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Amir receives KDIPA, Audit Bureau reports for 2023/2024



KUWAIT: (Left) HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday Minister of Commerce and Industry, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Khalifa Al-Ajeel and Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Director General Sheikh Dr Mishal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, alongside Deputy Chairman Wafa Al-Qatami, as they handed him KDIPA's report for the fiscal year 2023/2024. (Right) HH the Amir later received President of Kuwait Audit Bureau Essam Al-Roumi, as he handed him the bureau's report for the fiscal year 2023/2024. — KUNA

GAZA: Zionist tanks thrust deeper on Monday into two north Gaza towns and a historic refugee camp, trapping around 100,000 civilians, the Palestinian emergency service said, as the death toll from the Zionist air and ground onslaught in Gaza reached 43,020, mostly women and children. The Gaza Strip's health ministry said at least 19 people were killed by Zionist airstrikes and bombardment on Monday, 13 of them in the north of the devastated coastal territory.

The Palestinian Civil Emergency Service said around 100,000 people were marooned in Jabalia, Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun without medical or food supplies. The emergency service said its operations had come to a halt because of the three-week Zionist assault into the north, an area where the military said it had wiped out Hamas combat forces earlier in the year-long war.

South Africa has filed "evidence" of a "genocide" committed by the Zionist entity in the Gaza Strip with the International Court of Justice, the office of President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Monday. The document "contains evidence which shows how the government of (the Zionist entity) has violated the genocide convention by promoting the destruction of Palestinians living in Gaza", the presidency said in a statement.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Building material thieves arrested

KUWAIT: The interior ministry's forensic security department detained a group involved in stealing building materials from construction sites in Mutlaa and reselling them at lower prices. Following multiple citizen reports, authorities launched investigations and stakeouts. The suspects confessed and were referred to relevant authorities, with large amounts of stolen materials found in a storage site used for resale. — KUNA

Iran executes German-Iranian man

TEHRAN: Iranian authorities on Monday executed German-Iranian Jamshid Sharmahd, who was detained in 2020 by Iranian authorities, the judiciary said. "After going through the judicial process and the final approval of the court decision by the Supreme Court, the death sentence of Jamshid Sharmahd... was carried out this morning," the judiciary's Mizan website said, following Sharmahd's conviction for "corruption on earth". — AFP

France hijab bans discriminatory

GENEVA: United Nations rights experts on Monday slammed decisions in France barring women and girls who wear the Muslim headscarf from sports competitions as "disproportionate and discriminatory", demanding they be reversed. These decisions "infringe on their rights (of French athletes) to freely manifest their identity, their religion or belief in private and in public, and to take part in cultural life," said a statement signed by eight independent UN experts. — AFP (See Page 14)

Qatari Amir meets Kuwait's First Deputy PM

DOHA: Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani received on Monday Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of his visit to the country to participate in the 15th Milipol Qatar Exhibition and Conference 2024.

A statement to KUNA said that at the outset of the meeting, Sheikh Fahad conveyed to the Qatari Amir the greetings of HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and his wishes of good health and happiness and to the people of Qatar further development and prosperity. During the meeting, they discussed the deep-rooted relations between the two countries and ways to strengthen them, in addition to the prominent developments of shared interests regionally and globally. — KUNA



DOHA: Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani receives Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah on Oct 28, 2024. — KUNA

Kuwait, Russia FMs hold talks

MOSCOW: Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya and Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov held talks on Monday during an official visit to Moscow. Kuwait's foreign ministry said the two sides discussed latest regional and international developments, foremost being the escalating situations in Palestine and Lebanon, seeking ways to cease hostilities and allowing safe passage of aid to those in need.

They also discussed the impacts of the controversial decision by the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court on the Khor Abdullah agreement, as well as completing

the demarcation of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi maritime border beyond mark no. 162. They similarly discussed means to resolving the Kuwait-Iran marine borders dossier. The two also touched on the Syrian crisis and international efforts to find a political solution that ends the suffering of the Syrian people.

Yahya conveyed greetings of the Kuwaiti leadership and people to Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Russian Federation and its friendly people, praising historical relations and the strong strategic partnership between the two countries. Lavrov conveyed his greetings to the Kuwaiti leadership, government and friendly people, praising deep-rooted bilateral ties. Other issues discussed included ways of strengthening bilateral relations to push development and growth further, as well as mutual goals the two countries wish to achieve. — KUNA



MOSCOW: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya meets his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on Oct 28, 2024. — AFP

Trump, Harris in final stretch as Biden votes

ATLANTA: Kamala Harris crisscrossed Michigan on Monday while Donald Trump headed to Georgia — another of the decisive swing states in one of the closest US elections in history — after presiding over a dark mega-rally aimed at whipping up his right-wing base. With only a week until Nov 5 Election Day, more than 41 million Americans have cast ballots in early voting — including outgoing Democratic President Joe Biden, who

voted on Monday after waiting in a long line in his hometown Wilmington, Delaware.

Tensions are soaring in a race that polls suggest is too close to call, fueled by fears that Trump could again refuse to recognize a defeat, as he did in 2020. The Republican continues to claim he was cheated, and his rhetoric has become increasingly infused with violence and threats. Concerns increased after ABC News reported that a fire consumed hundreds of early ballots cast in a supposedly secure drop-off box in Vancouver, Washington, part of a highly competitive district. Arson was reportedly suspected in another ballot box fire hours earlier in Portland, Oregon.

Continued on Page 6



NEW CASTLE, Delaware: US President Joe Biden casts his early-voting ballot in the 2024 general election on Oct 28, 2024. — AFP



Turkey, Kuwait celebrate 60 years of friendship, solidarity

Turkish-Kuwaiti ties have reached new heights under the leadership of HH Sheikh Mishal, President Erdogan



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan shake hands.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal is seen with the Turkish Ambassador and President Erdogan.

By Tuba Nur Sonmez
Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait

KUWAIT: As we celebrate the 101st Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic of Turkey, it is a time for reflection and pride, not only for the achievements of our nation but also for the strong and lasting ties we have built with our friends around the world. October 29 marks a day of national pride for Turkish citizens, a moment to honor the legacy of Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of our Republic, and to pay tribute to the heroes who fought for our nation's independence and unity. We bow our heads to the memory of Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of our Republic, and to all the heroes, men and women who fought side by side and sacrificed their lives for our nation's independence and unity.

60 Years of Friendship

The year 2024 holds special significance for Turkey and Kuwait, as we mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic relations. Over these six decades, our partnership has grown from modest beginnings into a deep, multi-faceted relationship, underpinned by shared values and fraternal ties. As the Turkish Embassy, we have been celebrating this joyous occasion through series of events.

Turkey and Kuwait's relationship is not just rooted in diplomacy but in a long history of mutual respect and cooperation that stretches back hundreds of years. Today, we proudly describe our ties as "outstanding" and a model for regional and international partnerships. Under the visionary leadership of Pres-



Ambassador Tuba Nur Sonmez

ident Recep Tayyip Erdogan and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, our relationship continues to flourish, reaching new heights in recent years through frequent high-level visits and the signing of critical agreements in areas such as trade, defense, and investment.

The most recent visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal to Turkey in May, during which six agreements were signed, exemplifies the strength of our bond. The fact that Turkey was the first non-Arab country His Highness visited after assuming his position further highlights the unique and close ties between our nations.

'Hard times reveal true friends'

Turkey and Kuwait have always stood shoulder to shoulder in trying times. Following the devastating

earthquakes in Turkey earlier this year, our Kuwaiti brothers and sisters were among the first to offer their assistance, demonstrating once again the depth of our friendship. As the saying goes, "Hard times reveal true friends." This solidarity was also evident recently, when Kuwait extended its support after the terrorist attack in Ankara. In the face of such tragic events, Kuwait's unwavering backing has been a source of strength and comfort for Türkiye. We are deeply grateful for the exemplary friendship of the Kuwaiti people and government.

Shared vision for peace

In addition to our bilateral relationship, Turkey and Kuwait share a broader vision for peace and stability in the region. Both nations have long supported a just resolution to the Palestinian cause, and we have worked together in delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza. The joint efforts of Turkish and Kuwaiti authorities have placed both countries at the forefront of helping the most vulnerable in Gaza.

As Turkey, we firmly believe that the international community, particularly the United Nations Security Council, must take immediate and necessary measures to prevent further destabilization in the region. It is imperative that institutions responsible for maintaining global peace and security act decisively to safeguard the future of the Middle East.

Growing partnership

We consider bilateral trade and other forms of economic interaction as crucial components of our relations. In 2023, our trade volume amounted to nearly \$700 million. There are around 50 Turkish

companies in Kuwait, operating mainly in construction, home textile, garment, perfumery, jewelry, and service sectors. Additionally, Kuwaiti investments in Turkey have reached \$2 billion, mainly concentrated in finance and real estate.

Considering the cultural, historical, and religious ties between our nations, and the potential of both countries, these figures fall short of the actual potential. Hence, increasing bilateral trade and investment volume between our countries remains essential for us. Our people-to-people relations have also been developing, with Kuwaitis among the top foreign buyers of property in Turkey, acquiring more than 8,000 properties in the last seven years.

In addition, we welcomed a remarkable 57.7 million visitors in 2023, according to the latest figures. Nearly 400,000 Kuwaiti tourists visited Turkey, making Kuwaitis among the top visitors to Turkey relative to its population. Taking all these factors into consideration, we believe that cultural similarity is a chief facilitator of the interaction between our countries. I strongly believe that increasing cultural interactions will continue to enhance this momentum and our fraternal relations.

In conclusion, the Turkey-Kuwait relationship is a shining example of how two nations can build a multifaceted partnership based on mutual respect, shared interests, and a commitment to common goals. As we look to the future, we remain committed to further strengthening our ties and fostering a relationship that benefits both nations and contributes to regional and global stability. May the Republic of Turkey and the State of Kuwait forge an enduring friendship.

Austrian ambassador calls for ceasefire, return of hostages

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Designated Ambassador of Austria to Kuwait Ulrich Frank said his country is on the side of international law and the protection of innocent civilians in Gaza and Lebanon. "Also, hostages are irrevocable. We need de-escalation on every front and must do everything in our power to end the humanitarian catastrophe taking place now. This requires an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon and all possible fronts to allow for humanitarian aid and to finally free the hostages, including an Austrian citizen. Only a two-state solution can pave the way."

The remarks came at a reception held by the Austrian Embassy on Sunday to mark Austrian National Day, which falls on October 26. "Austria has provided 37 million euros in humanitarian aid for civilians in Gaza and the region since October 7, 2023. A peaceful coexistence requires tolerance, compromise, and the recognition that both sides have valid perspectives." Frank pointed out that 170 Austrian soldiers serve in the UNIFIL in Lebanon.



KUWAIT: Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Mohammad Hayatee speaks with Austrian Designated Ambassador Ulrich Frank. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

He emphasized Austria's permanent neutrality, a principle that keeps it "free from military alliances and foreign troop presence." "Yet, neutrality does not mean we are ideologically neutral; we are committed to democracy, human rights, and pluralism," he said.

Frank highlighted Austria's role in the global community, noting that Austria is committed to multilateralism and the rule of law. "Alongside Kuwait, we advocate for a reformed and more effective UN Security Council, which reflects today's world and not just the post-World War II order." Regarding Kuwait-Austria relations, Designated Ambassador Frank commended the strong ties between the two countries, stating "I am confident that the nearly 60-year tradition of fruitful diplomatic relations benefit both Kuwait and Austria."



KUWAIT: (From left) Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Ambassador Tuba Nur Sonmez, Sheikhha Fadia Saad Abdullah Al-Sabah, Dr Ugur Unal and Dr Ahmet Tokdemir cut a ceremonial ribbon at the event.

Exhibit showcases deep-rooted Turkish, Kuwaiti relationship

KUWAIT: As part of a series of events celebrating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Kuwait, the Turkish Embassy organized a Turkish Concert and Diplomatic Documents Exhibition on October 27, 2024 at Yarmouk Cultural Center in cooperation with the State Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey and Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah.

In her opening remarks, Ambassador Tuba Nur Sonmez emphasized that under the visionary leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and His

Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the brotherly relations between Turkey and Kuwait "will be strengthened and our cooperation will reach new heights in all areas." She emphasized that the Turkish Embassy in Kuwait remains committed to strengthening these ties and promoting initiatives that are mutually beneficial to both countries. She also highlighted the solidarity and close cooperation that Turkey and Kuwait have shown during difficult times.

During the Turkish Concert, two talented young Turkish artists, Eda Sevinis on the piano and Umut Saglam on the cello gave wonderful performances. A commemorative group photo was also taken to mark the occasion. After the ceremony, the guests attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the exhibition titled "60 Years of Diplomatic Relations and Enduring Friendship between Türkiye and Kuwait: Documents from the Archives". The exhibition displayed selected



Turkish artists Eda Sevinis on the piano and Umut Saglam on the cello perform at the event. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

documents from the Turkish State Archives, including press reports, diplomatic communications and photographs, which illustrate the deep-rooted relations and enduring friendship between Turkey and Kuwait.

At the end of the event, a commemorative booklet was presented to the guests. The booklet included selections from archival documents, diplomatic correspondence, newspapers, and photographs of bilateral visits between Turkey and Kuwait. Ambassador Sonmez was accompanied by the Guest of Honor Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs; Dr Ahmet Tokdemir, Director of the State Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey; Dr Ugur Unal, Rector of Gazi University and former Director of the State Archives of Turkey; Sheikhha Fadia Saad Abdullah Al-Sabah, Chairperson of the Saad Foundation for Knowledge and Scientific Research, as well as members of the diplomatic corps, cultural envoys and senior Kuwaiti officials.

Al Hamra Real Estate Co conducts emergency fire drill

KUWAIT: In a continued effort to uphold the highest safety standards, Al Hamra Real Estate Co has successfully carried out a mock emergency fire evacuation drill. This initiative, aimed at reinforcing safety measures for tenants, employees, and visitors of Al Hamra Business Tower, underscores the company's unwavering commitment to safeguarding lives and property in alignment with Kuwait's national safety regulations and ISO standards, alongside global Quality, Health, Safety, and Environment (QHSE) protocols.

The drill, conducted on October 28, 2024, focused on certain tower floors under the oversight of the Civil Defense, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Health. It simulated an emergency fire scenario, during which over 1,000 individ-

uals were safely evacuated from the building under the supervision of the rapid response team.

Abdulaziz Aldhuwaih, Marketing and Public Relations Manager at Al Hamra Real Estate Co said: "We are pleased with the success of this evacuation exercise, which highlights our steadfast commitment to the safety of tenants, employees, and visitors by strictly following ISO standards and QHSE protocols. These regular drills allow us to test the preparedness of our tower facilities and continuously enhance our emergency response capabilities."

He added: "I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Civil Defense, Fire Service teams, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Health for their ongoing support and invaluable collaboration, which were essential in ensuring the success of the drill and the safety of all involved."

Al Hamra Business Tower was chosen for this drill due to its strategic significance as Kuwait's leading business hub. With advanced infrastructure and comprehensive emergency preparedness capabilities, the tower reaffirms its role in setting high safety standards for the industry.

Wael Dawood, Facilities Manager at Al Hamra Real

Estate Co, said: "We are pleased with the success of this drill, conducted in collaboration with key security and government bodies. This initiative reflects our commitment to the highest safety standards for all visitors of Al Hamra Business Tower. It also showcases our efforts to maintain the tower's efficient operations as the tallest building in Kuwait and conduct evacuations safely and within set timelines. The drill's success underscores our readiness to handle emergencies and promote a culture of safety and adherence to the highest security standards."

This mock evacuation drill also reinforced the readiness and efficiency of the tower's alarm and fire suppression systems, ventilation systems, and evacuation elevators, all of which are essential for successful evacuations. Together, these systems create a safe, effective environment in emergency situations. Al Hamra Real Estate Co remains dedicated to maintaining the highest safety standards, making Al Hamra Business Tower one of the safest buildings in Kuwait. In alignment with its strategy to enhance tenant and employee safety, the company will continue to conduct regular safety drills to ensure complete preparedness in emergency scenarios.

Local

KDIPA attracts KD 206.9m in new investments in 2023/24

Authority presents report to HH the Crown Prince, HH the Prime Minister



KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives KDIPA's report for the financial year 2023/2024. — KUNA photos



HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah receives Kuwait Audit Bureau's annual report.



HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives the Audit Bureau's report at Bayan Palace.

KUWAIT: Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) has attracted new approved foreign direct investments worth KD 206.9 million (approximately \$675 million) during the 2023/2024 fiscal year, bringing the cumulative total of direct investments to around KD 1.7 billion (approximately \$5.55 billion) since its establishment in January 2015.

KDIPA released its ninth annual report for the financial year 2023/2024 on Monday, covering the period from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024. This report is part of its mandate under Law No. (116) of 2013 and aims to achieve the developmental goals of Kuwait Vision 2035.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Monday Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel and Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Director General Sheikh Dr Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, alongside Deputy Chairman Wafa Al-Qatami, as they handed KDIPA's report for the fiscal year 2023/2024. The leaders also met with the President of Kuwait Audit Bureau Essam Al-Roumi, who presented the bureau's report for the fiscal year 2023/2024.

According to KDIPA's report, the authority's cumulative investments came from 95 entities across 34



HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives KDIPA's report.

different countries, primarily focusing on the services sector, especially in information technology, oil and gas services, and construction and infrastructure. Investments also spanned other vital areas such as insurance, aviation, agriculture, and health.

The authority reported a 16 percent increase in the economic impact of licensed investment entities, raising the total cumulative spending in the local economy to approximately KD 924 million (about \$3 billion). This spending included local goods and

services, advanced technological equipment, taxes, government fees, national workforce salaries, and social responsibility activities.

In its report, KDIPA highlighted several milestones in digital transformation, promotional activities, national skill development, and sustainability. It accelerated its digital transformation, completing its digital infrastructure and developing electronic applications, achieving ISO 27001:2022 certification for information security management.

In terms of promotional activities, the authority expanded its international presence, securing the position of Vice President of the Steering Committee of the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) for the next two years, and enhancing participation in international promotional events to showcase Kuwait's economic developments.

Regarding national skill development, KDIPA organized a comprehensive training program comprising 80 sessions that benefited 318 employees, with a notable 30.4 percent increase in specialized courses offered through virtual communication.

The authority also committed to the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals by launching around 40 initiatives in Kuwait. Furthermore, it implemented measures to strengthen corporate governance, including the adoption of a code of conduct as part of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority's (Nazaha) "Performance Project". — KUNA

Oud Fashion Talks returns to support Kuwaiti creators

KUWAIT: Oud Fashion Talks returned to Kuwait on October 17 and 18, continuing its mission to support the growth of the creative economy in the region. The event gathered global experts in the fashion and creative industries, providing valuable insights to help Kuwaiti creators learn how to manage their businesses and build a strong foundation. It focused on raising awareness of how soft power can contribute to the overall economic development of the country.

The program highlighted the importance of educating creators and designers on how to start sustainable businesses, build brands, and explore job opportunities in the creative sector, emphasizing sustainability as a core part of the business model in creative industries.

The event began with a lavish dinner on October 17 at the Al-Shaheed Park in downtown Kuwait. Distinguished international and Kuwaiti guests attended, including Imran Amed, Founder and CEO of the Business of Fashion, Khalid Al-Tayer (CEO of OUNASS and Al Tayer Group), Comedian and Activist Bassem Youssef, Tunisian actress Dorra Zarrouk, global influencer and UN Ambassador Karen Wazem, veteran Kuwaiti Actress Huda Hussein, as well as senior management from the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), Tamdeen Group, and Beidoun Group, along with several local and regional stars and influencers.



KUWAIT: Khalid Al-Tayer, CEO of OUNASS and Al Tayer Group, and Imran Amed, Founder and CEO of the Business of Fashion, speak during a panel discussion about driving transformation in the GCC luxury market.

Oud Fashion Talks was established to support local designers and businesses, creating a solid framework to connect Kuwaiti talent with the global fashion industry. The event developed skills through discussions and workshops, helping creators grow their businesses, ultimately contributing to job creation in the private sector. This initiative plays a significant role in diversifying income sources and expanding the local creative economy in Kuwait, with the fashion industry being a vital source of new job opportunities.

The discussion sessions allowed designers and creatives to engage with industry leaders like Elie Saab, Imran Amed, and Mohammad Almarzouq, CEO of Tamdeen Retail, among others. These ex-

perts shared their insights on overcoming challenges, building successful businesses, and motivating others through their experiences. Workshops provided practical guidance, in partnership with Instagram (Meta), to help creatives grow their businesses digitally and taught them professional fashion design and photography techniques. These workshops enabled participants to elevate their skills from hobbyist to professional levels, opening new income sources.

Oud Fashion Talks played a strategic role in highlighting Kuwaiti creative brands. After participating in Oud Fashion Talks, these brands attracted the attention of major investors like Bloomingdale's and Harvey Nichols, leading to collaboration opportunities. The event also introduced a wave of new customers, enhancing the standing of local talented creators in the market. Networking opportunities enriched attendees' knowledge and fostered active interaction networks, increasing coverage in regional and international media. Among the notable successes achieved by Oud Fashion Talks was the establishment of "Ibrah," a local production facility that now proudly supports Kuwait's creative economy.

The event was supported by prominent sponsors, including the KPC, Tamdeen Group, Al-Tayer Group, Beidoun Group, AlHajeri Group and Asteri Beauty. These companies, recognized for their forward-thinking approach, align with Kuwait's efforts towards economic diversification by supporting creative industries. Oud Fashion Talks concluded on October 18 with a full day of discussions, workshops, food trucks, exhibitions, pop-up shops, and more. This year, Oud Fashion Talks partnered with Kuwait's Touristic Enterprise Company (TEC) to provide free registration, ensuring broad accessibility for all attendees.

Municipal Council approves Jahra Al-Corniche Project

KUWAIT: The Municipal Council approved the Jahra Waterfront Project "Al-Corniche" in its main session Monday chaired by Abdullah Al-Mehri. The project covers an area of approximately 5,794 square meters and is bound by the Doha West Power Plant to the east and the Al-Jahra Nature Reserve to the west. The council noted that the project will create around 25,000 job opportunities and represents a significant step toward Kuwait's goal of achieving the "New Kuwait 2035" vision. It confirmed that the project will be offered to the private sector according to the applicable laws and procedures.

Council also approved the Cabinet's decision to provide strategic storage areas for food and other items in the Adan and Mubarak Al-Kabeer areas, covering 1,000 square meters. The council also agreed to the request from the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL) to add a training institute specializing in handicrafts and weaving techniques at Sadu House. Furthermore, it approved the request to reallocate the site of the Constitutional Court and the Capital Markets Court in Ghamata.

The council also endorsed proposals to increase the number of multi-storey parking facilities at the Amiri Hospital and extend the service road parallel to Street No 85 in the Shamiya area. — KUNA

'Cyber Warriors' go head-to-head in army competition

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior and Minister of Defense Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, the Ministry of Defense kicked off the 10th edition of the Best Cyber Warrior Competition on Monday, in collaboration with the United States Central Command (USARCENT). The competition aims to strengthen cyber defense skills and partnerships.

During his speech, Colonel Omar Firas Al-Sabti, Directorate of Cyber Operations, stated that the 10th edition of the Best Cyber Warrior Competition will feature panel discussions and workshops led by distinguished global and regional cybersecurity experts. He said that the Kuwaiti Army is committed to the competition's success as part of its efforts to support constructive military collaboration aimed at enhancing cybersecurity systems among friendly nations. He noted, "It is no secret that cybersecurity today represents one of the most critical regional and global challenges across both military and civilian spheres. Securing military data and information requires concerted local, regional, and international efforts, especially in light of rapid technological advancements and the increasing digital transformations, which make this vast volume of data vulnerable to breaches."



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti army personnel stand in front of a poster for the 10th edition of the Best Cyber Warrior Competition. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Colonel Abdullah Al-Shatti, Head of Cyberspace Operations, told the press that the Kuwaiti team stood out as one of the top teams, securing first place in last year's competition in Oman. "This year, Kuwait is hosting the event, with participation from nine countries and over 80 teams competing both in-person and online, including teams from the UAE, Oman, Jordan, the US Army, and various ministries," he said. "The objectives of the competition include strengthening cooperation among friendly and allied countries and maintaining ongoing collaboration between the Kuwaiti Army and the US Army."

The competition also aims to boost morale and enhance training levels across military and civilian entities in the cybersecurity field, he said. "Cybersecurity has become a vital official sector across all areas of the state, serving as a key defense mechanism for any



Colonel Abdullah Al-Shatti

facility or country. The cyber domain is the primary deterrent for information security and national sovereignty. We hope to continue advancing in this field in the coming years and strive for even greater achievements."

Representing the US Army, Assistant Chief of Staff G-6, Colonel Stephen Dail said: "A decade ago, when this initiative first began, the world of cybersecurity was rapidly expanding. We recognized the growing need for skilled professionals, as it became increasingly crucial. Now, 10 years later, we see that cybersecurity is not just a technical field, but a core aspect of our global security, economy, and even our daily lives. The cyber warriors we celebrate today play a vital role in protecting our digital future."

Colonel Dail affirmed that this competition stands as a testament to Kuwait's dedication to nurturing cybersecurity expertise and contributing to the global effort to make the world safer. "As we look forward to



Colonel Stephen Dail



Colonel Omar Firas Al-Sabti

the coming days of intense competition, I encourage all of you to embrace the spirit of learning, collaboration, and innovation. Let us commence this prestigious competition with a spirit of unity, excellence, and mutual respect."

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NIC supports second edition of 'Shift'

Program qualifies freshly graduated Kuwaiti women to enter investment labor market

KUWAIT: With the unwavering support of The National Investments Company, the "Shift" program, in collaboration with Creative Confidence, is back for its second edition. This support ensures that the program is designed exclusively for newly graduated Kuwaiti women, qualifying them to enter the investment labor market. The launch event at the Volvo - Khaleeja Tower was a great success. It hosted a group of Kuwaiti women trainees and provided them with courses that enhanced their competencies and capabilities. These courses are designed to make them strong candidates for distinguished career opportunities in the private sector. Women participants can join this program by submitting a request through <https://creativeconfidence.typeform.com/to/qW0JqZpD> from October 28, 2024 until November 27, 2024. It will run for five weeks.

The launch event witnessed the positive participation of NIC's delegation: Fahad AlMukhaizim, Board Member and CEO, Taibah Mohammad AlQatami, Board Member, and Abdulmohsen AlKhatrash, Executive Director of Human Resources and Administration Affairs. It also witnessed the contribution of Sumaya Mohammed Al-Jassim, CEO of Creative Confidence.

"The success of the "Shift" program in its 2023 edition has inspired us to continue our support for the second edition



in 2024. This program has proven to be a significant opportunity for Kuwaiti women, enabling their participation in the labor market and fostering positive change in Kuwaiti society," said AlKhatrash.

AlKhatrash further noted that the program's first edition had a profound impact on the participating Kuwaiti trainees. They developed positive work attitudes, comprehensively understood the investment field, and enhanced their

productive abilities and skills. The program's rigorous training stages prepared them for the local market and provided job opportunities at NIC and other companies.

He also added that this program emphasized the dedication of Kuwaiti women to improving and enhancing their capabilities and skills in line with the requirements of the labor market and the developments taking place, fac-

ing challenges while continuously developing. "Through this great success, and in line with the company's strategy to advance the path of career and professional development and talent management and development, we will support this program in its second edition. We will strive to provide all capabilities to make this program a successful professional development point for all participants to advance in the field of

investment and assume leadership positions in the future.

"For the second year, the participation of Kuwaiti women in the economic field was considered an excellent step and a tangible endorsement of the Kuwaiti society's support for women's involvement in this field, as what is essential is the presence of competence and the ability to prove themselves and achieve the necessary achievements in society," said AlKhatrash.

CEO of Creative Confidence Al-Jassim hailed NIC's participation for the second consecutive year after the remarkable success achieved in its first edition. "We have received more than 365 applications this year. I would like to encourage all female graduates to make use of this exceptional opportunity, offering a training experience that integrates the fields of creativity, innovation, and investment and enables Kuwaiti women to play different and positive roles in society, as Kuwaiti women have made remarkable strides in recent years, and broke barriers in various sectors, to reflect the progress and acceptance of society for women to assume roles that were exclusive to males," she said.

Creative Convenience is a Kuwaiti consulting and training firm specializing in innovation, creativity, and collaboration. It provides an opportunity to bridge the gap between the school and professional stages.

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On the sudden demise of

Saad Abdulaziz Abdul Mohsen Al-Rashed

who passed away
on Monday, 28th October.

May Allah Almighty bestow mercy on his soul



KUWAIT: TEDx AU speakers pose for a photo at the event.

AU hosts TEDx with diverse lineup of inspirational speakers

KUWAIT: The Teaching and Learning Center at the Australian University (AU) hosted the highly anticipated TEDx event on Saturday, October 19, 2024, in its Auditorium under the theme "Mindset: Shaping Tomorrow". The talk brought together innovative thinkers, passionate leaders and talented speakers to share ideas worth spreading.

TEDx Australian University, licensed by global TED organization, featured a diverse lineup of speakers aiming to foster a spirit of curiosity and exploration, encouraging the AU community to

challenge norms and envision a better future. Key-note speeches were brought by local community influential and inspirational figures sharing their experiences to inspire attendees and motivate them to persevere despite adversity. The speakers included Dr Manal Al-Hasawi, Asrar Al-Ansari, Ali Najim, Majed Al-Zaabi, Mohammad Al-Saddani, Rola Mourdaa, Abdullah Boftain, Sayer Al-Otaibi, Nicholas Chalhoub, Ali Nasser, Sharefah Baqer and Hussain Al-Mossawi.

Rola Mourdaa, Manager of the Teaching and Learning Center at AU, during her speech shared her personal experiences and reflected on standing firm in one's values. She remarked: "Success and happiness in life are not based on money, fame or career, maybe it's a combination of all but what will really count in the end are moments of connection, shared laughter, support during hard times and priceless memories with loved ones."

Team tasked with finding solutions to women's housing

KUWAIT: Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Abdullatif Al-Meshari issued a decision Sunday to form a special team dedicated to women's housing chaired by Sheikha Bibi Youssef Saud Al-Sabah. The decision includes the appointment of Badier Al-Subaei, the Deputy Director General for Distribution and Documentation, as the deputy chair of the team, along with the membership of six other individuals.

The team is tasked with inventorying and assessing properties designated for women under the housing sector, including the Sabah Al-Salem residential complex, Taimaa, and Sulaihiya, and exploring the best ways to develop these areas. The decision grants the team the authority to study land use in designated areas, modify properties, and generally assess buildings to propose solutions. They are also responsible for presenting recommendations related to women's housing and detailing all procedures related to the completion of housing care projects, along with suggestions to enhance these processes to achieve desired objectives and expedite solutions for projects. The ministerial decision stipulates that the team's tasks must be completed within a maximum of four months from the date the decision was issued. — KUNA



Bangladesh president faces ouster

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

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Middle East aid workers say rules of war being flouted

Local aid workers dying in silence, warns Red Cross

GENEVA: Flagrant violations of the laws of war in the escalating conflict in the Middle East are setting a dangerous precedent, aid workers in the region warn. Humanitarians say the warring parties are flouting international humanitarian law (IHL). "The rules of war are being broken in such a flagrant way... (it) is setting a precedent that we have not seen in any other conflict," Marwan Jilani, the vice president of the Palestine Red Crescent (PCRS), told AFP.

Speaking last week during a meeting in Geneva of the 191 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, he lamented a "total disregard for human life (and) for international humanitarian law".

Amid Zionist entity's devastating retaliatory operation in the Gaza Strip, local aid workers are striving to deliver assistance while facing the same risks as the rest of the population, he said. The PCRS has more than 900 staff and several thousand volunteers inside Gaza, where more than 43,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to the Hamas-ruled territory's health ministry, and where the UN says virtually the entire population has been repeatedly displaced.

"They're part of the community," said Jilani. "I think every single member of our staff has lost family members." He decried especially what he said was a "deliberate targeting of the health sector". Zionist entity rejects such accusations and maintains that it is carrying out its military operations in both Gaza and Lebanon in accordance with international law.

But Jilani said that "many of our staff, including doctors and nurses... were detained, were taken for weeks (and) were tortured". Since the war began, 34 PCRS staff and volunteers have been killed in Gaza, and another two in the West Bank, "most of them while serving", he said. Four other staff members are still being held, their whereabouts and condition unknown. Jilani

warned that the disregard for basic international law in the expanding conflict was eroding the belief that such laws even exist.

A "huge casualty of this war", he said, "is the belief within the Middle East that there is no international law". Uri Shacham, chief of staff at the Zionist entity's emergency aid organization Magen David Adom (MDA), also decried the total disregard for laws requiring the protection of humanitarians. It lost seven people that day.

The Red Cross in Lebanon, where for the past month Zionist entity has been launching ground operations and dramatically escalating its air strikes against Hezbollah, also condemned the slide.

Thirteen of its volunteers have been recently injured on ambulance missions. One of its top officials, Samar Abou Jaoudeh, told AFP that they did not appear to have been targeted directly.

"But nevertheless, not being able to reach the injured people, and (missiles) hitting right in front of an ambulance is also not respecting IHL," she said, stressing the urgent need to ensure more respect for international law on the ground. Abou Jaoudeh feared Lebanon, where at least 1,620 people have been killed since September 23, according to an AFP tally based on official figures, could suffer the same fate as Gaza. "We hope that no country would face anything that Gaza is facing now, but unfortunately a bit of that scenario is beginning to be similar in Lebanon," she said.

The Lebanese Red Cross, she said, was preparing "for all scenarios... but we just hope that it wouldn't reach this point".

Local staff and volunteers – the backbone of aid agencies providing help in the world's worst conflicts – are dying in ever greater numbers. Yet few seem to notice, the head of the Red Cross told AFP in an interview on Monday.

"Almost 95 percent of the humanitarians who are killed are actually the local staff and local vol-



A family member carries a picture of Lebanese army Major Mohammed Farhat, killed in southern Lebanon along with two other soldiers by Zionist fire on October 24, during his funeral procession in Zgharta district of Lebanon on October 26, 2024. — AFP

unteers", Jagan Chapagain, the Secretary-General of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. But while the killing of an international staff member of large humanitarian organizations can spark global outrage, there is often little attention paid when a local aid worker suffers the same fate. "Unfortunately, when a local staffer or volunteer gets killed, it gets hardly any attention," Chapagain said.

Since the beginning of this year alone, 30 of the network's volunteers have been killed worldwide, while within the United Nations system, "they have lost hundreds", he said.

He decried a clear "erosion" in the respect for international humanitarian law and the principles requiring humanitarians to be protected. Growing disregard for international law in conflict was significantly "increasing the situation of extreme exposures (and) risk for our humanitarian workers, (with) volunteers getting shot, ambulances getting attacked". — AFP

Displaced Gazans sew winter clothes from blankets

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza: As Gaza braces for a cold, wet winter, displaced Palestinians living in tents and makeshift shelters by the sea are sewing clothes from blankets in a desperate effort to stay warm.

Nidaa Attia, 31, and others measure, cut and sew the clothing in a tent near the beach at Al-Mawasi in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip. The work is entirely manual and labor intensive. Lacking electricity, they generate power by using the pedals of a bicycle connected by a belt to their sewing machine. "Winter is coming for the second time (since the start of the war) and people are without any (warm) clothes," Attia said.

Nearby a young child stood on a table while another woman measured him for a jumper to protect him from the cold winter. "There are no clothes coming into the Gaza Strip, so we thought a lot about how we could find a solution to the lack of fabrics, and we came up with the idea of recycling thermal blankets into winter clothes," Attia said. Her "Needle and Thread" initiative, launched in September, relies mostly on volunteers, though some receive a small payment. The clothes are sold for between 70 and 120 shekels (\$18-\$30) but prices are lower for those who bring blankets.

A Gazan winter can be harsh, marked by cold temperatures and strong winds. Last year heavy rains flooded some shelters. After more than a year of war, many in Gaza have no income. Some have tried to sell their possessions, including second-hand clothes, but few can afford the prices of even basic goods. The amount of international aid entering Gaza has plummeted to its lowest level all year, according to UN data, while a global hunger monitor has also warned of a looming famine. — Reuters

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May his soul Rest in Peace

International

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

Both support Zionist entity but diverge on approaches



This combination of pictures shows Kamala Harris in Philadelphia and Donald Trump in New York on October 27, 2024. — AFP

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

Trump has scoffed at the billions of dollars in US aid to Ukraine, saying that Russia, which invaded its smaller neighbor in February 2022, is destined to win. The Republican has in the past voiced admiration for Russian strongman Vladimir Putin, who recently praised Trump as "sincere" about seeking to end the Ukraine war. Trump's aides have suggested leveraging US assistance to force Ukraine into territorial concessions to end the war quickly. Trump has also mocked Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as the "greatest salesman" in a job at his lobbying for US military aid, although the two had a cordial meeting in September. Harris has vowed to keep up support for Ukraine and said at the September debate with Trump, "If Donald Trump were president, Putin would be sitting in Kyiv right now."

Middle East

Harris and Trump are both pro-Zionist entity but diverge on how far to pressure the US ally in its

nearly 13-month war that began with a Hamas attack and has expanded to Lebanon and tit-for-tat strikes between Zionist entity and Iran. Harris, like Biden, has made clear she will keep arming Zionist entity, distancing herself from calls from the left of their Democratic Party for an arms embargo for the sake of sparing civilians. But Harris has also urged Palestinian "self-determination" and called Zionist entity's killing of Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar a chance to end the war in Gaza.

Trump, whose Republican base is staunchly pro-Zionist entity, has accused the Biden administration of unjustly trying to restrain Zionist entity and said he is speaking regularly with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Trump as president took a series of landmark actions on Zionist entity's behalf, including moving the US embassy to flash point Jerusalem and giving Arab nations incentives to recognize Zionist entity. But he also has a complicated history with Netanyahu, whom he criticized for joining other world leaders in recognizing that Biden won the 2020 US election—an outcome that Trump refused to accept despite overwhelming evidence.

China and Taiwan

Policymakers of both US political parties have spoken of China as the top long-term challenger, though they differ on rhetoric and approach. Trump has relentlessly attacked China in his stump speeches and has vowed to impose massive tariffs on Chinese goods, hoping to boost manufacturing at home. But despite

his public statements, he has also indicated he is open to deal-making with President Xi Jinping.

Biden has in some ways gone further than Trump, including by imposing a sweeping ban on high-tech chip exports. Harris has highlighted Trump's reluctance while he was in office to take similar measures, charging that he "basically sold us out," with China's military benefiting from US technology.

In Taiwan, the self-ruling democracy claimed by Beijing, Trump has caused jitters by suggesting that it pay for its defense, likening the United States to an insurance company. Harris, as vice president, has pledged to maintain the status quo, stating that "we support Taiwan's self-defense, consistent with our longstanding policy."

In a sharp break from previous presidents of both parties, Trump has questioned the utility of NATO, the collective defense alliance formed at the start of the Cold War. Trump even said in February he would encourage the Russians to do "whatever the hell they want" to NATO allies that do not pay more on defense. Harris has frequently pointed to Trump's remarks as she promises, like Biden, to work with allies and stand by NATO.

Trump in his first term showed he was ready to break with international agreements he does not like, including the Iran nuclear deal. He would also be expected to champion tough US pressure against leftist leaders in Latin America, particularly Cuba and Venezuela, although neither Biden nor Harris has deviated sharply from his approach. — AFP

UK anti-Islam activist Tommy Robinson jailed

LONDON: British anti-Muslim activist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, known by the pseudonym Tommy Robinson, was jailed for 18 months on Monday after he admitted contempt of court by breaching an injunction made after he was successfully sued for libel. Yaxley-Lennon was sued for libel at London's High Court by Syrian refugee Jamal Hijazi and in 2021 was ordered to pay 100,000 pounds (\$129,885) in damages. He was also made subject to an injunction preventing him from repeating the libel, which Yaxley-Lennon admitted repeatedly breaching between February 2023

and this July. Sentencing Yaxley-Lennon at London's Woolwich Crown Court, Judge Jeremy Johnson said: "The breaches were not accidental or negligent or merely reckless. Each breach of the injunction was a considered and planned and deliberate and direct and flagrant breach of the court's order."

Britain's Solicitor General took legal action against Yaxley-Lennon over comments in online interviews and a documentary titled 'Silenced', which has been viewed millions of times and was played in London's Trafalgar Square in July. The Solicitor General's lawyer Aidan Eardley said Yaxley-Lennon had been found in contempt on three separate occasions and was jailed for it in 2019. He also has separate criminal convictions. Yaxley-Lennon was accused by some media and politicians of inflaming tensions which led to days of rioting across Britain in late July after the murder of three young girls at a dance workshop in Southport. He has accused the media of lying about him.

Yaxley-Lennon's lawyer Sasha Wass said of his libelous remarks: "He acted in the way that he did, and he accepts his culpability, because he passionately believes in free speech, a free press and the overwhelming desire that he has to expose the truth."

Wass also said that 'Silenced' had been "effectively commissioned" through US conspiracy theorist Alex Jones' Infowars company. Johnson sentenced Yaxley-Lennon to 18 months, less three days spent in custody after he was arrested on Friday. He will spend half in custody.

The judge said four months could be cut from the sentence if Yaxley-Lennon tried to "purge" his contempt, including by taking down copies of 'Silenced'. As Johnson spoke, Yaxley-Lennon could be seen mouthing "nah" to the public gallery. The judge said of Yaxley-Lennon that "all his actions so far suggest that he regards himself as being above the law". — AFP



Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, also known as Tommy Robinson

Gaza martyrs top 43,000 ...

Continued from Page 1

An official for the Hague-based court on Monday confirmed it had received the document, but did decline to give further detail. "The evidence will show that undergirding (the Zionist entity's) genocidal acts is the special intent to commit genocide, a failure by (the Zionist entity) to prevent incitement to genocide, to prevent genocide itself and its failure to punish those inciting and committing acts of genocide," said the presidency. The "memorial" — the name of the document detailing South Africa's case against the Zionist entity before the ICJ — cannot be made public but laid out evidence in "over 750 pages of text, supported by exhibits and annexes of over 4,000 pages", it added. South Africa in December brought a case before the ICJ, arguing the war in Gaza breached the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention. Several nations have added their weight to South Africa's proceedings against the Zionist entity, including Spain, Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Turkey, Chile and Libya.

Palestinian prisoner rights organizations accused Zionist prison authorities on Monday of "brutally assaulting" Marwan Barghouti, the most prominent Palestinian detainee in Zionist custody. Prison system staff assaulted Barghouti in his solitary confinement cell at Megiddo Prison in the Zionist entity's north on Sept 9, the Palestinian Commission of Detainees' Affairs, the Palestinian Prisoners' Club and a support group for Barghouti said in statements.

The rights groups said they were informed of the event by a lawyer who was able to meet with Barghouti on Sunday. It was his first visit in three months, the Prisoners' Club told AFP. The assault "resulted in several injuries to Barghouti's body, to his ribs... as well as bleeding of the right ear and a wound to his right arm,

Trump, Harris in final stretch...

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, Trump faced outrage after one of the warm-up speakers at his Sunday rally in New York's Madison Square Garden called majority-Hispanic Puerto Rico "a floating island of garbage". The former president's campaign said this "does not reflect the views of President Trump". However, the speaker, comedian Tony Hinchcliffe, was unrepentant, writing on social media that critics "have no sense of humor" — a comment reposted by Trump's son and advisor Don Trump Jr. Harris, 60, called Trump "increasingly unstable and unhinged" in an interview with CBS News. She later told reporters that Trump "fans the fuel of hate". As the clock ticks down, the challenge for Harris and Trump is both to energize core supporters and pull in the tiny number of persuadable voters who might still tip the balance — especially in the seven swing states where polls suggest they are running neck-and-neck.

Harris, who spent Sunday in must-win Pennsylvania, was holding three events in Michigan, while Trump was

along with severe back pain," the groups said. Talks led by the US, Egypt and Qatar to broker a ceasefire in Gaza resumed on Sunday after multiple abortive attempts, with Egypt's president proposing an initial two-day truce to exchange four Zionist hostages of Hamas for some Palestinian prisoners, to be followed by talks within 10 days on a permanent ceasefire.

Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday the latest meetings in Doha focused on a new outline that takes into account previous proposals and regional developments. He said mediators would resume talks in coming days "in a continued attempt to advance a deal", without elaborating. To date, the Zionist entity has repeatedly said the war will go on until Hamas is eradicated while the Islamist movement has ruled out end to fighting until Zionist forces leave Gaza.

Gaza's war has kindled wider conflict in the Middle East, raising concern about global oil supplies, with the Zionist entity carrying out bombings across Lebanon and sending forces into its south in an offensive to disable Hezbollah, an ally of Hamas. It has also triggered rare direct clashes between regional arch-foes the Zionist entity and Iran. Iran's Foreign Ministry said on Monday Tehran would "use all available tools" to respond to the Zionist entity's weekend attack.

The Zionist entity continued battering Lebanon on Monday, including an early-morning airstrike on a district in the southern port of Tyre that left seven dead, the Lebanese health ministry said. The Zionist military later issued an evacuation order for large swathes of Tyre, including areas that have not been previously asked to evacuate and that included neighborhoods near a seaside hotel where journalists are usually based.

Footage circulated online of civil defense workers driving through Tyre on Monday and urging people to leave. "For your safety, because of the warning, evacuate immediately!" one of them shouted into a megaphone attached to a car. The Zionist entity's expanding evacuation warnings have made ghost towns out of much of southern Lebanon, including Tyre, and the bombing campaign has left many towns along the border in ruins. — Agencies

to hold two in Georgia — a pattern set to be repeated around the country's other battlegrounds for the next seven days. On Tuesday in Washington, Harris will deliver what her campaign calls a "closing argument", in a nod to her career as a prosecutor.

The Democrat will speak from the same spot near the White House where then president Trump stoked his supporters on Jan 6, 2021, to launch a violent assault on Congress in an attempt to stop certification of his reelection loss to Biden. Trump — the oldest presidential nominee ever and also the first to have been convicted of crimes — used a packed Madison Square Garden for his own closing pitch on Sunday. The campaign celebrated the event in the legendary arena as a show of force and energy.

"PURE JOY," posted senior Trump immigration advisor Stephen Miller on X. But much of the event — likened by Democrats to an infamous 1939 rally of American fascists in the same venue — was not joyous. Trump lashed out at the "enemy from within", which he described as an "amorphous group" that includes the Democratic Party leadership. And his allies unleashed crude, sometimes openly racist rhetoric to mock Harris sexually, make fun of Hispanics' birth control, parody Jews and Palestinians, and poke fun at a black man by referring to a watermelon — a deep-rooted racist stereotype in the United States. — AFP

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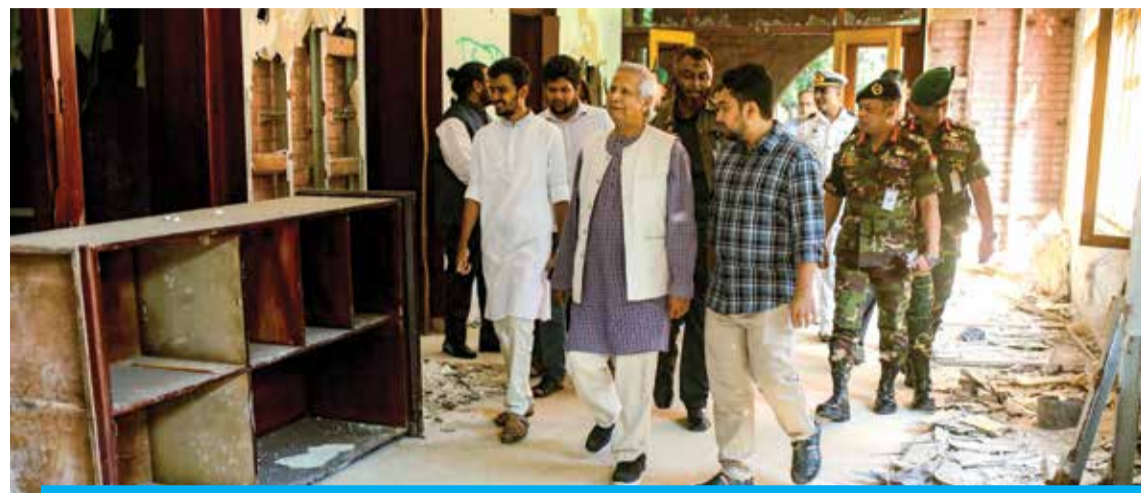
who passed away
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May Allah Almighty bestow mercy on his soul

International

Pressure mounts to oust Bangladesh president

Hasina's palace to become revolution museum



DHAKA: Nobel laureate and chief adviser of Bangladesh's interim government Muhammad Yunus (fourth left) tours the battered Gonobhaban palace, the former official residence of the ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka. — AFP

DHAKA: Bangladesh's President Mohammed Shahabuddin faced growing pressure Monday to quit from leaders of the revolution that toppled autocratic ex-prime minister Sheikh Hasina in August, who argue he was her appointee. Shahabuddin, 74, widely known as "Chuppu", was elected by parliament in 2023 by Hasina's now ousted Awami League, but while the post is largely ceremonial, his potential removal from the role has sparked fears of a constitutional vacuum.

"Any decision regarding the removal of the president will be based on political consensus," Shafiqul Alam, press advisor to the interim government that replaced Hasina, said on Monday.

The interim government is led by Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus as its "chief adviser". Government spokeswoman Syeda Rizwana Hasan, a minister in Yunus's cabinet, said there is "an ongoing discussion regarding the removal" of Shahabuddin. "It must be considered whether a government formed after a revolution should retain a president who was selected by a fascist government," Hasan told reporters on Sunday.

"The demand for his removal stems from claims that he does not align with the spirit of the movement." Earlier this month Shahabuddin sparked furious protests after he said he had never seen a resignation letter from Hasina—raising the prospect her departure was unlawful.

Soon after, Asif Nazrul, a student protest leader now serving in Yunus's government, charged

that the comments were a "violation of his oath of office". Last week, police clashed with a crowd of hundreds who tried to storm the presidential compound, leaving 30 officers and protesters injured.

But those pushing for his removal face constitutional hurdles. To impeach the president requires a two-thirds vote by parliament, with the speaker then assuming the post. Parliament however was suspended following Hasina's ouster, meaning the process to remove a president—and who would choose his successor—is open to question. "If we want to make the most of this uprising, we should not be guided by whims that may create a constitutional vacuum," Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the powerful Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) said.

Hasnat Abdullah, convener of Students Against Discrimination, the protest group credited with sparking the uprising against Hasina, demanded a swift decision. "We don't want this situation to linger," he said, claiming only the BNP opposed removing him.

Meanwhile, the once luxurious palace of Bangladesh's autocratic ex-leader Sheikh Hasina will become a museum to honor the revolution that ousted her, the leader of the caretaker government said Monday. "The museum should preserve memories of her misrule and the people's anger when they removed her from power," Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus said as he toured the battered Ganabhaban palace, the former official residence of the prime minister. — AFP



Georgia's President Salome Zurbishvili, flanked by leaders of opposition parties, speaks during a press conference at the presidential palace in Tbilisi. — AFP

Georgia braces for protests after contested vote

TBILISI: Georgia braced for protests on Monday after the pro-EU opposition called for mass demonstrations, accusing the ruling party of "stealing" this weekend's parliamentary election with Russian help.

The Caucasus country—rocked by mass protests earlier this year—was plunged into political uncertainty in the hours after Saturday's vote, with both Brussels and Washington denouncing "irregularities". Georgia's pro-European president Salome Zurbishvili alleged a "Russian special operation" to interfere with the election—a claim swiftly rejected by Moscow.

The ruling Georgian Dream party has for months been accused by the opposition of steering Tbilisi away from its goal of joining the EU and back into Russia's orbit.

Defying the EU's concerns over the vote, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban—current holder of the bloc's rotating presidency and the Kremlin's closest EU associate—was scheduled to press ahead with a two-day visit to Tbilisi to show his support for Georgian Dream.

And Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze on Monday insisted EU membership remained a "main priority" for his party and that he expected a "reset" with Brussels. According to near-final results announced by the electoral commission, Georgian Dream won 53.92 percent of the vote, compared with 37.78 of the votes taken by the union of four pro-Western opposition alliances. The opposition has said the vote was unfair and has refused to concede defeat to a party it accuses of pro-Kremlin authoritarianism.

Opposition politicians have said they would renounce their mandates and will not enter the newly elected parliament. "We are witnesses and victims of a Russian special operation, a modern form of hybrid war against the Georgian people," Zurbishvili said Sunday, declaring the announced results "illegitimate." The Kremlin on Monday said it "strongly

rejected" her accusation and instead accused EU countries of interference. "These accusations are completely unsubstantiated," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

An EU parliament mission said the vote was evidence of Tbilisi's "democratic backsliding", adding that it had seen instances of "ballot box stuffing" and the "physical assault" of observers. Zurbishvili joined opposition calls for protests—including from jailed ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili, who led mass protests 20 years ago that first set Georgia on a pro-EU path. "Now is the time for mass protests. We must show the world that we are fighting for freedom and that we are a people who will not tolerate injustice," he said.

Several opposition groups called for mass protests in the capital Tbilisi, already rocked by massive demonstrations this year over several laws passed by Georgian Dream that were rejected by the opposition as repressive. The result announced by the electoral commission gave Georgian Dream 89 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.

US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken blasted what he called the "misuse of public resources, vote buying, and voter intimidation" which he said "contributed to an uneven playing field."

Political analyst Ghia Nodia said he expected "large-scale protests" but not "serious upheaval." "I anticipate Georgian Dream will launch a full-scale offensive against opponents, civil activists, and independent media," he said.

Nodia believed that while "electoral violations may have swayed the election outcome", the ruling party still maintained a "solid support base." Orban, who has retained ties to Moscow despite the 2022 Ukraine invasion, is due in Tbilisi on Monday evening. Commenting on the visit, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned Orban "does not represent" the bloc on foreign affairs.

Orban congratulated Georgian Dream for an "overwhelming victory" on Saturday, after one exit poll showed the government in the lead, before preliminary results were published. Other EU leaders condemned the vote—with some backing the call of the opposition. — AFP

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In loving memory of

**Late Mr. Saad Abdulaziz
Abdul Mohsen Al-Rashed**

a visionary leader
and cherished mentor,
whose unwavering
guidance shaped our lives.

His legacy and values will
continue to guide us forward.

Our heartfelt condolences
to the grieving family

**Ravi Varrier (CEO)
Pradeep Menon (CFO)**

 **AI Rashed International Shipping Co. k.s.c.c**

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2024

Zain, Mada recognized with 'Best Industry Digitalization' award for Energy Sector

At Huawei B2B Innovation Summit during GITEX Global 2024



Mohammad Harb receives the award in Dubai.



A group picture of Zain and Huawei officials.

KUWAIT: Zain Kuwait, along with its subsidiary Mada Communications, have been recognized with the 'Best Industry Digitalization' award for the Energy Sector at the Huawei B2B Innovation Summit, a highlight of GITEX Global 2024, held recently in Dubai.

The recognition reflects the two companies' contributions to reshaping the energy landscape through technology, empowering digitalization across the sector's biggest players in Kuwait. The award was presented during Zain's participation at GITEX, the world's largest technology event, where global technology leaders gather to drive sustainable growth for the digital econo-

• Award highlights Zain and Mada's contributions to reshaping the energy landscape through technology

my. The award was received by Mohammad Harb, Zain Kuwait Enterprise Operational Marketing Director, with Zain, Mada, and Huawei representatives in attendance.

This recognition underscores Zain Kuwait and Mada Communications' notable achievements in advancing digital transformation solutions within the local energy sector, achieved through successful partnerships with the biggest K-companies. These accomplishments

position Zain and Mada as the preferred choice for national institutions in this vital sector, supporting their strategic objectives towards sustainable growth.

Both companies empower energy enterprises to embrace digitalization to enhance operational efficiency by offering advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, 5G networks, drones-as-a-service, cybersecurity solutions, data analytics, managed cloud services, and more. This award

acknowledges Zain and Mada's success in leveraging the latest digital technologies, fostering innovation, enhancing operational efficiency, and strengthening safety measures across the energy sector's critical infrastructure. Their solutions have elevated productivity and sustainability, ensuring the sector's readiness for future challenges.

Zain and Mada reaffirm their commitment to driving digital transformation in the energy sector by dedicating further efforts to promote automation, data-driven decision-making, environmentally sustainable solutions, and innovative services that play a pivotal role in shaping the future of energy in

the region. Over the past years, Zain has further accelerated its efforts to support Kuwait's energy sector with cutting-edge digital solutions. As one of the world's leading oil producers, Kuwait's economy relies heavily on this industry, and the company remains dedicated to supporting its continued and growth.

The company's partnerships with industry leaders, both in the public and private sectors, have grown to include new projects that harness the potential of these technologies, which are transforming the energy landscape, and Zain is committed to ensuring Kuwait remains a global leader in this arena.

UN: Carbon cuts 'miles short' of 2030 goal

PARIS: Greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere reached new record highs in 2023, the UN warned on Monday, with countries falling "miles short" of what is needed to curb devastating global warming.

Levels of the three main greenhouse gases — heat-trapping carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide — all increased yet again last year, said the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations' weather and climate agency. Carbon dioxide was accumulating in the atmosphere faster than ever, up more than 10 percent in two decades, it added.

And a separate report by UN climate change found that barely a dent is being made in the 43 percent emissions cut needed by 2030 to avert the worst of global warming. Action as it stands would only lead to a 2.6 percent reduction this decade from 2019 levels. "The report's findings are stark but not surprising — current national climate plans fall miles short of what's needed to stop global heating from crippling every economy, and wrecking billions of lives and livelihoods across every country," said UN climate chief Simon Stiell. The two reports come just weeks before the United Nations COP29 climate summit in Azerbaijan, and as nations prepare to submit updated national climate plans in early 2025.

"Bolder" plans to slash the pollution that drives warming will now have to be drawn up, Stiell said, calling for the end of "the era of inadequacy". Under the 2015 Paris Agreement, countries agreed to cap global warming at "well below" two degrees Celsius above average levels measured between 1850 and 1900 — and 1.5C if possible. But so far their actions have failed to meet that challenge. Existing national commitments would see 51.5 billion tonnes of CO2 and its equivalent in other greenhouse gases emitted in 2030 — levels that would "guarantee a human and economic trainwreck for every country, without exception," Stiell said.

As long as emissions continue, greenhouse gases will keep accumulating in the atmosphere, raising global temperatures, WMO said. Last year, global temperatures on land and sea were the highest in records dating as far back as 1850, it added. WMO chief Celeste Saulo said the world was "clearly off track" to meet the Paris Agreement goal, adding that record greenhouse gas concentrations "should set alarm bells ringing among decision-makers".

"CO2 is accumulating in the atmosphere faster than at any time during human existence," the report said, adding that the current atmospheric CO2 level was 51 percent above that of the pre-industrial era. — AFP

Spanish PM in India seeking to bolster trade ties

NEW DELHI: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez was welcomed to India Monday with a flower-filled open-top parade alongside counterpart Narendra Modi, as Madrid seeks to boost investment in the world's fifth-largest economy. The duo waved to crowds in a vehicle smothered in orange marigold garlands on their way to inaugurate a military aircraft factory, a collaboration between Tata Advanced Systems and Airbus, in Vadodara in Gujarat state.

It is the first visit by a Spanish premier to India for 18 years, with cooperation agreements signed including on infrastructure, railways and renewable energy projects. India's defense ministry agreed to a \$2.5 billion deal for 56 cargo and troop-carrying C295 aircraft from Airbus Defense and Space in 2021.

While 16 will be assembled in Seville in Spain — with the first deliveries made last year — the 40 remaining will be built in India. The Indian plant in Vadodara will complete the first "Made in India" C295 aircraft in 2026. "This factory will not only strengthen India-Spain relations, but also the 'Make in India and Made for the World' mission," Modi said at the inauguration.

"It also reinforces India's position as a trusted partner in global aerospace manufacturing," Sanchez said. Airbus had opened a new chapter in India's defence and space industry. "This project strengthens our industrial ties while underlying our country's deep commitment as a reliable and strategic partner," he said, speaking in English. "It shows, as well, the capabilities of the Spanish defense industry."

Modi, in a statement after "productive discussions" with Sanchez, said he wanted to push links with Madrid. "We wish to add even more momentum in



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (second left) with his Spanish counterpart Pedro Sanchez (left) attends an exhibition during the joint inauguration of TATA Aircraft Complex for manufacturing C-295 aircraft at the TATA Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) campus in Vadodara. — AFP

our bilateral ties, especially in trade, commerce, culture, innovation, technology and more", Modi said.

India says trade between the nations is "robust and growing", totalling \$9.9 billion in 2023, with India exporting \$7.17 billion and importing \$2.74 billion. Spain, the 16th-biggest foreign investor in India with more than 280 Spanish companies in the country, sees opportunities including in construction, pharmacy, energy and railways. Leaders of Navantia, Spain's state shipbuilding company, are part of the visit, seeking potential contracts,

including for submarines.

Modi visited Spain in 2017, and held talks with Sanchez at the G20 summits in 2018 and 2021, but it is the first visit by a Spanish premier to India in nearly two decades. Sanchez, who visited China last month, is looking to consolidate relations in Asia and with both Beijing and New Delhi. The Spanish leader is slated to visit India's financial capital Mumbai on Tuesday, where he will hold talks with business chiefs, as well as a visit to a Bollywood film studio in a bid to seek tie-ups with Spanish firms. — AFP

Musk's bold 2025 prediction on Tesla faces flak

SAN FRANCISCO: Tesla CEO Elon Musk stunned investors and analysts with plans to grow vehicle sales by 30 percent next year, buoyed by a new, cheaper model and enthusiasm for self-driving software, but delivering on that promise would surprise much of Wall Street. Musk's 2025 forecast and improving profit margins sparked the biggest jump in Tesla shares since May 2013, when the company posted its first quarterly profit, and encouraged investors that, even as he works on a years-out robotaxi, he is focusing on the basics of his business. Musk faces flagging demand for Tesla's sparse and aging lineup, a global slowdown in EV sales growth, and rising competition in key markets such as China and the US, analysts and industry experts said.

His forecast of 2030 percent growth, after a negligible bump this year, is roughly double what Wall Street has been expecting. Deutsche Bank, after Musk's forecast, predicted 12 percent growth next year, even with a sub-\$30,000 new model and a re-

freshed Model analysts maintained their 13 percent growth forecast. "There's hardly an analyst anywhere in the world who's going to agree with 20 percent growth in the company next year" even with a lower cost model, said Sam Fiorani, vice president at research firm AutoForecast Solutions. "Tesla, aside from this quarter, has been seeing a slowdown in its demand for its products. And one quarter is not a trend." Tesla did not respond to a request for comment.

Global electric vehicle sales have fallen short of lofty expectations and growth has moderated in recent years. But competition is heating up. The International Energy Agency estimates global EV sales to grow about 23 percent to 17 million this year, down from a 35 percent rise last year and over 50 percent growth in 2021. China is the biggest market, accounting for nearly two-thirds of the sales this year, followed by Europe with over a fifth and the US with about 10 percent of sales.

While US tariffs are likely to keep Chinese models out of Tesla's main market, players including China's BYD dominate their domestic market and are targeting Europe. US carmakers fear being undercut by Chinese prices, and the focus of Tesla's next model is its relatively low price. "Being able to beat BYD at its own game, I just would say that to me is a non-trivial undertaking," said Pat Ryan, founder of car shopping platform CoPilot. "It's really strategic for them, but it's not going to be

easy." Affordability for customers will continue to be a challenge next year, Ryan said, with auto loans expected to be expensive despite interest rate cuts. That will be made worse if Donald Trump becomes US President and cuts tax incentives for EV buyers, which are as much as \$7,500 a vehicle, Ryan said.

Tesla's own lineup includes its best-selling Model Y, which is due for a refresh and the iconoclastic, trapezoidal Cybertruck pickup, which is seeing rising production. Musk has also increased promotions and marketing for Tesla's advanced driver assist software — called Full Self-Driving — expecting adoption of the technology to stimulate sales in 2025. Cybertruck production has hit volume levels and is profitable, in a good sign for next year, but analysts including Bernstein, which forecasts 16 percent growing next year, say 2025 depends on the design of the mystery affordable cars and how fast that production can ramp up. Following years of rapid growth, Tesla sales declined in the first two quarters of 2024. Incentives and financing deals have lured some back, but Musk has said Tesla will deliver only a few more vehicles this year than the record 1.8 million in 2023. Musk himself, a powerful personality, has turned off some potential buyers as controversies surrounding his increasingly right-wing politics and public statements weigh on Tesla's brand and demand. — Reuters

Business

stc revenues reach KD 261.8m for 9 months of 2024; net profit KD 24.7m

EBITDA increased by 1.2% to reach KD 63.7 million

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc), a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers and enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its financial results for the nine months period ended September 30, 2024, highlighting the most significant achievements, financial and operational performance in addition to the social initiatives made by the company during 2024.



stc CEO Muataz Abdullah Aldharab

In this regard, Eng Muataz Abdullah Aldharab, the company's CEO, stated: "Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc) continues its leadership aspirations by achieving solid financial and operational results during the first nine months of 2024, reinforcing its role as a key contributor to Kuwait's digital transformation. stc continuously ensures addressing market needs, particularly with the increasing demand for advanced ICT solutions, by delivering the latest comprehensive and integrated digital and technical services and solutions for both individual and enterprise sectors. Our efforts are focused on innovation in our product offerings to enhance customer experience and strengthen our market share within the competitive environment.

stc has also taken further steps during this period to diversify its growth avenues by enhancing its business model in line with the continuous changes in the telecom market. Our ongoing investments in advanced infrastructure and digital systems reaffirm our long-term vision to maintain our position as a trusted telecom operator and digital service provider."

Aldharab added: "During the third quarter of 2024, stc concluded several agreements and partnerships, most notably signing a contract with the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to supply smart electricity meters. Furthermore, stc is working diligently to launch advanced 5.5G services in compliance with the decision of Kuwait's Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA).

While these projects highlight our commitment to fostering innovation and delivering excellence in service, stc is also proud to have received the "ICT - Telecommunications Award - Kuwait" for the 5G Technology at the Middle East Technology Excellence Awards that reflects our ongoing efforts to en-



able digital transformation in Kuwait.

Driven by the company's strategic pillar of providing a supportive and inclusive environment for employees, stc has been ranked as the ideal employer of choice in Kuwait for Information Technology and Engineering Professionals, according to Universum custom research - 2024.

In line with global trends, stc has focused on driving technological advancement by offering fixed communications connectivity services and IT solutions, providing the best integrated telecommunications and network solutions, in addition to advanced technology services, fixed broadband, system integration, cloud services, 5G services, Internet of Things (IoT), and data analytics for both individual and enterprise customers, through implementing strategic business transformation plans. By leveraging its highly developed network along with the expertise of its subsidiaries specializing in fixed communications connectivity services and information technology, stc has distinguished itself by delivering high-quality, comprehensive, and innovative digital solutions to the business sector."

Commenting on the announcement of the financial results as of September 30th of 2024, Aldharab stated that: "stc has achieved good financial results during the nine months of 2024, with total revenue reaching KD 261.8 million by the end of September 2024 with a growth rate of 0.8 percent compared to KD 259.8 million during the same period last year. The main reason for this growth is attributed to the increase in the consumer sector revenues, which constitute 73 percent

- Revenue increased by 0.8% to reach KD 261.8 million
- Net profit increased by 1.4% to reach KD 24.7 million
- stc's customer base reached 2.3 million



stc headquarters

of total revenues. Meanwhile, Business sector revenues accounted for 27 percent of the company's total revenue during the first nine months of 2024. Overall, the growth in stc's revenue is a result of our efforts to improve the company's business model, developing digital services, and providing integrated technical solutions to companies in various fields."

Aldharab added: "These outcomes resulted in a growth of EBITDA by 1.2 percent to reach KD 63.7 million in the first nine months of 2024 compared to KD 63.0 million during the same period in 2023 supported by the increase in stc's revenue. As a result, the company's net profit increased by 1.4 percent to reach KD 24.7 million (EPS 25 Fils) in the first nine months of 2024 compared with KD 24.4 million (EPS 24 Fils) in the same period last year. The increase in net profit is mainly attributed to the cost optimization program and enhancing the company's operational efficiency at both stc and its subsidiaries. stc's customer base stands at approx. 2.3 million customers at the end of September 2024."

Commenting on the company's financial position as of September 30, 2024, Aldharab said, "stc's total assets reached KD 441.7 million by the end of September 2024, while the total equity of the company's shareholders amounted to KD 233.7 million. It is worth noting that stc has a strong solvency position amongst the telecom companies in the Middle East. Looking towards a sustainable future, stc is committed to launching impactful sustainability programs aimed at raising awareness and promoting long-term sustainable prac-

tics. Through which, we aim to create a positive impact and elevate the culture of social responsibility in Kuwait, aligning with both national and global sustainable development goals."

Aldharab emphasized: "stc remains dedicated to maintaining a balanced financial strategy to ensure the efficient allocation and optimization of company resources, in addition to aligning its financial decisions with long-term goals. This financial strategy supports the company's ability to effectively manage risks while improving cash flows, making informed management decisions, identifying growth opportunities, and enhancing shareholders' confidence. stc is also focused on developing its corporate and financial strategies to serve Kuwait's digital transformation, while maximizing synergies between our digital solutions and financial objectives, enhancing operational efficiency, and implementing robust regulatory practices. This will help us in strengthening our position as a leading company in innovation and operational excellence."

The financial results for nine months period 30 September 2024	
Revenues	KD 261.8 mn
EBITDA	KD 63.7 mn
Net Profit	KD 24.7 mn
Earnings per share	25 Kuwaiti fils
Assets	KD 441.7 mn
Shareholders' equity	KD 233.7 mn
Book value per share	234 fils per share
Customer base	2.3 mn customers

The financial results for nine months period 30 September 2024	
Revenues	KD 261.8mn
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Book value per share	234 fils per share
Customer base	2.3 mn customers

Crisis-hit VW mulls closing 3 German plants

FRANKFURT: Ailing auto giant Volkswagen plans to close at least three factories in Germany and slash tens of thousands of jobs as part of drastic cost-savings drive, workers' representatives said Monday, calling the proposed cuts "of historic dimensions".

The plan laid out by management, which affects the namesake VW brand, also includes a 10-percent pay cut for all staff, the company's powerful works council said in an update to staff.

Bosses also want to downsize remaining plants and move "entire departments" abroad or outsource them completely, the statement added as thousands of workers assembled for meetings at the company's plants nationwide. There was no immediate comment from Volkswagen bosses, with a spokesman citing the "confidential" nature of the talks with unions and the works council.

The financial daily Handelsblatt had earlier reported that VW was seeking around four billion euros (\$4.3 billion) in savings, including through plants closures, pay cuts and bonus reductions.

Factory closures in Germany would be a first in the company's 87-year history. "Volkswagen is shocking its workforce" with cost-cutting plans "of historic dimensions", the works council said in the statement after informing employees in all 10 German plants of the proposals.

"This is the plan of Germany's largest industrial group to start the sell-off in its home country," Daniela Cavallo, head of the works council, told staff at VW's Wolfsburg headquarters. "It is a firm intention to bleed dry the regions where the plants are located," she said. "And it is the clear intention to send tens of thousands of Volkswagen employees into mass unemployment."

The 10-brand Volkswagen group employs more than 680,000 people globally, around 120,000 of whom work at the core VW brand in Germany. Volkswagen stunned employees in September when it said it was in need of a deep restructuring and was considering significant job cuts as well as shuttering plants on its home turf.

VW argues the cuts are necessary as it struggles with high production costs, a stuttering switch to electric vehicles and rising competition in key mar-



Daniela Cavallo (left), chairwoman of the General and Group Works Council of the Volkswagen Group and Thorsten Groeger (right), negotiator of the IG Metall metalworkers union, hold an alarm clock as they pose for a photo on October 28, 2024 in Wolfsburg. — AFP

ket China. Rival carmakers in Germany's flagship industry are facing similar headwinds, contributing to a wider downturn in Europe's largest economy.

In Berlin, the government cautioned against a mass jobs cull at Volkswagen. Chancellor Olaf Scholz's position was that "possible wrong management decisions from the past must not be at the expense of the employees", spokesman Wolfgang Buechner said, adding that the focus should be on "preserving and securing jobs". The works council acknowledged Monday that VW had "serious problems". But staff representatives accuse VW's leaders of mismanaging the group and putting profits above building a sustainable future for the manufacturer, and have vowed strong resistance to the cost-cutting measures.

Cavallo on Monday said the board of management still had no "plan for the future".

"What on earth are such cuts for?" she said, charging that "there is still no plan of attack on the table, no concept for the future product pipeline and no idea of how we can regain our technological leadership." She warned that tensions could "soon escalate", hinting at potential strike action. Volkswagen recently cut its 2024 outlook and is due to publish third-quarter results on Wednesday, which are expected to disappoint.

Also on Wednesday, Volkswagen will begin a second round of wage talks with the IG Metall union. The union has asked for a seven-percent pay rise, which Volkswagen bosses have rejected. Volkswagen's troubles are the latest in a spate of bad news for the German economy, which is expected to shrink for a second consecutive year in 2024. — AFP

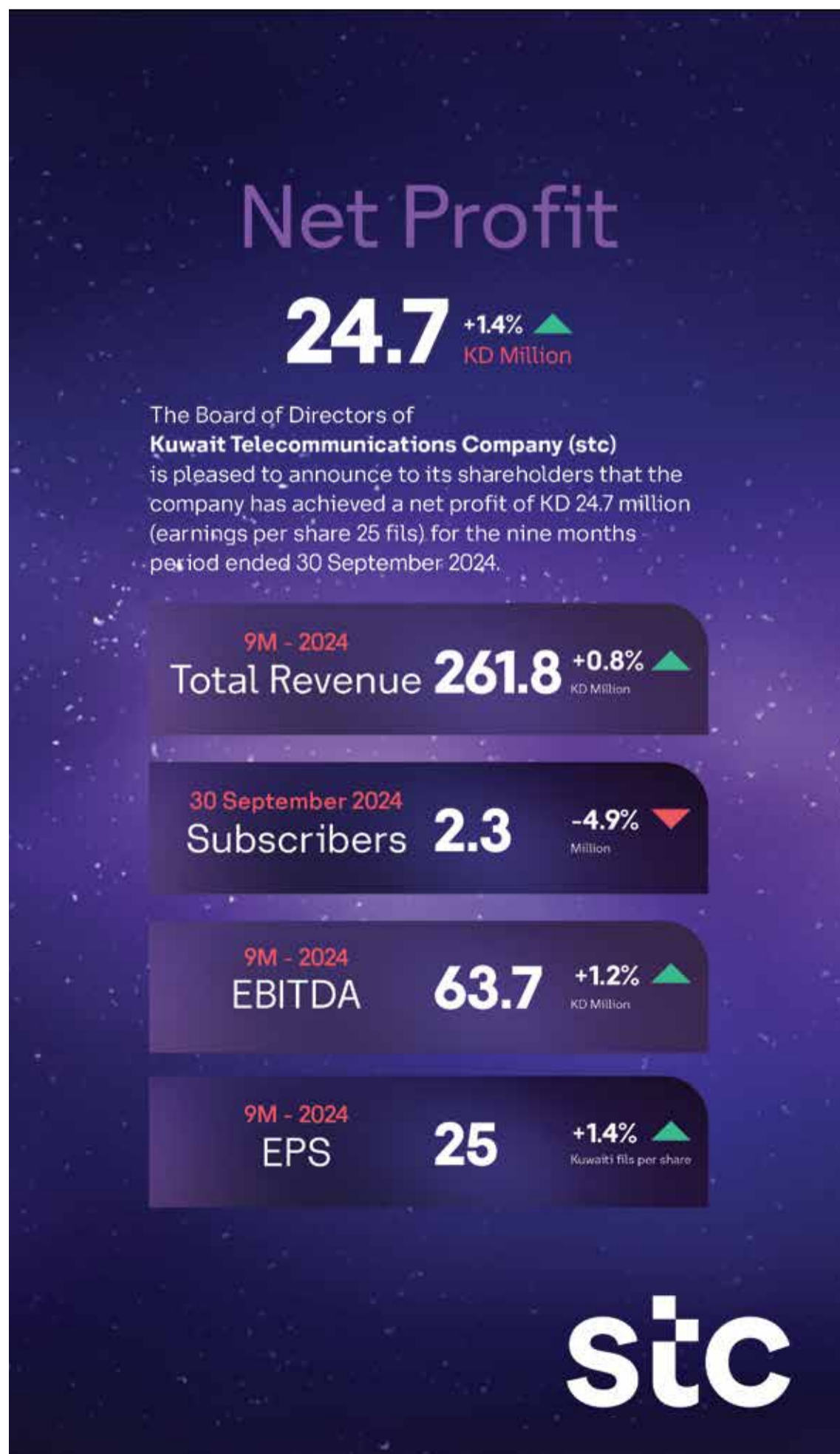
more restrained than expected," said Ipek Ozkardeskaaya, senior analyst at Swissquote Bank. Oil prices have swung wildly in recent weeks, with investors concerned that an attack on Iran's oil facilities would not only take Iranian crude off the market but spur a wider conflict involving other regional oil producers.

Brent North Sea crude, the international benchmark oil contract, fell around six percent on Monday with prices hovering around \$71 per barrel. "Zionist entity's strike, carefully avoiding energy sites, has softened fears of a full-scale conflict with Iran," said Stephen Innes, analyst at SPI Asset Management. "Even more telling is Iran's response, downplaying the attack's impact and signaling that its warnings may have deterred any more aggressive action from Zionist entity," he added. — AFP

Oil prices tumble, global stocks rise as Iran fears ease

LONDON: Oil prices tumbled and global stocks mostly rose Monday on relief that Zionist entity's strikes on Iran avoided the country's energy infrastructure. Zionist entity spared oil and nuclear facilities in its air strikes on Iranian military targets Saturday, easing investor concerns about the extent of Zionist entity's retaliation to Tehran's October 1 missile barrage.

"Investors breathed a sigh of relief as the attack was



Business

Burgan Bank attends 2024 WBG and IMF Annual Meetings in Washington

Bank reinforces its role in contributing to discussions on crucial global economic issues



(Right to left): Governor of CBK Basel Al-Haroon, Sheikh Ahmed Duaij, Isam Al-Sager, Adel Al-Majed, Abdulwahab Al-Rushood, Raed Boukhamseen, Tony Daher and Dr Yaqoub Al-Rifai.



(Right to left): Abdullah Al-Sumait, Abdullah Marafie, Tony Daher, Governor of CBK Basel Al-Haroon, Sheikh Ahmed Duaij, and Abdullah Al-Sharekh.

KUWAIT: In line with its proactive role in participating in vital discussions on the latest developments and economic challenges facing the world that require global coordination, Burgan Bank recently joined world-leading financial institutions and global decision-makers at the 2024 Annual Meetings of the Boards of Governors of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), held in Washington, DC, on October 21-26. Attending the event on behalf of Burgan Bank were Tony Daher, Group Chief Executive Officer; Abdullah Marafie, General Manager – Treasury and Financial Institutions; and Abdullah Al-Sharekh, Board Member.

In parallel to the annual meetings, the Burgan Bank representatives also attended the Kuwait Banks evening reception hosted by the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) under the patronage of the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) Basel Ahmad Al-Haroon at Conrad

Washington DC. The customary reception gathered the most influential Kuwaiti banking and financial institutions to discuss potential opportunities for collaboration, share insights about Kuwait-specific challenges and solutions, and review the country's progress in advancing its overall economic landscape. The KBA reception also served to cement Kuwait's robust economic system and resounding financial influence in the region and across the global market.

"It is an honor for us to, once again, be present among the world's most visionary and influential fi-



Abdullah Marafie

ancial key players whose strategies and initiatives impact millions of lives worldwide," said Marafie. "The global economic dynamics are in constant motion and in order to succeed on a domestic, regional, or international level, it is vital to continue being a vocal participant in the conversation. For decades, Burgan Bank has contributed effectively to the advancement of banking in Kuwait and the region by adopting sustainability, innovation, digital transformation, and human capital development as primary institutional pillars. Our participation in the 2024 Annual Meetings is an extension of our unwavering efforts to remain at the forefront of global banking advancement."

"In today's hyper-globalized financial market, it is of greater importance than ever before to work together toward achieving banking sustainability and inclusive financial enablement for more beneficiaries globally. With the constant introduction of new financial technologies as well as the rise

of new political, economic, and environmental threats, financial institutions must continue to innovate solutions that maintain financial stability and social inclusion," added Marafie.

This year's agenda included some recurring topics such as climate change and its impact on financial stability and social inclusion as well as more novel ones including the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital currencies on the global financial system and domestic markets. The talks and panel discussions were delivered and attended by central bankers, ministers of finance and development, private sector executives, representatives from civil society organizations, and academics from around the world. As a leading financial institution, Burgan Bank remains adamant about participating proactively in all domestic, regional, and global events that contribute to shaping and developing the world economic system and sharing valuable insights from its long and prosperous banking and financial journey.

US commercial real estate industry worries over taxes

NEW YORK: The US commercial real estate industry is pushing for tax relief and incentives championed by former Republican President Donald Trump to continue in the next administration, as the sector struggles with surging delinquencies, record vacancy rates, and elevated costs of financing. Commercial real estate is especially vulnerable to higher taxes because its high fixed costs make it less able to offset them, according to industry trade groups. They said they are particularly concerned about key tax breaks being retained or left unchallenged in the coming years.

"Do no harm" is the biggest thing with real estate organizations," said David McCarthy, the managing director and head of legislative affairs at the Commercial Real Estate Finance Council, a nonpartisan trade group. "Given that the nature of real estate is not super liquid, anything that raises costs now would come at the worst possible time." Key measures that the industry is concerned about preserving include pass-through deductions, like-kind exchanges and low capital gains taxes. Trump has endorsed making his tax cuts permanent although he has not been specific about these measures. Many of his 2017 tax cuts are set to expire next year.

So far, campaign contributions from the finance, insurance and real estate sectors favor Trump, with \$234.9 million in donations to the former president versus the \$117 million in giving to Vice President Kamala Harris, a Democrat, according to data from politics money tracker OpenSecrets. Industry trade group the National Association of Realtors has also donated more to Republicans, with \$5.2 million to the GOP versus \$3.9 million to Democrats. "Regardless of who is in office in January, we will be dealing with the tax cuts ... expiring at the end of 2025, and we want to keep those," said NAR director of commercial and policy oversight Erin Stackley.

The Harris and Trump campaigns did not respond to requests for comment. Among the real estate mega donors who have backed Trump are budget hotelier Robert Bigelow's Bigelow Aerospace which donated \$14.2 million to Trump's Super PAC, the OpenSecrets data shows.

Newmark Chairman Howard Lutnick's investment firm, Cantor Fitzgerald, has given at least \$6 million to the PAC. Lutnick co-chairs Trump's transition team. Mega donors tied to real estate who back Harris include Simon Property Group heiress Deborah Simon, who has donated at least \$1 million, and Worth the Real Estate Group head Jeff Worthe, who has also given at least \$1 million, OpenSecrets shows. Bigelow, Lutnick and Simon declined to comment. Worthe said he supported being able to focus on "what's good for business," adding that he supported Harris because he wanted stability in Washington.

Tax breaks

While some see signs of a market bottom, others argue that the commercial real estate (CRE) industry needs time to recover from high interest rates and work-from-home trends. Next year, it will face \$1 trillion wall of debt, a surge in office sector delinquencies on commercial mortgage-backed securities to 11 percent and record-high office vacancies in urban centers, according to ratings agency reports. Falling interest rates may offer scant relief.

"Over the last 18 months ... operating costs have ... risen dramatically at the same time the availability of capital and credit has diminished," said Jeff DeBoer, CEO of the Real Estate Roundtable, an invitation-only group whose members include Blackstone, Brookfield Property Partners and Starwood Capital Group. "All of that creates stress and challenges in the CRE marketplace." McCarthy said the industry specifically wants to see a reauthorization of key provisions included in Trump's 2017 tax cuts, including the 199A deduction, also known as the qualified business income deduction. — Reuters

Joe & The Juice opens pickup-only store in Bnaider

KUWAIT: Ali Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa Light Food, a subsidiary of Ali Abdulwahab Al-Mutawa Commercial Co (AAW), announced on Monday the opening of a new Joe & The Juice store in the Bnaider area. The opening coincides with the launch of its "Joe" app, enabling a quick and easy way for customers to place their orders before arrival.

The Joe & The Juice store located in Bnaider Resort aims to serve customers from the Bnaider and nearby chalets. It introduces a new concept where customers can place their orders through the "Joe" app or at the store's window and enjoy the convenience of pre-ordering and payment. Customers can also collect points with every purchase and receive a variety of tailored rewards and benefits as they progress in the "Joe" loyalty program.

The opening of this store reflects Joe & The Juice's commitment to enabling customers to enjoy healthy food and beverage on the go, aligning with the younger generation's modern and fast-paced lifestyle. Joe & The Juice's other Kuwait locations are in Argania Complex in Shuwaikh, Argan Square in

It's the economy, say voters in swing state Nevada

LAS VEGAS, US: Las Vegas may be America's playground but for those who live and work in Sin City, high costs make life difficult, and that single issue will be decisive when they vote for a new US president in November. But who will make things better for people who serve the drinks, wait the tables and deal the cards? Odds are dead even in Nevada, a key battleground where Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Kamala Harris are running neck-and-neck.

For Sally Uribe, a 40-year-old waitress who once made hundreds of dollars a night working in a casino, there is no doubt. "When Trump was president, I only worked 40 hours a week, if that," Uribe said after an early morning shift serving drinks to gamblers.

Now, the single mom-of-three says she has three different jobs just to make ends meet. She blames the Democrats, and believes Trump when he promises falling prices and rising wages.

"I have to pay more in interest. I have to pay more for gas. I also have to pay more for groceries. Everything just went skyrocket(ing)," she said. Hotel worker Spencer Lindsay is meanwhile campaigning for Harris, and says voters express similar concerns. A young would-be Trump voter complains straight away about the cost of living — a common refrain, Lindsay says, adding that most voters ask about the prices of "medication, food and gas."

Trump and Harris are spinning the wheel of fortune in Nevada in the final frenetic weeks



The new Joe & The Juice store in the Bnaider.

Salmiya, The Walk Mall in Ardiya, Al-Andalus Complex in Hawally, The Warehouse in South Sabahiya, Sahara Golf Resort next to Hunting and Equestrian Club, GUST campus in West Mishref, Al-Khiran Mall, Arraya Centre in Kuwait City, and Kuwait International Airport Terminal 1- Arrivals, Murouj in Sabah Al-Salem, and Vibes Complex in Abu Al-Hasaniya, and Bnaider Resort, which operates 24 hours a day from Thursday to Saturday.

ahead of the November 5 election, hoping to secure the state's six Electoral College votes. Fivethirtyeight.com has the two dead even in its average of recent polls. The state backed Democrat Joe Biden in 2020.

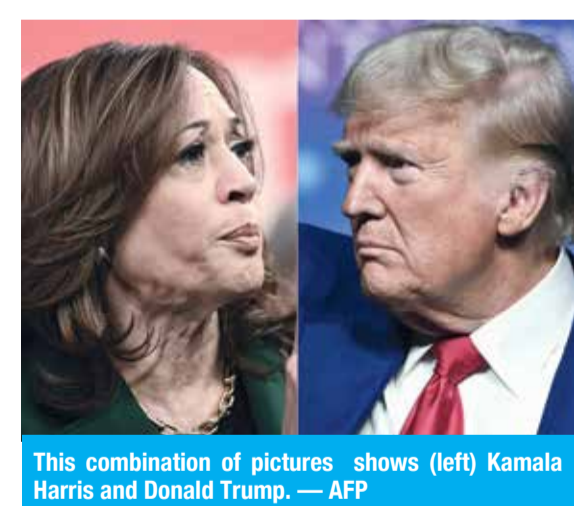
Four out of 10 people in the state say the economy is the most pressing issue, according to a poll by Emerson College. Two-thirds of Nevada's population of 3.1 million live in Clark County, which includes Las Vegas, where the leisure and hospitality sector accounts for a quarter of all jobs.

So it is no surprise that a Trump pledge to make tips tax-free, unveiled during a visit to Vegas in June and quickly matched by Harris, is of great interest. Uribe said it's the policy she likes most on the Republican's platform. As for Lindsay, a member of the 60,000-strong Culinary Union, he admits: "We do live on our tips." "So for any candidate or political party to really win over Nevada, yes, take taxes off tips," he says.

Las Vegas came to a complete standstill during the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving thousands out of work. The city has long since reopened, with its daily menu of huge conventions, mega-concerts, larger-than-life parties and razzmatazz-filled sports events. But the hangover from the shutdown is proving tough to shift.

And the job market is still shaky: at 5.6 percent, unemployment in Nevada is the worst in the country, way above the national rate of 4.1 percent. "I've applied in many places, but nothing," says Gallego Perez, who became unemployed four years ago.

Perez waits in the parking lot of a hardware store to pick up odd jobs — a life that generates around \$1,000 a month, barely half the state's median rent. He says there is no point in making an election decision based on the economy. "How would life change for us here?" he asks.



This combination of pictures shows (left) Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. — AFP

Sam Mitchell, an electrician who lost his job four years ago, is acutely aware of how politics matters. Mitchell, who panhandles at traffic lights, says he had worked his whole life when suddenly the ground shifted. "All it takes is one day, two days of being late, which is really easy to do on the bus" and you lose your job, he says. "Then it all snowballs."

Mitchell identified as a Republican in the past and saw Trump as a "good businessman."

"I was pretty conservative," he said. "I believed in the whole idea of 'the government should leave us alone and let us do our own thing.'" For many of the Nevada voters AFP spoke to, the economy is the most pressing issue.

But for Bianca Garziola, the result is less important than the money she can make from the election itself. "At the end of the day, everything's going to turn out the same," she said as she showed off political t-shirts at a store she manages.

"But in the shirt business, Trump is winning the election," she said. "Everything with Trump on it sells." — AFP

Business

Gender equality cornerstone of comprehensive and sustainable economic growth: Al-Bahar

Driving gender equality: Insights from a panel discussion at the FII conference in Riyadh

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) Group took a leading role in advocating for women's empowerment in the financial sector at the 8th edition of the Future Investment Initiative (FII), themed "Infinite Horizons: Investing Today, Shaping Tomorrow". Representing NBK Group, Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO, and a longstanding champion of gender equality and women empowerment, engaged in a thought-provoking panel discussion in Riyadh, focusing on the critical importance of gender diversity and inclusion in driving sustainable economic growth.

to-have; it's a business imperative." She highlighted initiatives like NBK RISE as exemplary models for fostering female leadership and creating pathways for women to excel in their careers.

This program is uniquely designed to drive community impact by advocating for increased representation of women in leadership roles, inviting external organizations to join in signing a pledge to elevate women into leadership positions within their institutions. "It's about building bridges, not walls," she remarked, underlining the importance of collaborative support in achieving gender equity. Furthermore,

managing risks; we're crafting legacies," she emphasized, aligning this insight with NBK's commitment to ESG principles.

The panel also highlighted the significant economic impact of empowering women in the workforce. Al-Bahar pointed to surveys indicating that equal employment rates in the MENA region could lead to a 30 percent increase in GDP. "Investing in women isn't just a social responsibility; it's an economic strategy. Imagine the growth if we unleashed our collective potential!" she exclaimed, advocating for gender equity as a driver of economic progress.

- The finance sector is beginning to understand that diversity isn't just a nice-to-have; it's a business imperative
- Women's leadership brings unique perspectives that can drive innovation
- Equal employment rates could lead to a 30% increase in GDP
- Unlocking our collective potential presents significant opportunities for economic growth
- While cultural norms can pose challenges, they also offer unique opportunities for tailored accessibility



NBK's Deputy Group CEO Shaikha Al-Bahar engages in a panel discussion during the conference.

Fostering dialogue on gender diversity

The panel served as a vital platform to address the multifaceted challenges and opportunities surrounding women's empowerment in finance. It aimed to spark discussions on the significance of gender diversity, the role of inclusive practices in shaping economic sustainability, and innovative approaches necessary to dismantle barriers that have historically hindered women's advancement in the industry. Additionally, the discussion sought to convey a powerful message to future female leaders, drawing from the insights and experiences of leading champions in the field.

Reflecting on the historical context of gender bias in finance, Al-Bahar remarked, "We've all faced skepticism in a male-dominated field, but it's time we turn those doubts into opportunities." She acknowledged the significant barriers women have faced, citing various research work that revealed the gender gap still exists "We've come a long way, but the past still casts a long shadow," she emphasized, highlighting the ongoing need to dismantle these biases.

Navigating a transforming landscape

Transitioning from historical challenges, Al-Bahar addressed the evolving environment within the finance sector. "While challenges like pay inequity and lack of mentorship remain, we're witnessing a transformation," she stated. "The finance sector is beginning to understand that diversity isn't just a nice-

NBK RISE promotes inclusivity by sponsoring participants from various backgrounds, enabling them to cultivate a diverse network of women equipped with the necessary skills for success in senior roles. Crafted by women who understand the distinct challenges faced at different career stages, the program ensures authenticity and relevance in addressing real issues. Additionally, creative communication strategies have been implemented to raise awareness about the gender gap, fostering a more supportive environment for women's leadership in the finance sector.

The impact of women's leadership

Al-Bahar underscored the pivotal role women play in enhancing firms' investment strategies. "When women lead, they bring unique perspectives that can drive innovation," she said, referencing studies indicating that mixed-gender investment teams outperform male-only teams by over 1.4 percent annually. "It's not just about equity; it's about performance," she asserted, showcasing the tangible benefits of gender diversity in investment contexts.

Delving deeper, Al-Bahar discussed the advantages of female leadership in risk management. "Women often adopt a more conservative, long-term approach, prioritizing stability and sustainable growth," she noted, citing independent research showing that portfolios managed by women had a 20 percent lower turnover rate. "We're not just

Women as trailblazers in high-growth sectors

Al-Bahar further underscored the vital contributions of women in high-growth sectors such as FinTech, healthcare, and clean energy. "Women aren't just participants in the market; we're trailblazers shaping the future," she asserted. At organizations like NBK, women have taken the lead on projects focused on cross-border investments, effectively tapping into new markets and diversifying portfolios, aligning with global trends that see women leaders spearheading innovative and sustainable investment strategies. NBK actively supports the inclusion of women in STEM fields, with approximately 27.8 percent of STEM-related roles held by women as of 2023. This dedication to gender diversity not only empowers women but also positions NBK as a regional leader in fostering an inclusive environment, paving the way for future female leaders in the industry.

The democratizing effect of fintech

The discussion also touched on the democratizing effect of fintech platforms like Robinhood and Coinbase in attracting women to finance. "These platforms have broken down barriers and made investing accessible for everyone, especially women," Al-Bahar stated. With 40 percent of new sign-ups on Robinhood being women, she remarked, "This is a seismic shift in how we engage with finance. We're turning the tide."

Examining gender diversity through a social lens

Finally, Al-Bahar addressed the influence of government policies on gender diversity in finance. "While cultural norms can pose challenges, they also offer unique opportunities for tailored accessibility," she explained. She pointed to Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and Kuwait's "New Kuwait 2035" vision as examples of initiatives aimed at increasing female workforce participation. "Change is a process, but every step we take brings us closer to equality," she stated. The panel concluded that the discussion at the Future Investment Initiative highlighted the critical importance of gender diversity, viewing it as more than just a moral obligation; it is essential for fostering sustainable economic growth. Al-Bahar aptly summarized, "In finance, as in life, diversity is the key to innovation and success. Together, we can reshape the future and create an inclusive landscape where everyone can thrive."

Driving positive change

As a frontrunner in the banking sector, NBK remains steadfast in its commitment to ESG principles, recognizing their integral role in fostering sustainable development. By prioritizing responsible banking practices and championing initiatives that empower communities and support environmental stewardship, NBK not only enhances its operational resilience but also contributes to the broader goal of creating a sustainable future. Al-Bahar's leadership exemplifies this dedication, reinforcing the bank's mission to drive positive change within the financial landscape and beyond.

Indonesia blocks iPhone 16 sales over lack of investment

JAKARTA: Indonesia has prohibited the marketing and sale of the iPhone 16 model over Apple's failure to meet local investment regulations, according to its industry ministry.

Southeast Asia's biggest economy has a young, tech-savvy population with more than 100 million people under the age of 30, but Apple still does not have an official store in the country, forcing those who want its products to buy from resale platforms. Indonesia's industry ministry spokesman said imported phones of the iPhone 16 model—which launched in September—could not be marketed domestically because Apple's local unit had not met a requirement that 40 percent of phones be made from local parts. "The iPhone 16 devices imported by registered importers cannot yet be marketed domestically," ministry spokesman Febri Hendri Antoni Arif said in a statement Friday.

"Apple Indonesia has not fulfilled its investment commitment to obtain... certification." To reach that percentage, Apple must invest in Indonesia and source Indonesian materials to be used for iPhone components, according to local media reports. Apple did not respond to an AFP request for comment. The ministry said the new Apple phones could be carried into Indonesia as long as they were not being traded commercially. It estimates just 9,000 units of the new model have entered the country, which has a population of around 280 million. Indonesia's smartphone market shipment share in the second quarter of the year was dominated by China's Xiaomi, Oppo and Vivo, as well as South Korea's Samsung, according to Counterpoint Research. —AFP



CUPERTINO: Apple CEO Tim Cook inspects the new iPhone 16 during an Apple special event in Cupertino, California. — AFP



Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves arrives for the IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings in Washington, DC. — AFP

UK gov't defends 'tough decisions' ahead of budget

LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Monday defended "tough decisions" over taxes and public spending set to be unveiled in his Labour party's maiden budget this week.

The center-left government, elected in July, has pledged to claw back what it says is a £22-billion (\$28.6 billion) black hole in public finances inherited from the previous Conservative government.

Starmer confirmed that the October 30 budget will raise taxes and call for more borrowing to "drive long-term growth". "I will defend our tough decision all day long," he said at a speech in the West Midlands, in central England.

"Nobody wants higher taxes, just like nobody wants public spending cuts, but we have to be realistic about where we are as a country," he added. Starmer said that the government faces "unprecedented challenges" amid crumbling public services and the poor state of public finances left by the previous government's 14 years in office. The speech also revealed a couple more ideas of what to expect from Wednesday's budget.

The prime minister said £240 million will be allocated to roll-out local services to help people get back to work. The UK is "the only G7 country that

has higher levels of economic inactivity now than before the pandemic", he explained. Starmer also announced that the cap on bus fares will be raised to £3 until the end of 2025, up from the £2 until the end of this year. "This is an economic plan that will change the long-term trajectory on British growth for the better," he insisted.

In the speech on Monday, he doubled down on Labour's promise to avoid a return to austerity and to avoid hiking taxes on "working people"—which would rule out increases to national insurance. However to meet this promise, he has confirmed that other taxes will need to rise.

Finance Minister Rachel Reeves is expected to raise employers'—rather than employee—contributions by at least one percentage point in the budget. Critics have warned the move could force both small and large businesses to limit hiring and pay rises. Labour politicians have also increasingly found themselves under pressure to define the term "working people" as the opposition Conservatives have accused the government of concealing their intention to increase taxes ahead of the election.

"I think what Labour did is mislead the public during the election campaign. They essentially lied to the British public," Chris Philp, a member of the Conservatives top team, told ITV News. "They said that their plans did not require any tax increases above the relatively limited number set out in their manifesto and it turns out that was completely untrue," he added. With increases in income tax ruled out, changes to capital gains tax, inheritance tax and fuel duty are among the levies Reeves could target. — AFP

Japan political crisis complicates BOJ, fiscal policy outlook

TOKYO: The loss of Japan's ruling bloc's parliamentary majority has heightened prospects that a new government will need to ramp up spending and of potential complications for further central bank interest rates hikes. Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its longtime partner Komeito failed to retain a majority in lower house elections on the weekend, casting doubts over how long the 67-year-old premier can keep his job.

"Regardless of who will be in power, the new government will be forced to take expansionary fiscal and monetary policies to avoid inflicting burdens on voters," said Saisuke Sakai, senior economist at Mizuho Research and Technologies. To stay firmly in power, the LDP, which has governed Japan for almost all its post-war history, will likely need to court smaller opposition parties, such as the Democratic Party for the People (DPP) and Japan Innovation Party (JIP), as coalition partners or at least for policy-based alliances. Both smaller parties have ruled out forming a coalition with the LDP but said they are open to some policy cooperation.

In their election campaigns, both the DPP and JIP pledged to lower consumption tax from 10 percent. DPP's proposals also included cutting power utility bills and tax for lower-income earners. While Ishiba has already proposed a supplementary budget that exceeds last year's 13 trillion yen (\$85 billion), he could face pressure for a package that exceeds 20 trillion yen, Sakai said.

The heightened political turmoil could make it harder for the Bank of Japan in its bid to wean the economy off decades of monetary stimulus, analysts say. The central bank ended negative interest rates in March and raised short-term rates to 0.25 percent in July on the view Japan was making progress towards durably achieving its 2 percent inflation target.

BOJ Governor Kazuo Ueda has vowed to continue lifting rates and economists don't see any major immediate change to the broader policy direction. However, a markedly new parliamentary makeup could deprive the BOJ of the political stability it needs to steer a smooth lift-off from near-zero interest rates, analysts say. "The bar is higher for the BOJ to raise interest rates again by the end of this year amid this political noise," said Masahiko Loo, senior fixed income strategist at State Street Global Advisors. —Reuters

French screen legend Depardieu asks for delay to sexual assault trial

Actor Gerard Depardieu on Monday asked for a delay to the start of his trial on sexual assault charges, saying his health prevented him from attending the proceedings, with numerous other complaints and a possible second court case already lying in wait. The actor is the highest-profile figure to face accusations in French cinema's version of the #MeToo movement, triggered in 2017 by allegations against US producer Harvey Weinstein. Depardieu, 75, was expected to appear at the criminal court hearing that was due to start in Paris at 1:30 pm (1230 GMT).



French actor Gerard Depardieu performs on stage during a "Depardieu chante Barbara" concert at the Opera Garnier in Monaco, on July 27, 2017.

But just hours before the start, his lawyer Jeremie Assous said the actor would not be able to attend. "Gerard Depardieu is extremely affected and unfortunately his doctors have forbid him from being present at the hearing, which is why he will ask for a postponement to a later date so that he can attend", Assous told Franceinfo. Depardieu faces charges of abuse that allegedly occurred during a 2021 film shoot. The names of

the two women accusing him have not been made public.

One of the plaintiffs, a set dresser now aged 55, reported in February that she had suffered sexual assault, sexual harassment and sexist insults while filming director Jean Becker's "Les Volets Verts" ("The Green Shutters") in a private house in Paris. "I expect the justice system to be the same for everybody and for monsieur Depardieu not to receive special treatment just because he's an artist," the plaintiff's lawyer Carine Durrieu-Diebolt told AFP.

Assous said that Depardieu's defense would offer "witnesses and evidence that will show he has simply been targeted by false accusations". He accused the plaintiff of attempting to "make money" by claiming 30,000 euros (\$32,500) in compensation. The plaintiff told French investigative website Mediapart that Depardieu had started loudly calling for a cooling fan during the shoot because he "couldn't even get it up" in the heat.

"My client expects that the justice system will find Gerard Depardieu to be a serial sexual assaulter," Durrieu-Diebolt said. The second plaintiff in Monday's case, an assistant director on the same film, also alleges sexual violence.

'Hiring an assaulter'

Anouk Grinberg, an actor who appeared in "The Green Shutters", told AFP that Depardieu had used "salacious words... from morning till night". "When producers hired Depardieu to work on a film, they knew they were hiring an assaulter," she added. Grinberg said that in her experience, Depardieu had "always used sexual, smutty language"—but that his behavior had become "much, much worse, with permission from his profession, that pays him for it and covers up



French actress Anouk Grinberg speaks with the media outside the criminal court where French actor Gerard Depardieu will be tried on sexual assault charges, in Paris on October 28, 2024.--AFP photos

his offences".

Around 20 women have now accused Depardieu of various sexual offences. Actor Charlotte Arnould was the first to file a criminal complaint. A judge has yet to rule on a request from prosecutors in August for Depardieu to stand trial for raping and sexually assaulting her. An investigation is also underway in Paris after a former production assistant accused Depardieu of a 2014 sexual assault.

And actor Helene Darras filed a sexual assault complaint that fell foul of the statute of limitations. Spanish writer and journalist Ruth Baza has accused Depardieu of raping her in 1995. "Never, but never, have I abused a woman," Depardieu wrote in an open letter pub-

lished in conservative daily Le Figaro in October last year.

Weeks later, President Emmanuel Macron shocked feminists by complaining of a "manhunt" targeting Depardieu, who he called a "towering actor" who "makes France proud". Macron's remarks followed the broadcast by an investigative TV show of a recording of Depardieu making repeated misogynistic and insulting remarks about women. Depardieu is the biggest star to face accusations in French cinema's #MeToo movement. Directors Jacques Doillon and Benoit Jacquot are among the other major figures accused of sexual violence. —AFP

Gerard Depardieu, a fallen icon of French cinema facing trial

Gerard Depardieu was known for more than 50 years as a titan of French cinema, but details of his crude behavior and allegations of sexual violence have brought his star low in recent years. The 75-year-old goes on trial Monday on charges of sexually assaulting two women during a 2021 film shoot. Depardieu's career spans more than 200 films, making him one of the best-known French faces on the global silver screen. It has included leading roles in adapted classics of French literature, such as Cyrano de Bergerac and Jean Valjean of "Les Miserables".

Audiences and fellow creatives long appreciated his brash, often deliberately offensive character—only for those qualities to begin counting against him in recent years. A 2023 broadcast of images shot five years earlier in North Korea showed Depardieu making misogynistic and sexual remarks about an underage girl. But while then-Culture Minister Rima Abdul-Malak called the recording a "shame for France", President Emmanuel Macron took Depardieu's defence, saying he remained a "towering actor" who "makes France proud". Macron's intervention came as Depardieu faced a slew of rape and sexual assault allegations spanning decades.

Crude scenes, big noses

Gerard Depardieu was born December 27, 1948 in Chateauroux, central France. Although his teenage years were marked by delinquency, he went on to discover the theatre in Paris and appeared in his first film in 1965. One of Depardieu's breakthrough roles came as a violent small-time crook in 1974's "Les Valseuses" ("Going Places") directed by Bertrand Blier—a film that drew opprobrium for its on-screen depictions of sexual acts and vulgarity. The criticisms did nothing to harm Depardieu's career, as he went on to be crowned with France's version of an Oscar, the 1981 Cesar award for "Le dernier metro" ("The last metro") directed by Francois Truffaut.

US magazine Newsweek called Depardieu a "hero with a thousand faces" in 1987 as he was on a run of films that peaked with 1990's "Cyrano de Bergerac", directed by Jean-Paul Rappeneau. Depardieu bagged a second Cesar and the Cannes festival's acting award for his appearance as the titular big-nosed, versifying nobleman in a classic French tale of unrequited love. He launched an adventure into Hollywood in the early 90s with efforts like "Green Card" and "1492". But even then, past utterances in which he appeared to confess to committing "rapes" as a young man surfaced in Time magazine.

Depardieu claimed that his words had been mistranslated, but the affair undermined his Californian ambitions. The late 90s and early 2000s brought commercial success with live-action adaptations of the Asterix comic books and dramas like police thriller "36, Quai des Orfevres", but the actor did not reach his previous artistic heights. Now a vineyard owner known for his love of rich food, Depardieu made headlines for outbursts and offensive or even violent behavior, especially towards women.

Allegations catch up

Long written off as being down to his unique character, some allegations eventually made it into the justice system. Depardieu was charged in 2020 with raping actor Charlotte Arnould, then in her 20s, multiple times, which he has denied. A second actor, Helene Darras, filed a criminal complaint for sexual assault, but the case was dropped as it had passed the statute of limitations. Where Depardieu's antics—such as urinating on board a plane in 2011 -- had once drawn laughs, he now became a liability.

Studios removed him from publicity campaigns for his films before putting his career on hold in late 2023. Pleading before the court of public opinion, he swore that he was "neither a rapist nor a predator" in an open letter. "I've been provocative, excessive, sometimes crude throughout my life... if when I thought I was living intensely in the present moment, I have hurt or shocked anyone at all, I never meant to do harm and I apologize," Depardieu wrote. Beyond his legal woes, Depardieu has appeared to shun France in favor of authoritarian governments from North Korea to Cuba and Algeria in recent years. He announced in 2012 that he would give up his French nationality, living as a tax exile in Belgium and acquiring Russian citizenship. Until Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Depardieu was full of praise for Russian President Vladimir Putin. —AFP

Timothee Chalamet crashes his own look-alike contest

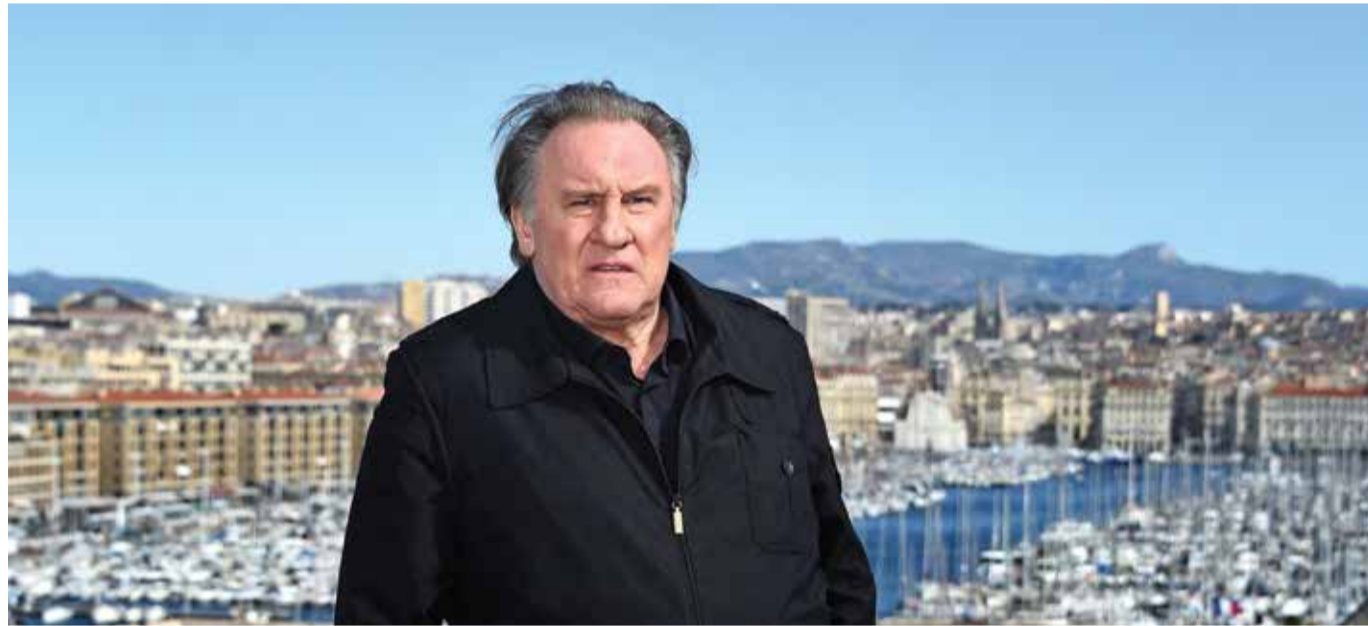
Will the real Timothee Chalamet please stand up? Even the Hollywood star's most convincing doppelgangers, gathered in New York for a look-alike contest, did a double-take when the man himself swung by their festivities Sunday. Around 20 young men, complete with chiseled jawlines and distinctive waves of walnut-colored hair, had gathered along with a massive crowd of spectators in New York's Washington Square Park, Variety reported. The "Call Me By Your Name" star, hidden behind a mask and sporting a baseball hat, then crept up on the contest, posing for photographs with the competitors.

Images on social media captured the moment that Chalamet made his presence known, delighting the surrounding cell phone-holding fans. "How do we know that that's really him? It could just be a very good look-alike," one user wrote in a comment.

YouTube creator AnthonyPo, who claimed to be behind the event and bears more than a passing resemblance to the star of "Dune" and "Wonka" himself, wrote on X "thanks my number 1 fan (Timothee) for showing up." At least one imitator was led away by police who apparently responded to the event because of the large crowd, which was forced to relocate. The winner was presented with an oversize gold trophy and a cheque for \$50, social media showed. —AFP



US-French actor Timothee Chalamet waves to fans during a red carpet event for the film "Dune: Part Two" in Seoul on February 22, 2024.--AFP



French actor Gerard Depardieu poses during a photocall for the second season of the French TV show "Marseille" broadcasted and co-produced by US streaming video giant Netflix, on February 18, 2018 in Marseille, southern France. --AFP

Six years of allegations against Gerard Depardieu

Gerard Depardieu will stand trial from Monday in Paris on charges of sexual assault against two women, representing a small fraction of allegations against the legendary French actor in recent years.

Rape allegations

Actor Charlotte Arnould, now 28, filed a criminal complaint in southern France against Depardieu, now aged 75, in August 2018. She said he had twice raped her that month at his Paris home, which Depardieu denies. The complaint was thrown out for lack of evidence by investigators in 2019 -- but Arnould managed to force them to reopen it in 2019. At the time, her identity as Depardieu's accuser remained under wraps.

First charges

Depardieu was charged with rape and sexual assault in the Arnould case on December 16, 2020, later failing to have the case dismissed. In 2021, Arnould went public as Depardieu's accuser, saying on Twitter that she was horrified to see him continue his career while she "spent her time surviving".

Flood of allegations

Thirteen women made allegations of sexual violence by Depardieu to French investigative website Mediapart in April 2023. Prosecutors said at the time that they had received "no new criminal complaints to date". That did not stop largely female demonstrators holding up a Depardieu concert in northern city Lille in April and in Lyon in May. The actor was also removed from the promotional campaign for his latest film, "Umami". In July 2023, two more women film workers made allega-

tions of sexual assault to broadcaster France Inter.

Career on hold

Actor Helene Darras filed a criminal complaint against Depardieu in September 2023, saying he assaulted her while they were filming "Disco" in 2007. But her complaint was dismissed as it was past the statute of limitations. "Never, but never, have I abused a woman," Depardieu himself wrote in an open letter to conservative daily Le Figaro the following month, insisting he was "neither a rapist nor a predator". Actor Anouk Grinberg retorted in Elle magazine that she had "seen him do it". "Everyone who's worked with Depardieu knows that he assaults women," Grinberg added. The actor placed his career on hold.

'Shame for France'

In December 2023, an investigative TV show broadcast a recording from five years earlier of Depardieu during a visit to North Korea where he makes repeated misogynistic and sexual remarks about an underage girl. Then-Culture Minister Rima Abdul-Malak called the recording a "shame for France" and said she would look into withdrawing Depardieu's Legion d'Honneur—France's highest decoration. The actor was struck off the National Order of Quebec, lost his status as an honorary citizen of a Belgian municipality, and even saw his waxwork removed from the Musee Grevin—Paris' equivalent of Madame Tussaud's. Also in December, Spanish journalist and writer Ruth Baza filed a criminal complaint in her home country for an alleged rape by Depardieu when she was interviewing him in Paris in 1995.

Battle in the film world

Depardieu's family, including his daughter Julie Depardieu, denounced a "plot" against the actor in December 2023. And President Emmanuel Macron took Depardieu's defence, saying he remained a "towering actor" who "makes France proud" and was being subjected to a "manhunt". Actor Carole Bouquet, a former partner of Depardieu's, said he was "incapable of harming a woman"—joined by around 60 celebrities who protested his "lynching" in an op-ed on Le Figaro's website. But they were met within 48 hours by a counter-op-ed signed by around 8,000 artists.

The 'Green Shutters' shoot

In January 2024, a former production assistant filed a criminal complaint for an alleged sexual assault while filming the 2014 short "Le Magicien et les siamois" ("The Magician and the Siamese"). Her complaint was dropped in April as it was past the statute of limitations. In February, a set dresser made similar allegations about the 2021 shoot for "Les volets verts" ("The Green Shutters"). She was followed by a second woman, who Mediapart reported was an assistant director on the same shoot.

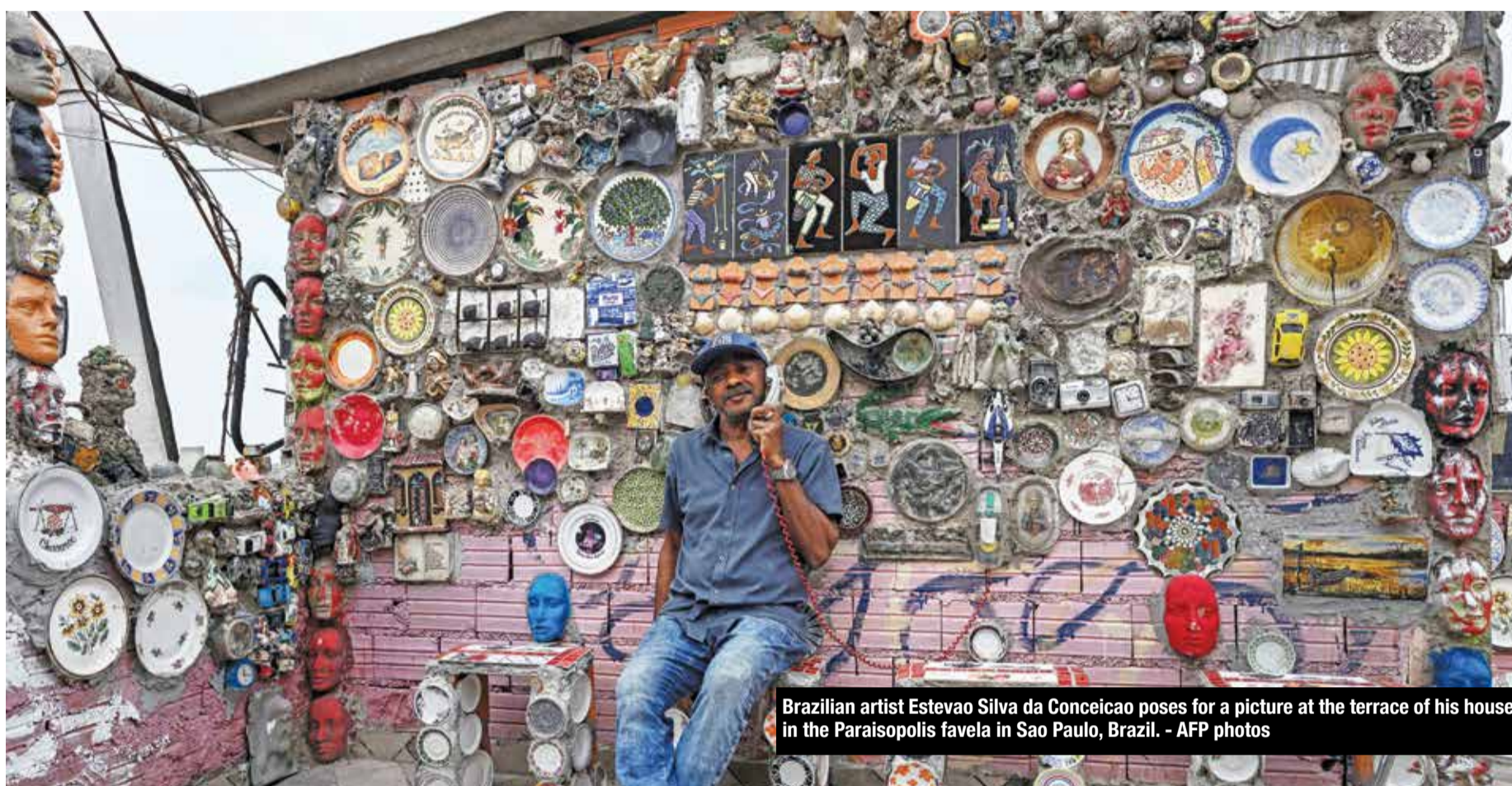
Second trial coming?

Depardieu's trial relating to both allegations around "Les Volets Verts" begins Monday. He could soon face a second, with Paris prosecutors requesting on August 14 that he be tried in criminal court for rape and sexual assault against Charlotte Arnould. —AFP

Lifestyle



Henrique Souza da Conceicao, son of Brazilian artist Estevao Silva da Conceicao, is pictured at the terrace of their house.



Brazilian artist Estevao Silva da Conceicao poses for a picture at the terrace of his house in the Paraisopolis favela in Sao Paulo, Brazil. - AFP photos

A castle in Sao Paulo favela, the unfinished work of the 'Brazilian Gaudi'



Brazilian artist Estevao Silva da Conceicao poses for a picture next to art objects at his house.



Brazilian artist Estevao Silva da Conceicao poses in front of his house.



Multicolored earthenware and plates inlaid in stone: the "little castle" built in a favela in Sao Paulo over four decades earned Estevao Silva da Conceicao the nickname "Brazilian Gaudi". Like the Sagrada Familia, Barcelona's emblematic basilica designed by the famous Catalan architect and under construction for more than 140 years, this colorful four-storey building built on the hillside is an unfinished work. "I've been doing this for 39 years, it's my life's work. I don't know if I'll finish it before I die, only God knows," the former mason and gardener confided to AFP 67 years old.

Nicknamed "Castelinho" (small castle) by the inhabitants of the Paraisopolis favela, this building with its tortuous curves has become a tourist attraction for its striking resemblance to another famous work by Antoni Gaudi (1852-1926), Park Güell. And yet, the Brazilian claims to have never heard of the Catalan genius before starting to build his castle on a plot of barely 60 m2 in this poor neighborhood where more than 100,000 inhabitants live. "I made a work that resembles that of Gaudi without copying him. It just came out of my mind," he assures. "I never studied, but I managed to create a work of art," says this black man with a thick salt-and-pepper mustache.

Trip to Barcelona
The resemblance of "Castelinho" to Gaudi's style was discovered by a student at the beginning of this century. The story of Estevao Silva da Conceicao was told in the documentary "Gaudi in the Favela", by filmmaker Sergio Oksman, released in 2002. During filming, the previous year, the former mason went to Barcelona to know the works of the architect to whom he is compared. The notoriety gained from the film has transformed the place into a tourist site and the visit currently costs around five euros.



"There are so many things to see, every little corner is full of details to observe," describes Celly Monteiro Mendes, 24, a tourist from Manaus, in the Brazilian Amazon. Once through the entrance decorated with multicolored painted plates and overhung by shrubs, visitors access a cave-like room, the starting point of a maze of galleries with low ceilings, with narrow staircases leading from one floor to another. The cement walls covered with small brown pebbles are decorated with hundreds of objects of all kinds: plastic toys, cups, old telephones, masks, coins, clock gears and other hardware. Some of these objects were given to him by visitors.

Enchanted garden
Born in the state of Bahia (north-east), the "Brazilian Gaudi" arrived in 1977 in Sao Paulo, where he worked notably as a mason and gardener. In 1985, he bought land to build his house in Paraisopolis and let his imagination run wild. "I wanted to have a garden, to do something different. I didn't think

it would turn into a world-famous work of art resembling what Gaudi did, otherwise I would have taken it even higher", he explains.

"I did it for myself, and it became a tourist spot," summarizes Estevao Silva da Conceicao. He started by planting a rose garden and built a metal structure around it, but the plants grew too quickly. Tired of raking leaves, the gardener preferred to remove all the vegetation and covered the metal structure with cement, laying the foundations of his castle.

The walls were covered with stones "to cool" the place and he added a broken plate that he had on hand. The first of hundreds of objects that now make up his work. The plants have reappeared on the last of the four floors, in the open air, where we can hear the birds singing while observing Brazilian inequalities from above: the shacks of the favela in the foreground and the imposing buildings of the chic Morumbi district in the far. — AFP



Art objects made by Brazilian artist Estevao Silva da Conceicao are pictured at his house.



Paris show spotlights Afghan women who 'lost hope'

Posing in a pink hijab in front of a window, 14-year-old Muska will soon be married "in exchange for a well and some solar panels", explains the caption on her photograph. There are dozens of images of Afghan women and girls like Muska at the Paris exhibition "No Woman's Land", which offers a glimpse into their private lives, despair and rare moments of joy. Iranian-Canadian photographer Kiana Hayeri, 36, lived in Kabul for seven years and has regularly contributed to outlets including the New York Times and National Geographic.

Many tough stories are told in the exhibition but Hayeri said her feelings had been worsened by the changes in Afghanistan during the six months she worked on the project. "Some of the women that, even two and a half years into Taliban's returning to power, were still trying to do things and making it happen... well they also lost hope," she added.

The photographer worked with French researcher Melissa Cornet, 32, to interview over 100 women and girls in seven Afghan provinces. "One of the questions we asked the women was: "Do you have any hope that your situation can improve under the Taliban?," said Cornet, a lawyer who lived in Kabul for over two years until the hardliners reclaimed Kabul. "And almost systematically the answer was no."

'Locked up'
The Taliban has established what the UN has called "gender apartheid" since taking power in August 2021. Women have been barred from education beyond primary school, visiting parks, gyms and beauty salons, or even going outside at almost any time without a chaperone. One recent measure - following a hyper-strict interpretation of Islamic law like the others - even forbids women from speaking loudly in public. For now, "there's barely any light at the end of the tunnel," Hayeri said. Cornet said the haphazard layout of the exhibition, running until November 18 at the Refectoire des Cordeliers in Paris, recalls "how confined (Afghan women) now are to these interior spaces," Cornet said.

"All of the women we met, except for a couple of encounters, it happened in their homes or at our home for security reasons, because there's just no third places where we could safely meet," she added. Some photos show women or teenagers smiling, dancing or celebrating a birthday indoors. Such moments claim "their right to joy, to freedom and to the celebration of their femininity," one caption reads.

'Change nothing'
Other pictures focus on silent acts of resistance, such as study in underground schools. Most photos simply show how tragic everyday life can be for Afghan women. In one, two cupped hands hold a ring belonging to Halima, who is "holding the wedding band of her husband, who died of a heart attack the day of his release from jail for activism," the caption explains. The portrait of Muska shows a girl recently expelled with her family from Pakistan, where she was born. "Because her family is struggling financially, they accepted the marriage offer from the son of the landlord," Cornet said.

Muska was effectively sold for "a well and solar panels... the equivalent of probably \$300-\$400," she added. Hayeri and Cornet's knowledge of Afghanistan and their contacts allowed them to secure the poignant photos. Hayeri said she felt "heartbroken and helpless". "How's it going to change anything?" she asked. "We know exactly how the situation is... it's just that there's no political will right now to do more to help them in Afghanistan, but also to help them leave Afghanistan and be welcome in Europe or in the US," Cornet added.

The NATO coalition that fought a Taliban insurgency for 20 years before withdrawing in 2021 highlighted women's rights as one of its major causes. Critics say that has now been forgotten. "We just don't talk enough about the responsibility we have" to Afghan women, Cornet said. — AFP

Sports

Kansas City Chiefs stay unbeaten as Commanders win on miracle catch

Jameis Winston helps Browns stun Ravens

WASHINGTON: Washington rookie Jayden Daniels completed a stunning 52-yard touchdown pass on Sunday's final play to give the Commanders a shocking 18-15 victory over Chicago while the NFL champion Kansas City Chiefs stayed unbeaten.

Daniels, questionable until game time with a rib injury, scrambled to evade defenders then hurled the ball half the field to the goal line. Bears defender Tyrique Stevenson tipped it from among a pack of players and into the end zone, where Noah Brown caught it for an astonishing game-winning touchdown.

"I was juiced up for sure. It was exciting," Daniels said. "That's like a once-in-a-lifetime experience. That was my first time. Just threw the ball up. I didn't see anything. I just heard people screaming and our sideline rushing the field. That's how I knew."

Daniels, who completed 21-of-38 passes for 326 yards, called it a miraculous play. "Nothing but God, man," Daniels said. "Without Him, I don't think I would even be playing this week." At Las Vegas, Patrick Mahomes threw for 262 yards and two touchdowns to spark the unbeaten Chiefs over the host Raiders 27-20.

The Chiefs became the seventh reigning Super Bowl champion to start the next campaign 7-0, the first since New England in 2019. Only Denver in 1998 managed to win another title after those starts. "We played a pretty good game," Mahomes said. "We're building and going in the right direction." But the NFL's play of the season was by Daniels, who was feeling rib pain near the end of the game.

"It's tough when you've got to throw the ball, have to rotate with it," Daniels said. "I started the game. I wanted to finish it. Nothing was going to take me out of the game." The Commanders grabbed a 12-0 lead but Chicago seized the lead on a touchdown with 23 seconds remaining, only to fall on an incredible play.

"That's a hard way to lose," Bears coach Matt Eberflus said. "I've got to look at it, detail it out, and make sure we're better next time." The Commanders stayed atop the NFC East at 6-2. Chicago fell to 4-3. Brown was overjoyed after catching the NFL's first go-ahead touchdown pass in the last 10 seconds of a game since 2020.

"We've got a team full of fighters," Brown said. "We don't give up until the final whistle. Just try and get down there as fast as you can, get good position, hope Jayden can get the ball down there. The things he can do are special, even that last play, keeping his composure, fighting like hell just to get the ball off and threw a hell of a ball."

Browns upset Ravens

Cleveland's Jameis Winston threw his third touchdown pass, a 38-yarder to Cedric Tillman, with 59 seconds remaining as the 2-6 Browns upset Baltimore 29-24. Winston, who moved into a starting role after Deshaun Watson suffered a torn Achilles tendon last week, completed 27 of 41 passes for 334 yards. The Ravens fell to 5-3.

Browns linebacker Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah was carted off the field in the third quarter with a neck injury. He was hospitalized for evaluation but had movement in all extremities and gave a "thumbs up" sign as he was taken off.

Miami quarterback Tua Tagovailoa made a comeback after missing four games with a concussion but the host Dolphins lost 28-27 to Arizona on Chad Ryland's 34-yard field goal as time expired. "Tough loss," Tagovailoa said. "I felt like myself... It was normal coming out there." AFC East leader Buffalo moved to 6-2 with a 31-10 romp at Seattle with Josh Allen throwing for 283 yards and two touchdowns.

Atlanta's Kirk Cousins completed 23-of-29 passes



LAS VEGAS: Patrick Mahomes #15 of the Kansas City Chiefs scrambles with the football under pressure from Maxx Crosby #98 of the Las Vegas Raiders during the second half of the NFL game at Allegiant Stadium on October 27, 2024 in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

for 276 yards and four touchdowns to power the Falcons' 31-26 triumph at Tampa Bay. Houston's C.J. Stroud threw for 285 yards and a touchdown while Joe Mixon ran for 102 yards and a touchdown as the Texans (6-2) beat Indianapolis 23-20.

Jared Goff threw for three touchdowns to power the Detroit Lions (6-1) over visiting Tennessee 52-14.

The Green Bay Packers (6-2) beat host Jacksonville 30-27 on a 24-yard Brandon McManus field goal as time expired.

Philadelphia's Jalen Hurts ran for three touchdowns and completed 16-of-20 passes for 236 yards and a touchdown to spark the Eagles to a 37-17 victory at Cincinnati. — AFP



Gary Kirsten

Pakistan coach Kirsten resigns

LAHORE: Pakistan's white-ball head coach Gary Kirsten resigned on Monday after just six months in the job and a week before a tour of Australia begins. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said the former South Africa Test player would be replaced by Test coach Jason Gillespie for the tour, in a statement offering no reason for Kirsten's departure.

Media reports said both coaches had been unhappy after a recent PCB decision to shut them out of the squad selection process. Kirsten has made no public statement about his resignation. In the past two years, Pakistan cricket has cycled through several coaches, three board heads, four captains and numerous formats of its domestic competition.

Analysts say the instability has sabotaged chances of success on the field. Last week's 2-1 Test triumph over England was Pakistan's first home series win since February 2021. On Sunday, Pakistan appointed Mohammad Rizwan as skipper for the white-ball tour of Australia and Zimbabwe, replacing Babar Azam who stepped down this month.

Pakistan open the Australia tour with three one-day internationals in Melbourne (November 4), Adelaide (November 8) and Perth (November 10) followed by three Twenty20s. Kirsten played 101 Tests and 185 one-day internationals for South Africa between 1993 and 2004 before coaching India to win the 50-over World Cup in 2011. — AFP

France hijab ban in sports discriminatory

GENEVA: United Nations rights experts on Monday slammed decisions in France barring women and girls who wear the Muslim headscarf from sports competitions as "discriminatory", demanding they be reversed. France invoked its strict rules on secularism to ban its athletes from wearing religious symbols, including the hijab, during the Paris 2024 Olympics. And France's football and basketball federations have also opted to exclude players wearing the headscarf from competitions, including at the amateur level.

These decisions "are disproportionate and discriminatory, and infringe on their rights (of French athletes) to freely manifest their identity, their religion or belief in private and in public, and to take part in cultural life," said a statement signed by eight independent UN experts.

"Muslim women and girls who wear the hijab must have equal rights to participate in cultural and sporting life, and to take part in all aspects of French society of which they are a part," they said.

The statement was signed by the UN special rapporteurs on cultural rights, on minority issues, and on freedom of religion and belief, and members of the UN working group on discrimination against women and girls. They are independent experts appointed by the UN Human Rights Council, but who do not speak on behalf of the United Nations. — AFP

Golden Boot contenders all score

PARIS: Bryan Mbeumo, Nicolas Jackson and Mohamed Salah — the leading African challengers for the Premier League Golden Boot award — all scored at the weekend. Cameroon international Mbeumo netted twice for Brentford in a 4-3 win over Ipswich, Senegalese Jackson helped Chelsea beat Newcastle 2-1 and Egyptian Salah equalised for Liverpool in a 2-2 draw at Arsenal.

Erling Haaland of Manchester City tops the Golden Boot charts with 11 goals after nine rounds, second-placed Mbeumo has eight, and Jackson and Salah six each. Here, AFP Sport highlights some of the African headline-makers in the major European leagues.

Tajjul vows Bangladesh to bounce back in second S Africa Test

CHITTAGONG: Bangladesh spinner Tajjul Islam said Monday he was determined to level the series against South Africa in the second and final Test, after a crushing seven-wicket defeat in the opener. South Africa have won all 15 Test encounters between the two sides and are eyeing a series clean sweep to propel them up the World Test Championship (WTC) table.

"We only have one goal — to win this match," Tajjul said, on the eve of the Test in Chattogram, on a traditionally batting-friendly wicket. "Whether it's batting, bowling, or fielding, we have to play as a team", added the 32-year-old spinner, who took eight wickets in the first Test at Mirpur.

Bangladesh have played 24 Tests in Chattogram but won just two with seven draws, their highest number at any venue. South Africa are fifth in the WTC standings, with Bangladesh languishing at eighth.

"If we can form two-three partnerships, one or two batters can get centuries, or one or two players score fifties, we can have a bigger total", he said. Tajjul brushed off reports he would replace skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto after the Test — but said he would be up for the task if offered.

"I've been playing for 10 years," he said. "I'm ready". Bangladesh made two changes to their squad, bringing in right-arm pacer Khaled Ahmed to replace Taskin Ahmed and uncapped wicket-keeper Mahidul Islam Ankon for Jaker Ali, who made his debut in the first Test.

'Win consecutively'

South Africa's stand-in captain Aiden

Australia rest Test stars for Pakistan T20

SYDNEY: Australia on Monday left out their Test stars for the home Twenty20 series against Pakistan, with a new captain set to be named. The three-match T20 series next month will conclude only four days before

Australia embark on the first of a five home Tests against India. Selectors rested fast bowlers Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood, along with other Test players Mitchell Marsh and Travis Head.

All-rounder Cameron Green is injured and will miss the entire Australian summer. Marsh is the usual T20 captain, leaving Josh Inglis, Adam Zampa, Glenn Maxwell and Matt Short in the mix to take charge against Pakistan.

Fast bowlers Xavier Bartlett, Nathan Ellis and Spencer Johnson all re-

turn after injuries for the matches in Brisbane on November 14, Sydney two days later and Hobart on November 18. The first Test against India begins in Perth on November 22.

"This group of players have all represented Australia in T20 cricket, so we look forward to them continuing to enhance their international experience throughout this series," said chief selector George Bailey. "We are excited by the mix of experience combined with those closer to the start of their international journeys."

goal this season. The 23-year-old was visibly annoyed when replaced with 20 minutes to go.

EL BILAL TOURE (Stuttgart)
Fresh from scoring a stoppage-time winner in Stuttgart's 1-0 Champions League defeat of Juventus last week, Toure was again on target in a 2-1 win over Holstein Kiel. With Stuttgart cruising but only one goal ahead, Toure unleashed a rocket into the top corner with half an hour remaining.

FRANCE

ZAKARIA ABOUKHALAL (Toulouse)
The 24-year-old Moroccan fired his side out of the relegation zone with two goals in the opening 10 minutes as Toulouse won 3-0 at bottom-of-the-table Montpellier.

HAMED TRAORE (Auxerre)

The Ivorian loanee from Bournemouth got his fourth goal in seven Ligue 1 appearances, and second in a week, when he netted in the 72nd minute to ensure the spoils were shared as Auxerre held hosts Lyon to a 2-2 draw. — AFP



DHAKA: Bangladesh's Tajjul Islam celebrates with his captain Najmul Hosain Shanto (R) after taking the wicket of South Africa's Tony De Zorzi (L) during the first day of the first Test cricket match. — AFP

Markram said it was "definitely relieving" after the Test victory in Mirpur ended a decade-long drought in South Asia. "Good sides find ways to win consecutively — and that's been our drive coming into this Test match," Markram told reporters. "So, hopefully, we can put in another good performance."

Kagiso Rabada was South Africa's hero in the first match, finishing with nine wickets, which included the record-breaking mark of becoming the fastest bowler to reach 300 Test wickets. Wicketkeeper Kyle Verreyne contributed with

a century. Markram is leading the South Africa team with regular captain Temba Bavuma recovering from a muscle injury. "It is always an honor and privilege to captain your country, especially in a Test match, so I've thoroughly enjoyed it," he said.

But he paid credit to his men, saying it was the "players who make the difference". "We had guys who put their hands up in the first Test match, getting us into a really good position to win," he said. "That focus will pretty much be the same for this Test." — AFP

The T20s follow a three-match one-day international series against Pakistan beginning on November 4. Cummins, Hazlewood and Starc were included in the one-day squad announced two weeks ago, but Marsh and Head will be on paternity leave.

Australia T20 squad: Sean Abbott, Xavier Bartlett, Cooper Connolly, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Aaron Hardie, Josh Inglis, Spencer Johnson, Glenn Maxwell, Matthew Short, Marcus Stoinis, Adam Zampa. — AFP

Sports

Yildiz saves Juventus in eight-goal thriller at Inter as Napoli pull away

Roma slump to a humiliating 5-1 defeat at Fiorentina

MILAN: Kenan Yildiz fired Juventus back from two goals down to draw 4-4 in an incredible clash at Inter Milan on Sunday, which allowed Napoli to extend their Serie A lead to four points. Turkey starlet Yildiz came off the bench with around half an hour left at a packed and pulsating San Siro and brought third-placed Juve back from the dead with two superb finishes in the final 20 minutes.

The 19-year-old stunned the more than 70,000 home fans who were convinced that they were watching their team make a Scudetto statement when Denzel Dumfries rolled home what looked like Inter's decisive fourth goal in the 53rd minute.

"Today I was really happy to score my first goal and second goal, also against a big team like Inter. I hope to continue like this," Yildiz told DAZN, adding that he has faith in Juve's title chances. "We hope always, but the season is still long, we want to give our best and I hope at the end that it's going to be good."

And although both teams lost ground on Napoli it will be champions Inter, in second, who will most feel the sting of Sunday's draw after missing a clutch of chances following Dumfries' strike. Inter were two ahead thanks to a beautiful strike from Henrikh Mkhitaryan and two Piotr Zielinski penalties, all in the first half, before Dumfries' low finish.

Inter's 'lesson'

They went close to sealing the points through Federico Dimarco, Nicolo Barella and Lautaro Martinez but got caught twice on the break by Yildiz, whose double was also his first goals of the season. "We deserved to score seven or eight goals against a team which had conceded one in eight games," said Inzaghi.

"You can't concede four goals from four shots

on target... It'll serve as a lesson for us." Juve stay third, a further point off the title pace after showing huge fight to bounce back and take a precious draw from their fiercest rivals. Thiago Motta's side, missing a host of first-choice players, had already fought back from going behind to Zielinski's first spot-kick through tap-ins from Dusan Vlahovic and Timothy Weah.

Former Inter midfielder Motta, who won the 2010 Champions League with the "Nerazzurri", got his substitutions right while Yann Bisseck's poor performance in place of Benjamin Pavard aided Juve's stunning comeback. "We had the right attitude and spirit, and at the end we even tried to get the win," said Motta. "We need to look at why at times we play brilliantly and in other moments we seem to be dominated by opponents."

Roma crumble

Crisis club Roma slumped to a humiliating 5-1 defeat at Fiorentina which left Ivan Juric at risk of the sack barely a month after he replaced Daniele De Rossi in the capital club's dugout. Roma are 11th on just 10 points after a horrendous night in Florence in which nothing went right, going two down to strikes from Moise Kean and Lucas Beltran within 17 minutes and never recovering from that early blow.

The away side were briefly in the game when Manu Kone netted in the 39th minute, but Kean bagged his second of the night moments later. A miserable evening was completed by Roma youth product Edoardo Bove adding the fourth and Mats Hummels nodding into his own net just four minutes after making his debut for the club from the bench following Mario Hermoso's sending off.

Roma's dismal season has only been made



MILAN: Inter Milan's Italian midfielder #23 Nicolo Barella fights for the ball with Juventus' American midfielder #16 Weston McKennie during the Italian Serie A football match between Inter Milan and Juventus at San Siro stadium in Milan. — AFP

worse by local rivals Lazio's great form, their latest win a 3-0 thumping of injury-ravaged Genoa. Lazio are level on 16 points with fourth-placed Fiorentina, Atalanta and Udinese, who are all one behind Juve, after Tijjani Noslin's jinking run and low finish in the 21st minute was followed up by late strikes from Pe-

dro and Matias Vecino.

Genoa meanwhile are third from bottom after a seven-match winless run in which they have lost five times. They are set to sign Mario Balotelli on Monday in an attempt to solve an injury crisis which has crippled their attack. — AFP



NASHVILLE: Lindsey Horan #10 of United States dribbles the ball between Iceland defenders during the second half of the match at GEODIS Park on October 27, 2024 in Nashville. — AFP

Sears shines as US women rally to beat Iceland

WASHINGTON: Emma Sears scored one goal and assisted on another in a sparkling international debut on Sunday, helping the United States rally for a 3-1 victory over Iceland in a women's friendly international football match in Nashville, Tennessee.

Sears capped the scoring in second-half stoppage time, putting away the rebound after Alyssa Thompson hit the upright. She had entered in the second half for the reigning Olympic champions and made her presence felt, dealing deftly with a cross from Thompson to deliver a precise pass to Lynn Williams

for a goal that made it 1-1 in the 72nd minute.

Four minutes later, Lindsey Horan fired the hosts ahead as Williams received a free kick from Malory Swanson and slid the ball across to Horan, who tapped it into an open net. Iceland had taken the lead in the 31st minute when Karolina Lea Vilhjalmsdottir curled a high corner kick directly into the goal.

US keeper Casey Murphy leapt to try to get a hand on it but it dropped behind her into the net. It was the first time under coach Emma Hayes that the United States trailed in a match—a run that included a fifth Olympic gold at the Paris Games.

Ingibjorg Siguroardottir also forced a save in the first half, when the United States dominated possession but struggled to create chances in the face of Iceland's disciplined defense. Hayes opened with some fresh faces, including giving Emily Sams a starting spot for her first international cap. — AFP

PSG cruise past Marseille to secure top spot

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain outclassed their bitter rivals Marseille 3-0 at the Stade Velodrome on Sunday, sending the champions three points clear at the top of Ligue 1 after Monaco suffered their first defeat of the season.

The highly-anticipated first Classique of the season was all but over as a contest by the interval as PSG raced into a three-goal lead over Marseille, who had lost Amine Harit to a straight red card midway through the first period.

"It's a very positive result," said PSG coach Luis Enrique. "That is a given when you win a Classique away from home with such authority. We dedicate this victory to the fans. It's an important match for them and for our place in the table."

Joao Neves gave the visitors the perfect start early on, before a disastrous 10-minute period just prior to the half-hour saw Marseille lose Harit and ship a second goal when captain Leonardo Balerdi turned into his own net. Bradley Barcola then tucked away PSG's third, and his eighth of the season.

It was a chastening night for Roberto De Zerbi's Marseille, who had enjoyed a strong start to the campaign and went into the match with the possibility of joining their biggest rivals on 20 points with a victory. But instead they endured their 12th-straight home match against PSG in the league without a win as hundreds of their fans had already made for the exit by half-time. "I'm disappointed. We had prepared a match of courage and personality. But up until Harit was sent off, there was neither courage nor personality," said De Zerbi.

"It wasn't the match we had in mind and that's a problem. We can lose, but when you wear the Marseille shirt, you can't play without personality and courage," added the Italian coach. Portuguese midfielder Neves made his mark seven minutes into his first Classique when he pounced on a handling error

by goalkeeper Geronimo Rulli to open the scoring.

In the 20th minute, the match swung definitively in PSG's favor when Harit was given his marching orders after catching Marquinhos in the stomach with a high boot. "The sending-off changed the game," said Luis Enrique. "From then on, the match was harder for our opponents and less open."

As if to compound Marseille's misfortunes, Balerdi doubled the away side's lead nine minutes later as he stretched to cut out a seemingly routine cross and ended up knocking the ball past the advancing Rulli and into the goal. Barcola put the cherry on the cake for PSG five minutes before the break, finishing after determined build-up play by Ousmane Dembele.

'Two stupid mistakes'

Earlier, high-flying Monaco passed up the opportunity to go top of the table when they lost 2-1 at neighbors Nice. Breel Embolo gave the visitors a first-half lead before Nice struck back via Evann Goussand and Gaetan Laborde to inflict 10-man Monaco's first loss of the domestic campaign.

The principality side remain in second place on 20 points, three points behind leaders PSG. "I'm not happy with the result," said Monaco coach Adi Huetter. "When you lose a derby, everyone is disappointed, that's clear. But we're guilty because we had the game in our hands. And it came down to two stupid mistakes."

Embolo broke the deadlock for Monaco in the 39th minute, finishing neatly after being released by Maghnes Akliouche's through-ball. But the match turned in first-half stoppage time as Goussand headed in an equalizer for Nice and Monaco's Brazilian defender Vanderson then picked up a second yellow.

A poorly-executed corner routine cost Monaco as Laborde was gifted the opportunity to run through completely unchallenged, before finishing on 71 minutes. Lyon drew 2-2 at home to Auxerre to move to seventh in the table.

Georges Mikautadze twice gave the hosts the lead but they were on both occasions pegged back by Sinaly Diomande and Hamed Traore. Strasbourg climbed to the top half of the table by beating Nantes 3-1, thanks to a brace from Andrey Santos and a Dilane Bakwa goal. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752

Qibla	22459381
Ayoum Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Hospitals

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

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Salah strikes late as Liverpool snatch draw at title rivals Arsenal

Unbeaten City, who beat Southampton, are one point ahead of second-placed Liverpool



LONDON: Arsenal's Ghanaian midfielder #05 Thomas Partey defends a shot from Liverpool's English midfielder #17 Curtis Jones during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Liverpool at the Emirates Stadium in London. — AFP

LONDON: Mohamed Salah rescued Liverpool as the Egypt star's late equalizer earned a pulsating 2-2 draw against title rivals Arsenal on Sunday. Arne Slot's side were on the brink of only their second defeat this season until Salah netted with nine minutes left at the Emirates Stadium.

Liverpool had fallen behind to Bukayo Saka's early opener and, although Virgil van Dijk equalized, Mikel Merino put Arsenal back in front before half-time. Salah's eighth goal in 13 games in all competitions this season was aided by Arsenal's latest rash of injuries, with defenders Gabriel Magalhaes and Jurrien Timber both forced off in the second half.

Manchester City were the real winners on Sunday as the draw in north London ensured they finished the weekend on top of the Premier League. Unbeaten City,

who beat Southampton 1-0 on Saturday, are one point ahead of second-placed Liverpool, with third-placed Arsenal sitting five points adrift of top spot.

It was only the second time Liverpool had failed to win since Slot replaced Jurgen Klopp in the close-season, starting his Anfield reign with 12 victories from 13 games in all competitions. Even so, Liverpool will be happier with the point after showing impressive resolve to twice come from behind against a fellow title contender.

Arsenal were left to lick their wounds after the defensive injuries that left them fatally exposed. They were already without Riccardo Calafiori, sidelined by an injury suffered against Shakhtar Donetsk in midweek, while William Saliba served a suspension following his dismissal in last weekend's loss at Bournemouth.

Mikel Arteta's side have now gone

two league games without a win, leaving them with only three victories in their last seven top-flight matches in a major setback to their hopes of a first title since 2004.

Saka's perfect start

Saka, back from two games out with injury, had given Arsenal the perfect start in the ninth minute.

Ben White's sublime long pass sent Saka surging down the right flank before he deftly cut back into the Liverpool area, leaving Andrew Robertson trailing in his wake as he lashed a fierce close-range strike into the roof of the net.

Merino nearly gifted Liverpool an immediate equalizer when he carelessly let the ball run to Salah, who rifled his shot just wide from the edge of the area. So often over the last two seasons, Arsenal

have been dead ball masters thanks to their set-piece coach Nicolas Jover, but for once they were exposed as Liverpool drew level in the 18th minute.

Luis Diaz beat Kai Havertz to flick on Trent Alexander-Arnold's corner and Van Dijk got in front of Thomas Partey as the Dutch defender stooped to head home from close-range. But Arsenal's prowess from set-pieces enabled them to regain the lead in the 43rd minute.

Declan Rice's teasing free-kick arrowed into the Liverpool area and Merino was perfectly placed to thump his header past Caoimhin Kelleher from six yards. A lengthy VAR check followed to confirm Merino was just on-side as the Spain midfielder celebrated his first goal since his close-season arrival from Real Sociedad.

Arsenal keeper David Raya plunged to his right to keep out Alexis Mac Al-

lister's header on the final seconds of a thrilling first half. Arteta's already makeshift defence suffered another blow when Gabriel limped off with a knee injury after a challenge from Darwin Nunez early in the second half.

Without their first choice centre-back, Arsenal adopted a more cautious approach and Raya was booked for time-wasting with over 20 minutes to play. But the Gunners lost Timber to an injury in the closing stages as their defensive issues reached crisis point and handed Liverpool a lifeline.

With just nine minutes left, Arsenal's under-manned rearguard was ruthlessly exposed as Alexander-Arnold's lofted pass sent Nunez clear of teenage substitute Myles Lewis-Skelly. Nunez slipped in the unmarked Salah and he slotted home as Arsenal slumped to the turf in frustration. — AFP

Man Utd sack Ten Hag, Van Nistelrooy named interim boss

MANCHESTER: Manchester United sacked manager Erik ten Hag on Monday after a disastrous start to the season with former Red Devils striker Ruud van Nistelrooy named interim boss.

United dropped to a lowly 14th in the table after suffering their fourth defeat in nine league games at West Ham on Sunday and have won only one of their last eight games in all competitions. They are also 21st of 36 teams in the Europa League table, having drawn their three opening fixtures.

"Erik ten Hag has left his role as Manchester United men's first-team manager," said a club statement. "Erik was appointed in April 2022 and led the club to two domestic trophies, winning the Carabao (League) Cup in 2023 and the FA Cup in 2024.

"We are grateful to Erik for everything he has done during his time with us and wish him well for the future." United added Van Nistelrooy, who returned to the club as Ten Hag's assistant in July, would now serve as interim manager while they went in search of a new full-time boss.

Ten Hag's position had been repeatedly called into question after United co-owner Jim Ratcliffe kept him on board after an internal review at the end of last season when the club finished eighth in the Premier League.

The 54-year-old was even rewarded with a one-year extension of his contract to June 2026 after a shock FA Cup final victory over rivals Manchester City in May. Former Ajax boss Ten Hag, who joined United in May 2022, had fiercely defended his record in recent weeks after winning two trophies in his two full seasons in charge. United ended a



Erik ten Hag

six-year wait for silverware by beating Newcastle in the 2023 League Cup final.

FA Cup reprieve

The Red Devils also reached the FA Cup final and finished third in the Premier League in an encouraging debut season for Ten Hag. However, the wheels came off in his second season as injuries to key players, the lack of a meaningful impact from big money signings and Ten Hag's failure to implement a clear style of play led to a number of embarrassing results.

United crashed out of the Champions League at

the group stage after defeats by Galatasaray and FC Copenhagen, while Bournemouth, Brighton and Fulham were among the other sides to win at Old Trafford in the 2023/2024 campaign.

The implementation of a new sporting structure at United, spearheaded by Ratcliffe, saw widespread change over recent months off the field with the appointment of a new chief executive, sporting director and technical director.

But Ten Hag's surprise victory over Pep Guardiola's all-conquering City side at Wembley in the FA Cup final, saw him handed a stay of execution. He was further backed in the transfer market with the signings of Joshua Zirkzee, Manuel Ugarte, Matthijs de Ligt and Noussair Mazraoui taking the total spent in his reign to over £600 million (\$778 million), nearly half of which went on former Ajax players.

Yet, there was no improvement in United's fortunes as Liverpool and Tottenham coasted to 3-0 wins at Old Trafford in September.

'Unacceptable'

Former United captain Gary Neville said Ten Hag had paid the price for an "unacceptable" league position. "The big shock for me is how bad they've been with the new signings that have come in," Neville told Sky Sports.

He added: "The fact that they are 14th is unacceptable. You can't be in 14th after nine or 10 games with the level of spend that's occurred without being under significant pressure — and that's what's happened."

Former England manager Gareth Southgate and ex-Barcelona coach Xavi are among the leading contenders to take charge at Old Trafford. For all Ten Hag's faults, he oversaw just a small period of United's more general decline since legendary former manager Alex Ferguson retired in 2013.

Since the Scot's departure, five permanent managers have now been dismissed without United even challenging for the Premier League title — a trophy they won 13 times under Ferguson. — AFP



Abdulsamad Al-Aryan receives his award.

GKE Foundation honor Al-Aryan

KUWAIT: Global Knowledge Exchange (GKE) Foundation honored former deputy Chairman of Kuwait Tennis Federation Abdulsamad Al-Aryan during the ceremony that was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to honor the pioneers of the Arab sports movement and their major role in sports development in various games.

Several Arab sports leaders were honored in the presence of the foundation Chairman Abduldulhameed Al-Rumaithi. Al-Aryan on his part lauded this initiative saying "I am happy for this honoring, and we appreciate this initiative that is a crowning of sincere work and building that extended for many years in the sports field".