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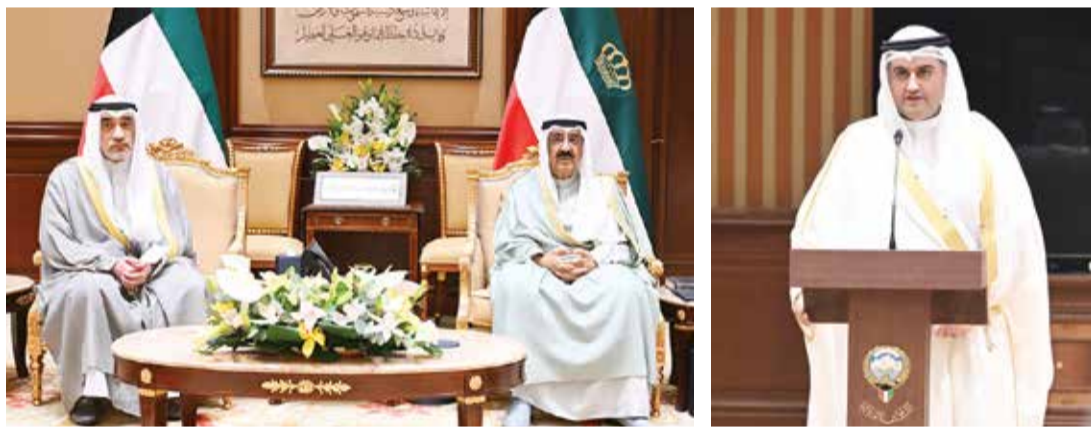
15 Leaders Barca stumble at Real Sociedad in controversial loss



Kuwait urges truce, protection of civilians in Gaza, Lebanon

Saudi warns Zionists must not attack Iran • Zionists against sovereign Palestinian state

Amir appoints new justice minister



KUWAIT: An Amiri decree was issued on Monday appointing Nasser Al-Sumait as Minister of Justice, a post that had been held jointly by Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Wasmi. HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad

Al-Jaber Al-Sabah later received at Bayan Palace Acting Prime Minister and Defense and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, who was accompanied by Sumait, who took the constitutional oath before HH the Amir.

RIYADH: Representative of HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, urged for a ceasefire and protecting civilians in Gaza and Lebanon. This came in his speech at the extraordinary Arab-Islamic Summit held Monday in the Saudi capital. The Representative of HH the Amir warned of the systematic targeting of civilians, preventing the entry of humanitarian aid, imposing a policy of forced displacement and attempts to change the historical and legal status of the city of Jerusalem, calling the international community to unite and put an end to these violations.

"Meantime, we are witnessing the encroachment of the (Zionist) aggression, and its expansion to include the sovereignty of the sisterly Lebanese Republic, targeting its people and everyone on its land, including UNIFIL forces, in a flagrant violation of international norms and laws," said the Kuwait Amir's Representative. He called on the international community to stand in solidarity with Lebanon, enable it to regain control over its institutions, protect its citizens and territory and implement Security Council Resolution 1701.

HH Sheikh Sabah urged the summit to send a clear message to the international community and



RIYADH: Representative of HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, attends the OIC and the Arab League summit on Nov 11, 2024. — KUNA

the Security Council to assume their responsibilities, restore confidence in the role and effectiveness of international community institutions and take a firm stance that leads to an immediate ceasefire, providing international protection for innocent civilians and ensuring the opening of safe corridors and the arrival of urgent humanitarian aid.

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Zionists kill 30 Gazans, tanks roll into camp

GAZA: Zionist forces sent tanks into the western side of Gaza's Nuseirat camp on Monday in a new incursion into the enclave's central area, and Palestinian medics said Zionist military strikes had killed at least 30 people since Sunday night. Residents said Zionist tanks opened fire as they rolled into that sector of the camp, one of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee sites, causing panic among the population and displaced families.

One resident, Zaik Mohammad, said the tanks' advance was a complete surprise. "Some people couldn't leave and remained trapped inside their homes, appealing to be allowed out, while others rushed out with whatever they could carry as they fled," Mohammad, 25, who lives one kilometer away from the targeted area, told Reuters. Palestinian and United Nations officials say there are no safe areas in the enclave, home to more than 2.1 million people and now largely in ruins.

With the war in Gaza now in its 14th month, the Zionist entity is focusing its operations in the north and center. Tens of thousands of Palestinian residents have been told to evacuate the areas, fueling fears that they may never be allowed to return. In attacks overnight and into Monday, health officials at Al-Awda Hospital in Nuseirat said 20 people were killed in a series of strikes from air and the ground, one that hit a tent encampment.

In the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahia, medics said four people were killed in a Zionist airstrike. Others were killed in Zionist airstrikes in Gaza City. At Kamal Adwan Hospital near Beit Lahia, medics said Zionist fire from a drone wounded three medical workers in the facility. Zionist forces have besieged the three hospitals in and around Jabalia for several weeks and hospital officials have refused orders to evacuate the facilities or leave their patients unattended despite the lack of food, medical, and fuel supplies. — Reuters

Zain Group 9M 2024 revenue hits 15-year high of \$4.71 billion

KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the third quarter (Q3) and nine-month (9M) periods ended Sept 30, 2024, serving 47.2 million customers.

For 9M 2024, Zain generated a 15-year high consolidated revenue of KD 1.45 billion (\$4.71 billion), up 2 percent YoY. In Q3 2024, Zain generated a 15-year high consolidated revenue of KD 501 million (\$1.64 billion), up 4 percent YoY.

Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi commented: "Across our markets, management teams have diligently and successfully overcome competitive and currency challenges, delivering excellent operational performances in line with expectations. Our operations in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, and Bahrain have all reported solid year-on-year growth in their key financial metrics." (See Page 9)



Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi

Padel action thrills Kuwait

By Abdellatif Sharaa and Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: The Premier Padel Kuwait P1 tournament, hosted at Rafa Nadal Academy Kuwait and sponsored by BNK, launched its main draw, with intense matches marking the round of 64. Head Coach Marc Arcusa praised BNK's organization and expressed hope for more events to boost padel's growth in Kuwait, despite one of his teams being eliminated early.

Professional player Barbara Las Heras highlighted the enthusiasm of local fans and the tournament's flawless organization, while Javier Navarro, a wildcard entry from Spain, commended the top-notch facilities and competitive spirit, calling the event a promising step toward becoming a major tournament.

Under the esteemed leadership of Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Chairman of BNK Holding, Kuwait's inaugural Premier Padel Kuwait P1 tournament has gathered over 150 top global padel athletes. This landmark event marks Kuwait's entry into the world stage of Premier Padel tournaments. (See Page 16)



KUWAIT: Players in action at the Premier Padel Kuwait P1 tournament on Nov 11, 2024. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

UK univs face crunch amid visa curbs

LONDON: UK universities are among the most prestigious in the world, but visa restrictions mean they are now attracting fewer international students — taking a heavy toll on their finances. The restrictions are compounding problems caused by the UK's departure from the European Union four years' ago. Almost 760,000 foreign students were enrolled in British universities in 2022,

making Britain the second most popular destination after the US, in a highly competitive market. Most come from India, then China and Nigeria.

But last year, the number of student visas fell by 5 percent. Between July and September, student visa applications slumped 16 percent compared to the same period last year. The decline is a major cause of concern for higher education institutions since foreign students pay far more in fees than British students.

Leo Xui, 20 years old and from China, began studying population and health sciences at University College London in September.

Continued on Page 6



COVENTRY: A woman walks through University Square past Coventry University's Alan Berry Building at the beginning of the new academic year in this Sept 23, 2020 file photo. — AFP



Kuwait proudly marks 62nd anniversary of constitution

Leadership determined to preserve democracy

Biography of Minister of Justice Al-Sumait

KUWAIT: An Amiri decree was issued on Monday appointing Nasser Yousef Mohammad Al-Sumait as Minister of Justice. Below is his biography:

Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait was born in 1981. He holds a BA in Law from Kuwait University in 2002 and a Master's degree in Commercial Law and Arbitration from the Gulf University in the Kingdom of Bahrain in 2009. He passed the foundational course for legal researchers, qualifying for appointment as a public prosecutor at the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies in 2005.

He worked in a number of different prosecution offices as a deputy public prosecutor from 2006 to 2014, deputy director of the juvenile prosecution between 2014 and 2016, and director of the juvenile prosecution between 2016 and 2019. Al-Sumait passed the foundation course, qualifying him to work in the judiciary at the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies in 2019.

He was a judge in the Court of First Instance in the juvenile, misdemeanor appeal, partial appeal, and government circuits between 2019 and 2021 and the Chief Prosecutor at the Public Prosecutor's Office between 2021 and 2024. Al-Sumait has been a consultant and public attorney at the Public Prosecution since 2024 until the issuance of the decree appointing him as Minister of Justice.

Al-Sumait also served as a member of the Supreme National Committee for Child Protection and a member of the Judicial Inspection Committees on the work of public prosecutors and supervised the work of the Juvenile Prosecution, Jahra Prosecution, Drugs and Alcohol Prosecution, Family Prosecution, the Office of Examining Reports and Complaints and their workflow — reviewing the data of their monthly statements, disposing of referrals and filings in cases, and a member of the Disciplinary Council for Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He also served as an expert specializing in the field of human trafficking crimes in the registry of the Arab Public Prosecutors Association and a lecturer at the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies. Nasser Al-Sumait worked on training legal researchers nominated to work as agents of the public prosecutor at the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies, in addition to a number of local and international experiences and participations. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait marked Monday the 62nd anniversary of its constitution, which specifies the ruling system and organizes relationships among legislative, executive, and judicial authorities, as the political leadership is determined to preserve the constitution. Kuwaiti people are proud of their constitution, which contributed to democracy in the Gulf nation, highlighted civil rights of citizens and their right of speech, as well as guaranteeing justice and equality. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Kuwait's 11th Amir, ratified the constitution on November 11, 1962, a defining moment in the political history of Kuwait.

Kuwaitis remember with pride, the historic democratic stages that Kuwait went through, beginning with the constitutional document in 1938 until the birth of the constitution in 1962, the "most important document" of Kuwait. The late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem had expressed a desire to build a solid parliamentary system based on democratic principles and see the contributions of the public to the constitution. He signed a law on August 26, 1961, regarding the bylaw of the transitional period and holding elections for the Constituent Assembly with a mandate of wording the constitution.

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem inaugurated the Constituent Assembly in January 1962 and told the members that they have a daunting task of laying the foundation of the ruling system of the nation. Members of the Assembly elected Abdullahatiff Mohammad Al-Ghanim as Speaker and Dr Ahmad Al-Khateeb as deputy speaker. The sixth session saw the election of the Constitution Committee, consisting of speaker Al-Ghanim, the late Father Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, who was Interior Minister and also served as committee chairman,



In this 1962 file photo, the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah receives a draft of the constitution from Abdullahatiff Al-Ghanim and Humoud Al-Khaled.

MP Humoud Al-Zaid Al-Khaled, who was also Minister of Justice, Yaqoub Yusuf Al-Humaidhi, and Saud Abdulaziz Al-Abdulrazzaq.

The committee tabled the final draft of the constitution, which was unanimously approved on November 3, 1962. The Assembly then referred the draft constitution to Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, who ratified it on November 11, 1962. The constitution consists of 183 articles over five chapters: the first about the state and system of government, the second about the fundamental constituents of Kuwaiti society, the third about public rights and duties, the fourth about authorities, and the fifth about general and transitional provisions.

The first parliamentary elections were held in January 1963 and were the beginning of the real political practices under the constitution.

The democratic march in Kuwait was marred with some setbacks. The parliament was suspended twice, in 1976 and 1986. However, the constitution was the shield against domestic and external challenges, foremost the Iraqi invasion and occupation in 1990-91. During the seven-month Iraqi occupation, Kuwaitis were united behind their legitimate leadership.

In April 1991, the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah formed a new government with a mandate of reconstruction, and in October 1992, parliamentary life resumed. The leaders of Kuwait have always reaffirmed respect for the constitution. The late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah had always reaffirmed commitment to the constitution, saying at a parliamentary session on October 26, 2010 that the constitution was the haven of democracy. The late Amir Sheikh

Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah reiterated this pledge and said the constitution protected the country from crises.

The late Amir, at a special parliamentary session to take the constitution oath as head of state on September 30, 2020, said, "We reaffirm our commitment to our democracy and are proud that Kuwait is a state of law and institutions...." His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah expressed determination to preserve the constitution from malpractices in a drive to safeguard democracy. In a speech on May 10 this year, His Highness the Amir announced dissolution of the National Assembly (parliament) and suspension of some articles of the Constitution for no more than four years, pending "revision of the democratic process in its entirety."

He said, "We, as entrusted with looking after this state and its people, had to offer counseling and guidance once and again in order to get out of these conditions with the least possible losses." Unfortunately, we have faced some unimaginable, unbearable difficulties and impediments. Some people attempted resolutely to shut down every way out of the bitter reality. "We were left with no option other than taking this hard decision to rescue the country and protect its higher national interests and resources," His Highness the Amir explained.

"Therefore, we decided to dissolve the National Assembly and suspend some constitutional articles for no more than four years," His Highness the Amir explained. "During this period, all aspects of the democratic process will be studied, and the outcomes of the study will be tabled to us for revision. We then will take whatever decisions we might deem appropriate," he added. — KUNA

Municipal Council approves spring camps regulations

KUWAIT: The Municipal Council approved, in its main session on Monday, headed by Chairman Abdullah Al-Mahri, the spring camps bylaw, which consists of 23 articles and allows the establishment of camps for individuals, cooperative societies, civil clubs, and public benefit societies. Council member Fahad Al-Abduljader said in a speech during the session that the bylaw opened a new window for small and medium enterprises, addressed the legislative shortcomings that existed, and will put work within its proper framework.

Al-Abduljader added that the bylaw will enable them to benefit from the spring camping season and achieve economic returns when it is implemented, noting that any entrepreneur can apply for a place to sell his products in the desert. He explained that the bylaw is diverse, calling for expediting its implementation for the current camping season, which starts next Friday, November 15.

He added that the Municipal Council approved the objection of Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullahatiff Al-Mishari to the second item of the Municipal Council's decision in its last session on the request of Kuwait Municipality. He pointed out that



Council members attend municipal council session. — KUNA

the Minister expressed in the approval letter sent to the Chairman of the Municipal Council his objection to the allocation of the project due to the violation

of one of the articles of the special resolution in the powers assigned to the Municipality in accordance with the provisions of Law No 33 of 2016. — KUNA

Embassy showcases US educational institutions, cutting-edge facilities

KUWAIT: US Embassy in Kuwait is excited to announce a series of dynamic activities in celebration of International Education Week, taking place from November 12 to 21, 2024. This annual celebration showcases the importance of international education and exchange, highlighting the exceptional quality of instruction and state-of-the-art facilities of US educational institutions that set them apart in the global educational landscape.

This initiative features a range of activities, including the US Embassy's participation in the Kuwait Book Fair from November 20 to 27 at the Mishref Fairgrounds, US university representatives engaging with private Ku-

waiti educational institutions, and Instagram Live sessions, social media posts, and TV/radio interviews with US embassy experts and Kuwaiti alumni of US schools explaining the application process, discussing student visas, and sharing stories.

"The US Embassy encourages all members of the community to participate in these activities and explore the opportunities that the US educational system offers. International Education Week is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the innovative and inclusive nature of US higher education," said Inga Litvinsky, Cultural Affairs Officer at the US Embassy in Kuwait. "We are excited to showcase the unique experiences available to students and to foster a deeper understanding of the benefits of studying in the United States." For more information about International Education Week and the scheduled events, you can reach our EducationUSA Advisers at KuwaitCity@EducationUSA.org and visit our website at www.EducationUSA.org.

Kuwait charity opens residential village in western Yemen

ADEN: Kuwait's Namma charity opened on Monday a fully-equipped residential village in Yemen's western province of Hodeidah, a project it said was part of a national aid campaign for the impoverished Arabian Peninsula nation. Expressing his gratitude for the aid, Hodeidah governor Al-Hassan Taher said such assistance

meets the "dire humanitarian needs" of Yemeni families, many of whom are wallowing in sheer penury, the official underlined.

He hailed the project as a testament to Kuwait's "humanitarian devotion," saying the new village would be instrumental in improving living conditions for Yemenis at a time where unstable weather conditions have exacerbated their woes. On the intricacies of the project, its chief architect Jamal Al-Fakiya said that the village comprises 50 residential units for as many families, while it also includes an adjacent school and mosque, in addition to other facilities that aim to provide basic necessities to residents there, he added. — KUNA

CITRA launches a new organizational structure

KUWAIT: The Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) announced the launch of a new organizational structure that includes a comprehensive update of the sectors and the creation of new departments and sections. This is aimed at enhancing its effectiveness in regulating the communications and information technology sector and better meeting.

The authority said in a press statement on Monday that the new update includes the monitoring sector concerned with protecting the rights of beneficiaries by checking the performance of companies and ensuring their commitment to standards and regulations. The sector also seeks to enhance a fair and effective competitive environment, which improves the quality of services provided to users.

It added that the new structure aims to reflect its vision of providing an advanced regulatory environment with greater accuracy and effectiveness by shifting from a traditional administrative role to an integrated regulatory and monitoring role that focuses on protecting consumer rights, ensuring transparency, and enhancing competitiveness in the market. These changes will contribute to enhancing its role as a protection umbrella for users and ensuring the provision of the best possible services, indicating that it always looks forward to supporting and involving citizens and residents in this new path. — KUNA

Kuwait occupies an advanced position in otolaryngology field

KUWAIT: Head of the Otorhinolaryngology Department at the Ministry of Health and head of the Otorhinolaryngology Department at Zain Center, Dr Mutlaq Al-Saihan, said that Kuwait occupies an advanced position in the field of otorhinolaryngology and head and neck surgery due to its distinguished medical and scientific competencies. Al-Saihan told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Monday that the Ministry of Health has provided the latest medical devices for diagnosis and surgical operations for medical cases that require advanced surgical interventions.

He stated that the total number of visitors to the otorhinolaryngology clinics affiliated with Zain Hospital in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital, Amiri Hospital, Al-Saqr Specialized Clinics, Salmiya, Yarmouk, Sabah Al-Salem, and Salwa Hospitals this year amounted to 33,000 visitors. He indicated that Zain Center for Otorhinolaryngology received about 42,000 visitors this year, including 10,130 patients in the evening clinics, while the total number of admissions to the hospital amounted to 4,126 cases.

He pointed out that the Zain Center for Ear, Nose, and Throat received 19 visiting doctors throughout the year in various specialties, and they performed 119 major operations. About 4,120 surgical operations were performed at the Zain Center, including 820 major operations, 2,950 medium operations, and 350 minor operations. — KUNA



Dr. Mutlaq Al-Saihan

Local

Extraordinary summit seeks unified Arab-Islamic stance as Mideast boils

Arab League calls for immediate ceasefire in Gaza, Lebanon



RIYADH: The Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, meets with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, on the sidelines of the extraordinary Arab-Islamic summit in Riyadh. — KUNA photos



Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, receives Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati on the sidelines of the extraordinary Arab and Islamic summit held in the Saudi capital Riyadh.



Saudi Deputy Governor of the Riyadh region Prince Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Abdulaziz welcomes Kuwait's Crown Prince HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah upon his arrival in Riyadh.



RIYADH: The extraordinary Arab-Islamic summit kicked off in the Saudi capital Riyadh on Monday with the participation of Kuwait to reach a unified Arab-Islamic stance in the face of the ongoing Zionist aggression on the Gaza Strip and Lebanon and to discuss developments in the region, especially the worsening humanitarian crises. Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, heads the official Kuwaiti delegation to the summit.

The summit, called for by Saudi Arabia, is expected to issue resolutions condemning Zionist aggression and calling on the international community to intervene immediately to stop the



aggression and facilitate the entry of humanitarian aid to the affected areas. The summit also seeks to enhance financial and diplomatic support for the Palestinians and Lebanese in addition to finding solutions to confront the major challenges facing the Arab and Islamic world.

The summit confirms the agreement

of Arab and Islamic leaders on the urgent need to coordinate efforts to confront the repercussions of Zionist aggression and work to achieve stability in the region. The summit comes at the invitation of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, based on the Kingdom's historical responsibility towards the Palestinian cause and major Arab and Islamic issues.

Immediate ceasefire

Meanwhile, Arab League Secretary-General Ahmad Aboul Gheit called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon and the need to implement the two-state solution as soon as possible under international

sponsorship. This came during the extraordinary Arab-Islamic summit, held in Riyadh. The Arab League chief affirmed that the extraordinary summit comes at a critical time in light of the continued sinful Zionist attacks on the Palestinian people and the expansion of the circle of aggression to Lebanese territory.

About Gheit pointed out that what Zionists are doing in terms of destruction and targeting of Palestinian society is sabotaging the future of peace and its possibilities, stressing that justice alone is what enables the region to establish lasting peace. He also called for commitment to implementing Resolution 1701 in Lebanon in a way that ensures security on both sides of the border. — KUNA



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, receives Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar bin Ibrahim.

Turkey's Secretary of Defense Industries visits Kuwait



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Saud Al-Sabah receives Secretary of Defense Industries of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Prof Dr Haluk Gorgun. During the meeting, cooperation and topics of common interest were discussed. — KUNA

KUWAIT: The Secretary of Defense Industries of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Prof Dr Haluk Gorgun, along with his accompanying delegation, visited Kuwait on Monday. He was welcomed by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr Abdullah Meshal Mubarak Al-Sabah and Acting Chief of General Staff, Major General Sheikh Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Turkish Ambassador, Tuba Nur Sonmez, accompanied the delegation throughout their meetings. Upon the arrival of the delegation, a meeting was held at Amiri Airport with the Undersecretary of the Defense Ministry and the Kuwaiti Deputy Chief of Staff. Following the meeting, the delegation visited the Turkish Embassy. Afterward, they proceeded to the headquarters of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) and met with KNG Undersecretary Lieutenant General Hashim Al-Rifai.

The Secretary of Defense Industries and his delegation were hosted for lunch at the General Staff Headquarters. Attending on behalf of Kuwait were the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense, Sheikh Dr Abdullah Meshal Mubarak Al-Sabah, the Acting Chief of General Staff, Major General Sheikh Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the Assistant Undersecretary for Foreign Procurement Sheikh Dr Eng Shamayel Ahmad Khaled Al-Sabah.

Finally, the delegation was received by the Acting Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Saud Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace. Throughout these productive meetings, cooperation in the field of defense industries between Turkey and Kuwait was discussed, highlighting a shared commitment to strengthening ties. The positive atmosphere of the discussions underscored the promising outlook for enhanced collaboration in the defense industry sector in the years to come.

National Guard selects batch of field officers

KUWAIT: The National Guard on Monday held a public draw to select a new batch of applicants to join the field officer students course holding university degrees after they met the legal conditions and procedures. Head of the admission committee, Major General Ahmad Abdul Latif, confirmed, according to a press statement issued by the Guard, that the National Guard has established the principles of transparency and justice by holding a public draw. Abdul Latif stressed that the admission procedures in the Guard take into account the principle of equal opportunities and adopt transparency and credibility in all stages, expressing his wishes for those who were lucky in the draw to succeed. — KUNA



Initiative aims to assist people with disabilities

KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah affirmed that the national initiative 'Partners to Employ Them' has contributed a lot (since its launch in 2018) in implementing Kuwait's international and constitutional obligations in protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and working to enhance their capabilities. This came in a statement made by Minister Al-Huwailah to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Monday after participating in the launch of the sixth batch of the national initiative 'Partners to Employ Them 2024-2025', with the participation of 123 members.

Minister Al-Huwailah said that Kuwait has been since joining the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2013 to support persons with disabilities and seeks to integrate them in various fields. She added that "we are celebrating this occasion with a patent that is the first of its kind locally," which is a 'dual smart glasses' to assist people with hearing disabilities.

The device uses artificial intelligence to convert verbal speech into written text that allows them to integrate into the study and work environment and interact with society. For her part, the Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Resident Coordinator to the State of Kuwait, Ghada Al-Taher, said in a similar statement that the initiative is a unique model in empowering people with disabilities.

Al-Taher stressed that the rehabilitation and training programs have opened the way for people with disabilities to join the development process in the country, praising



KUWAIT: Participants attend the launch of the sixth batch of the "Partners to Employ Them" initiative. — KUNA

the role of Kuwait in developing their skills and talents to achieve the vision of New Kuwait 2035. She explained that UNESCO and the International Labor Organization will work with the officials to provide consultations and make sure that the training is in line with the international standards, praising the pioneering experience of the initiative in rehabilitating and employing people with disabilities.

Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Human Construction Society for Social Development, Dr. Ghaleb Al-Osaimi, said in a similar statement to KUNA that the national initiative, through partnership with various governmental and private bodies, has overcome many challenges and worked to rehabilitate and develop people with disabilities. Al-Osaimi explained that 20 members of the current initiative were hosted by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences for field training in Kuwait University laboratories, while the Kuwait Finance House Bank hosted three members.

The Public Authority for Minors Affairs will provide



Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah, Ghada Al-Taher, Dr Ghaleb Al-Asimi

training for 100 members to qualify them for employment in the public and private sectors. He explained that the jobs they will be trained for will be in the fields of customer service, information systems, laboratory technician assistant, and surveillance (security and cameras), in addition to office and secretarial work. — KUNA

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NBK reviews work progress in Shuwaikh beach project

14 tons of recycled tire materials used, underscoring NBK's sustainable practices

KUWAIT: As part of its on-site visits to review work progress in Shuwaikh Beach Development and Beautification Project spanning an area of 1.7 km, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized a visit to the project location yesterday to follow up implementation, six months after starting construction works. The visitors were headed by Isam Al-Sager, Group Vice-Chairman and CEO of National Bank of Kuwait and Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Alithe, Capital Governor.

During the tour, the visitors reviewed the progress made since starting the project's construction works in early May, as work is underway, with the entire project set to be completed within 11 months, ie by the end of March 2025, after which Shuwaikh Beach will be ready to welcome visitors with its new look. So far, the project has reached an impressive completion rate of 40 percent.

The current development works includes the complete rehabilitation of the project's entire infrastructure over 1.7 km, including rainwater drainage system, sewage and electricity networks, as well as installation of 360 LEED lampposts and advanced surveillance cameras. In line with the bank's efforts to promote sustainability, about 14 tons of recycled tire materials were used in the construction of the running track that along the length of the project.

It is worth mentioning that NBK signed a cooperation agreement with Kuwait Municipality, under which the bank committed KD 3 million for the development and renovation of Shuwaikh Beachfront to serve all visitors' needs, with a focus on providing high quality and highly efficient modern facilities, in a way that fosters sustainable health, sports and entertainment in Kuwait. The tour emphasized the importance of continuous communication between all stakeholders to ensure the realization of a common vision towards the development of Shuwaikh Waterfront, to be a key tourist destination that meets the needs of the community and contributes to the well-being of its visitors, whether Kuwait citizens, residents or visitors.

NBK's contribution to this project comes with its efforts to promote sustainable development of Kuwait's economy, and to serve the implementation of Kuwait Vision 2035, which underscores the impor-



ance of developing tourism and entertainment sector in the Country. NBK is committed to supporting Kuwait's national initiative to promote environmental, social and economic prosperity, in line with the Country's recent pledge to become carbon neutral by 2060 by progressing towards its environmental goals and supporting the banking sector's endeavors to accelerate the transition to a carbon-free economy.

The project includes 4 integrated main areas providing all the needs of beachgoers, while being eco-friendly to help reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact, reflecting NBK's unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability on the one hand, and pioneering corporate social responsibility on the other hand.

Area 1: Includes playgrounds and entertainment areas, as well as a large green areas allowing for outdoor activities, in addition to restoration of the mosque, restrooms, and commercial kiosks within the project. The area also includes future work sites for a number of kiosks, ATMs and ITMs. Area 2: Includes an extended sandy beach area with wooden benches

in the middle. Area 3: Includes a walled garden with green landscape and dense trees providing large, shaded areas for relaxation and meditation amidst serene atmosphere. Area 4: Includes the project's starting point and interactive giant checkers game, in addition to large green spaces that allow for outdoor activities and multi-use spaces.

NBK has fostered corporate social responsibility culture as a cardinal principle for serving the community at large. To this end, it contributed large investments in social support, and introduced many meaningful programs in areas including education, healthcare, training and recruitment of national talent, social support and welfare programs as well as environmental and sports initiatives. NBK follows its practice in launching and sponsoring a variety of meaningful social initiatives in the fields of healthcare, childcare, social development, environment, sports and awareness, thus strengthening its position as a leading socially responsible corporation that strives to promote sustainable development in line with Kuwait National Development Plan.



Oman launches first satellite specializing in remote sensing

MUSCAT: Oman, represented by "Oman Lens" company on Monday launched its first full-fledged satellite registered under its name at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The Omani News Agency (ONA) reported that the satellite, specializing in remote sensing and earth observation technologies, is enhanced with artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. OL-1 satellite is able to capture and analyze high-resolution images in real time, because its advanced sensors enable it to collect detailed images of Oman's landscapes, infrastructure and natural resources, offering actionable solutions faster than traditional satellites. The satellite can also monitor environmental conditions with high accuracy, transforming data into practical solutions that benefit various sectors. Oman Lens plans on launching a host of satellites within the next five years as well as developing new smart city tech and reinforce data analysis in cooperation with its partners.- KUNA



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Municipality removes 23 unauthorized camps

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality removed 23 unauthorized camps in the northern areas of the country that were set up before the official camping season on Friday, November 15. The Municipality said in a press statement that their supervision team in Al-Jahra started removing spring camps that did not follow the official date of the camping season. It reaffirmed that their teams would continue their operations across all camping areas to ensure no camps are set up before the official season and would take necessary action to enforce Kuwait Municipality regulations. — KUNA





Trump announces former ICE director as 'border czar'

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TYRE: Mourners attend the funeral of Lebanese rescuers and first aid responders killed by Zionist airstrikes in the village of Deir Qanoun Al-Nahr in Tyre on November 11, 2024. — AFP

Zionist entity's raids futile: Hezbollah

Group says Washington, Tehran, Moscow 'intensifying' contacts for ceasefire in Lebanon

BEIRUT/JERUSALEM: The Zionist entity's military has been incapable of occupying even a single village in Lebanon since invading the country six weeks ago, Hezbollah said on Monday. Zionist entity troops on September 30 began what the military claimed were "localized and targeted raids" in Lebanon's south, a week after escalating air strikes across Lebanon. "After 45 days of bloody fighting, the enemy is still unable to occupy a single Lebanese village," Hezbollah Spokesman Mohammad Afif told a news conference in south Beirut, a stronghold of the movement and a repeated target of the Zionist entity's air strikes.

The Zionist entity has said its aim is to make its northern border safe for the return of tens of thousands of settlers who were evacuated when Hezbollah began firing rockets into the entity's northern areas. On November 3, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told troops at the Lebanon border that the operation aimed to push Hezbollah back over the Litani River. He said a second goal was to stop any attempt to rearm and the third was "to respond firmly to any action taken against us", according to his office. On Monday Hezbollah spokesman Afif said the group's fighters had repulsed the entity's troops in Khiam, about six kilometers from the border. He added that the troops also failed in attempts "to penetrate on several fronts at Bint Jbeil", about 17 kilometers southwest of Khiam.

Ceasefire prospects

The Zionist entity said on Monday there was progress in talks about a Lebanon ceasefire and indicated Russia could play a part by stopping Hezbollah rearming via Syria, although Afif said it had not received any new truce proposals. Hezbollah said political contacts were under way involving Tehran, Washington and Moscow, whilst also saying it had enough weapons for a "long war" and keeping up rocket fire into the Zionist entity. In Jerusalem, Zionist Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said the war against Hezbollah was not yet over. The main challenge facing any ceasefire deal would be enforcement, he said, though there was "a certain progress" in talks.

Saar, addressing a Jerusalem news conference, said the entity was working with United States on a ceasefire. He said a basic principle for any agreement had to be that Hezbollah would not be able to bring weapons into Lebanon from Syria. "It is vital to the success of any arrangement in Lebanon," he said. "And the Russians are, as you know, present in Syria. And if they are in agreement with this principle, I think they can contribute effectively to this objective."

Russia deployed forces into Syria nearly a decade ago to support President Bashar Al-Assad in the civil war there. Hezbollah also sent fighters to help Assad, and carved out big sway on the ground alongside oth-



Hezbollah spokesman Mohammad Afif

er Iran-backed groups. Syria is widely seen as a major conduit for Iran to supply weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the Zionist entity has struck targets in Syria regularly during the conflict. A Zionist airstrike temporarily cut Syria's main Homs-Damascus highway

on Monday, Syrian media reported. In Lebanon, relatives held funerals for 20 people killed in a strike on the southern town of Deir Qanoun-Ras al-Ain, including seven medics from rescue groups affiliated with Hezbollah and its Shi'ite ally Amal. The Zionist entity's military said more than 150 rockets were fired from Lebanon. One barrage set fire to parked cars and a building in a Haifa suburb. Three people suffered moderate and light wounds, the national ambulance service said.

'Testing the waters'

In Beirut, Hezbollah official Afif linked intensified political contacts to the looming change of US leadership. "There is a great movement between Washington and Moscow and Tehran and a number of capitals," he said. "We hear a lot of talk, but so far, according to my information, nothing official has reached Lebanon or us in this regard," he told a news conference. The contacts were "in the phase of testing the waters and presenting initial ideas". The Lebanese government, which includes Hezbollah, has repeatedly called for a ceasefire based on the full implementation of a UN Resolution that ended a war between the group and the Zionist entity in 2006. The resolution calls for the area south of the Litani river to be free of all weapons other than those of the Lebanese state. Lebanon and the entity have accused each other of violating the resolution. — Agencies

Minister calls for Zionist sovereignty in West Bank in 2025

JERUSALEM: The Zionist entity's finance minister said on Monday he hoped the entity would extend sovereignty into the occupied West Bank in 2025 and that he would push the government to engage the incoming Trump administration to gain Washington's support. The entity's foreign minister said separately that while no decision was made, the issue could come up in talks with the future US administration in Washington. Far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who also wields a defense ministry supervisory role for settlers as part of his coalition deal with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said he hopes the incoming Trump administration in Washington will recognize a Zionist sovereignty push.

Smotrich has for years called for the Zionist entity's sovereignty in the West Bank, home to approximately 3.3 million Palestinians. At a meeting of his far-right faction in parliament on Monday, Smotrich said he had instructed Zionist authorities overseeing West Bank settlements "to begin professional and comprehensive staff work to prepare the necessary infrastructure" for extending sovereignty, according to a statement from his office. Zionist settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law.

Zionist Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said that while leaders of the settler movement may be confident that incoming President Donald Trump could be inclined to support such moves, the government had made no decision. "A decision has not yet been made on the issue," Saar told a news conference in Jerusalem. "The last time we discussed this issue was in the first term of President Trump," he said. "And so let's say that if it will be relevant, it will be discussed again also with our friends in Washington." The United States has for decades backed a two-state solution between the Zionist entity and the Palestinians and has urged the Zionist entity not to expand settlements. — Reuters



GAZA: Forcibly displaced Palestinians take shelter in tents set up at Palestine Stadium in Gaza City, on November 9, 2024. — AFP

Mother struggling to feed children in Gaza wishes for death

GAZA: Iltimad Al-Qanou, a Palestinian mother struggling to feed her seven children, feels abandoned by everyone. She sometimes feels that death is the best way to end her family's suffering after a year of war that has turned Gaza into a bombed-out wasteland gripped by hunger. "Let them drop a nuclear bomb and end it. We don't want this life we're living; we are dying slowly. Have mercy on us. Look at these children," said the mother of three boys and four girls aged between eight and 18.

Children in their town of Deir Al-Balah crowd at a charity site with empty pots, desperate for nourishment. Aid workers distribute lentil soup from a pot. But it is never enough to stave off hunger and ease widespread panic. Qanou says her family faces the Zionist strikes airstrikes that have killed tens of thousands of people and flattened much of Gaza on the one side, and hunger on the other. "No one is looking at us, no one cares about us. I ask the Arab countries to stand with us, at least to open the borders so food and supplies

can reach our children," she said. "They are all liars; they are lying to the people. The United States is standing with (the Zionist entity) against us, they are all united against us." Trucks carrying humanitarian aid were allowed through the Erez crossing into northern Gaza on Monday. The United States will decide this week on whether the Zionist entity has made progress toward improving the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and how Washington will respond.

Imminent famine

Global food security experts said there is a "strong likelihood" that famine is imminent in parts of northern Gaza as the Zionist entity pursues a military offensive against Hamas militants there. In response to the famine warning, the head of the UN Palestinian relief agency UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini, accused the Zionist entity of using hunger as a weapon.

Aside from the hunger, Gazans say they have no place to go that is safe after repeated evacuations left them living in tent encampments until they need to move again to escape more strikes. Some say their plight is even worse than the 1948 "Nakba" or Catastrophe when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were dispossessed of their homes to make way for Zionist settlers. "Conditions were better than what we face now. Now, we have no security, and no place," said displaced Gazan Mohamed Abou Qaraa. — Reuters

Taiwan investigators find no links between country, pager blasts

TAIPEI: Taiwan investigators said Monday there was no evidence that Taiwanese individuals or firms were involved in a deadly September attack targeting Hezbollah communications devices which exploded in Lebanon. "Our investigation has verified that no nationals or domestic companies were involved in Lebanon's high-profile pager detonation incidents," Taiwan prosecutors said in a statement. Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Sunday he "greenlighted the pager operation".

Exploding pagers and walkie-talkies killed nearly 40 people and wounded nearly 3,000, and preceded Israel's ongoing military operation in Lebanon which has killed thousands more. Questions and speculation have swirled over where the devices came from and how they were supplied to Hezbollah. The New York Times reported previously that the Zionist entity had inserted explosive material into a shipment of pagers from Taiwan's Gold Apollo, citing American and other anonymous officials. Gold Apollo has staunchly denied producing the devices.

Taiwan investigators on Monday cleared the company, its chairman and its employees of any involvement. "No concrete evidence of criminal activity has been discovered in this case, nor have any specific individuals been implicated in any criminal activity," said the prosecutors' office in Taipei's Shilin district. As a result, the case was closed, the office said. Gold Apollo, which is based in Xizhi district in New Taipei City, did not immediately respond to AFP's request for comment.

The prosecutors said they found that the AR-924 model pager had been designed, manufactured and shipped "outside Taiwan" by the "multinational group" Frontier Group Entity. Gold Apollo had authorized Frontier Group Entity to use its trademark under an agreement signed with a subsidiary of that company in June 2022, prosecutors said. — AFP

International

Pakistan's record smog triggers anguish, anxiety

Pollution makes life difficult as Punjab cities ban tuk-tuks, close parks, schools

LAHORE: On the streets of Pakistan's second biggest city, smog stings eyes and burns throats. Inside homes, few people can afford air purifiers to limit the damage of toxic particles that seep through doors and windows. Lahore — a city of 14 million people stuffed with factories on the border with India — regularly ranks among the world's most polluted cities, but it has hit record levels this month. Schools have closed in the main cities of Punjab province, of which Lahore is the capital, until November 17 in a bid to lower children's exposure to the pollution, especially during the morning commute when it is often at its highest. "The children are constantly coughing, they have constant allergies. In schools we saw that most of the children were falling sick," said Rafia Iqbal a 38-year-old primary school teacher in the city that borders India.

Her husband Muhammad Safdar, a 41-year-old advertising professional, said the level of pollution "is making daily living impossible". "We cannot move around, we cannot go outside, we can do nothing at all," he told AFP. According to the international Air Quality Index Scale, an index value of 300 or higher results is "hazardous" to health and Pakistan has regularly tipped over 1,000 on the scale.

In Multan, another city of several million people some 350 kilometers away, the AQI level passed 2,000 last week — a staggering number never seen before by incredulous residents. Access to parks, zoos, playgrounds, historic monuments, museums and recreational areas will be banned until November 17 and tuk-tuks with polluting two-stroke engines, along with restaurants that operate barbecues without filters have been banned in Lahore "hot-spots".

Air purifiers are luxury for most families, with the cheapest priced at around \$90, with the added cost of replacing filters every few months in such extreme pollution. Safdar and Iqbal do not have air purifiers and instead try to contain their children to one room. "Preventive measures should have been taken. It's a yearly occurrence," Safdar said of the government. "Obviously there is something missing in their solution."

Cloud of poison

A mix of low-grade fuel emissions from factories and vehicles, exacerbated by agricultural stubble burning, blanket the city each winter, trapped by cooler temperatures and slow-moving winds. The WHO says that air pollution can trigger strokes, heart disease, lung cancer and other respiratory diseases. It is particularly punishing for children and babies, and the elderly.

Last year, the Punjab government tested artificial rain to try to overcome the smog, and this year,



LAHORE: People walk around a park amid heavy smoggy conditions in Lahore on November 7, 2024. — AFP

trucks with water cannons sprayed the streets — with no results. Special smog counters to triage patients have been established at clinics across the province, with 900 people admitted to hospital in Lahore alone on Tuesday.

Doctor Qurat ul Ain, a hospital doctor for 15 years, witnesses the damage from an emergency rooms in Lahore. "This year smog is much more than previous years and the number of patients suffering from its effects is

greater too," she told AFP. Many arrive with labored breathing or coughing fits and reddened eyes, often the elderly, children and young men who have breathed in the toxic air while on the back of motorbikes. "We tell people not to go out and otherwise to wear a mask. We tell them not to touch their eyes with their hands, especially children," she adds.

For days the concentration of polluting micro-particles PM2.5 in Punjab has been dozens

of times higher than that deemed tolerable by the World Health Organization (WHO). Doctor Alia Haider, also a climate activist, is calling for awareness campaigns for patients who often do not know the dangers of smog. Children from poor neighborhoods, she said, are the first victims because they live all year round with pollutants of different types. "We are stuck in our own poison," she said. It's like a cloud of gas over the city. — AFP

10 killed in India's Manipur after fight with security forces

GUWAHATI, India: Ten armed men were killed in a gunfight with security forces in India's remote northeastern state of Manipur on Monday after trying to attack a police station, officials said. Manipur has been suffering unrest since last year, when the majority Meitei community and the tribal Kukis clashed after a court ordered the state government to consider extending special economic benefits and quotas in government jobs and education enjoyed by the Kukis to the Meiteis as well.

The state of 3.2 million people has been divided into two ethnic enclaves — a valley controlled by the Meiteis and the Kuki-dominated hills — since the conflict began in May 2023. The areas are separated by a stretch of no-man's land monitored by federal paramilitary forces. At least 250 people have been killed and some 60,000 displaced. State police described Monday's attackers as "armed militants", saying in a statement that security forces and police had responded fiercely and brought the situation under control after around 45 minutes of heavy gunfire. — Reuters

Spain announces fresh flood aid of almost €3.8bn

MADRID: The political reckoning over Spain's deadliest floods in decades must wait until after the country recovers from the disaster, which triggered widespread anger at the governing class, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said on Monday. His government also announced a fresh aid package worth almost 3.8 billion euros as Spain counts the cost of the October 29 disaster that has killed 222 people. The exceptional Mediterranean storm that lashed the European nation particularly devastated the eastern Valencia region, which has suffered most of the deaths and destruction. Outrage at the authorities for their perceived mismanagement before and after the floods triggered mass protests on Saturday, the largest in Valencia city which drew 130,000 people.

Demonstrators have demanded the resignation of Sanchez and the Valencia region's conservative leader Carlos Mazon, but the left-wing premier insisted all efforts must focus on reconstruction. "Later will come the political debate about what things we must improve in the face of this climate emergency," Sanchez told a news conference. Mazon, who will appear before the regional parliament on Thursday to



VALENCIA: Protesters confront police during a demonstration to demand the resignation of Valencia Regional President Carlos Mazon on November 9, 2024. — AFP

explain his administration's decisions, conceded that "errors may have been committed" and "everyone" would be obliged to review them.

Critics have questioned the efficiency of the Valencia region's alert system that in some cases only reached residents' telephones after the water began gushing through towns. Volunteers have supplied desperately needed food, water, medicine and cleaning equipment to some devastated towns as the authorities took days to reach them. The feeling of neglect has given birth to the slogan "only the people save the people", but Sanchez insisted "we are all the state" on Monday.

The torrents of muddy water wrecked roads and

railways, tossed cars, gutted shops and submerged fields, with the final bill expected to soar to tens of billions of euros. Sanchez unveiled a second aid package worth 3.76 billion euros (\$4 billion) to reinforce a cash injection of 10.6 billion euros announced last week. Compensation will be streamlined and extended to more residents and property — farmers will receive fresh aid totaling 200 million euros and borrowers can benefit from more flexible mortgage repayments until 2026. Another 500 million euros will go towards clearing mud and debris and repairing swamped sewers in the hardest-hit towns, Sanchez said.

Furlough requests affecting 9,000 people have been submitted and the first insurance claims are being paid out following last week's measures, Sanchez said, adding that the government was shielding the income of around 400,000 workers. Sanchez has compared the measures to the state's economic intervention during the COVID-19 crisis and said the government "will be there with all the necessary resources and for as long as it takes".

Thousands of soldiers, police officers, civil guards and emergency services are repairing infrastructure, distributing relief and searching for dozens of missing people. Sanchez said almost all affected homes had been reconnected to the power and telephone networks but repairing roads and railways would take far longer. National railway company Renfe said the high-speed line connecting Madrid with Valencia would resume on Thursday. — AFP

Kuwait urges truce, protection...

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait calls for holding the Zionist occupation accountable in compliance with the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice regarding the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of occupation forces in the occupied Palestinian territory, he said. "Kuwait condemns the (Zionist) occupation's issuance of legislation aimed at banning the work of UNRWA in the occupied Palestinian territories," he added.

HH Sheikh Sabah renewed Kuwait's full support for all efforts made by Qatar, Egypt and the United States to reach cease-fire in Gaza. Moreover, he reiterated Kuwait's support for the international coalition to implement the two-state solution led by Saudi Arabia, praising the courageous steps taken by a number of friendly countries to recognize the State of Palestine, calling on the rest of countries that believe in the principles of justice, fairness and equality to take similar steps.

"Kuwait stresses its firm and historic principled position supporting the Palestinian people in their struggle to end the (Zionist) occupation, achieve all their legitimate political rights, and establish their independent state on their land within the borders of June 4, 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital," HH Sheikh Sabah said. He thanked the kingdom's leadership and people for hosting this urgent summit, conveying the greetings of HH the Amir to all the participants.

Saudi Arabia also called for immediate ceasefires in Gaza and Lebanon at the joint Arab League and Organization of Islamic Cooperation summit. Arab and Muslim leaders gathered in Riyadh, more than a year into the Zionist-Hamas war and regional escalation, in what is seen

as a chance to send a message to US president-elect Donald Trump. Opening the summit, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said the international community must "immediately halt the (Zionist) actions against our brothers in Palestine and Lebanon", condemning the Zionist entity's campaign in Gaza as genocide. Saudi Arabia "affirms its support for the brothers in Palestine and Lebanon to overcome the disastrous humanitarian consequences of the ongoing (Zionist) aggression," he said.

A draft resolution for the summit stresses "firm support" for "national rights" for the Palestinian people, "foremost among which is their right to freedom and to an independent, sovereign state". Just hours earlier, newly appointed Zionist Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said it was not "realistic" to establish a Palestinian state, dismissing it as a "Hamas state". "I don't think this position is realistic today and we must be realistic," Saar said in Jerusalem after Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas reiterated his commitment to a "sovereign" country. Far-right Zionist Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said on Monday he hoped the Zionist entity would extend sovereignty into the occupied West Bank in 2025 and that he would push the government to engage the incoming Trump administration to gain Washington's support.

Prince Mohammed also called on the Zionist entity not to attack Iran, highlighting improving ties between Saudi Arabia and its former regional rival. He said the international community should oblige the Zionist entity "to respect the sovereignty of the sisterly Islamic Republic of Iran and not to violate its lands".

In October, Saudi Arabia announced it had held war games with Iran and other countries in the Sea of Oman. On Sunday, Saudi Arabia's top military official, Fayyad Al-Ruwaili, arrived in Tehran for talks with Iranian officials. Prince Mohammed and Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian spoke by phone on Sunday ahead of Monday's summit, which is a follow-up to the gathering in November 2023. — Agencies

UK univs face crunch amid...

Continued from Page 1

"It's good for my career," he said of enrolling abroad. Thinking ahead to when he will return to China, he added: "I will be able to apply for a foreign company." His fees for the academic year are £31,000. British students attending universities in England have paid a maximum of £9,250 since 2017.

The Labour government, elected in the summer, announced last week that the cap would rise to £9,535 from next year, a move welcomed by universities who have been calling for an increase for years. Universities UK (UUK), which represents 141 British higher education institutions, warned at its conference in September that funding per student is at its lowest level since 2004. It estimates that the £9,250 fee is worth less than £6,000 because of inflation, leading to deficits in teaching and research.

"We are all feeling the crunch," UUK president Sally Mapstone told the conference. Universities have welcomed more foreign students in a bid to fill budget gaps, to the point where many are financially dependent on them. According to a parliamentary report, foreign students make up more than half the student body at London's University of the Arts and Cranfield University, a science and engineering institute just north of the British capital.

The Financial Times reported earlier this year that some universities, including York, have lowered their admission criteria to attract more students from abroad. But the previous Conservative government, ousted from power in July, complicated the univer-

sities' task by imposing restrictions on student visas as it sought to reduce record levels of regular migration. It forbade foreign students from bringing family members with them, with a few exceptions, and prevented them from switching to work visas while studying.

In the first four months of 2024, there were 30,000 fewer applications from overseas than in the same period in 2023, according to official statistics. "These hard numbers confirm our fear that the previous government's changes have made the UK a less attractive study destination," said Nick Hillman, director of the Higher Education Policy Institute think-tank.

Provost Ian Dunn of Coventry University, where more than a third of the 30,000 students are from overseas said the Tories' "narrative was very destructive". The university had already been impacted by Brexit. "We had 4,400 students from the European Union. Now we're probably at 10 percent of that," he said, adding that the situation was "difficult".

A lecturer at another English university told AFP that teaching positions as well as courses had been cut. "The drop in international students has dramatically worsened the crisis for us," she said on condition of anonymity because she was not authorized to talk to the media. "Some have preferred to go to Canada, Australia or the Netherlands, where courses are taught in English," she added.

Coventry University may have found the answer by partnering with institutions overseas to open campuses in several countries, including Egypt, Morocco, India and China. At the end of their studies, students may not have set foot in the UK but they still "obtain a degree from Coventry University", said Dunn. — AFP

Trump announces former ICE director as 'border czar'

Republican Congresswoman Elise Stefanik appointed as US ambassador to UN

WASHINGTON: US president-elect Donald Trump said late Sunday he was bringing back headline immigration official Tom Homan to oversee the country's borders in the incoming administration. The 78-year-old Republican tycoon has pledged to launch — on day one of his presidency — the largest deportation operation of undocumented immigrants in US history. "I am pleased to announce that the former ICE Director, and stalwart on Border Control, Tom Homan, will be joining the Trump Administration, in charge of our Nation's Borders ("The Border Czar")." Trump posted on his social network Truth Social. "I've known Tom for a long time, and there is nobody better at policing and controlling our Borders."

Trump said Homan will be in charge of "all Deportation of Illegal Aliens back to their Country of Origin". Homan, who led immigration enforcement during part of Trump's first administration, appeared at the Republican National Convention in July, telling supporters: "I got a message to the millions of illegal immigrants that Joe Biden's released in our country: You better start packing now."

Trump — who never conceded his 2020 loss — sealed a remarkable comeback to the presidency in the November 5 vote, cementing what is set to be more than a decade of US politics dominated by his hardline right-wing stance. He will not be inaugurated until January, and so far has only made one cabinet appointment, naming his campaign manager Susie Wiles — who he calls "ice baby" due to her supposedly unflappable temperament — as his White House chief of staff.

Late Sunday, Trump told the New York Post he has offered Republican Congresswoman Elise Stefanik the job of US ambassador to the United Nations. Stefanik, in her fifth term in office, told the newspaper she had accepted the role and was "truly honored".

Super-charge tensions

While the US government has struggled for years to manage its southern border with Mexico, Trump has super-charged concerns by claiming an "invasion" is underway by migrants he says will rape and murder Americans. During his campaign, he repeatedly railed against undocumented immigrants, employing violent rhetoric about those who "poison the blood" of the United States. In rally speeches, he wildly exaggerated local tensions and misled his audiences about immigration statistics and policy.

Violent crime, which spiked under Trump, has fallen in every year of President Joe Biden's administration. Migrants commit fewer crimes proportionately than the native population, though foreign suspects have been named in a few high-profile cases of violent attacks on women and children, infuriating Republicans. The number of US border patrol encounters with migrants crossing over from Mexico illegally is now about the same as in 2020, the last year of Trump's presidency, after peaking at a record 250,000 for the month of December 2023.

Trump vowed to tackle migrant gangs using the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 — which allows the federal government to round up and deport foreigners belonging to enemy countries — as part of a mass



CIUDAD JUAREZ: Migrants embrace their relatives during an event held every year since 2016 on the US-Mexico border which brings together people who, due to lack of documentation, cannot leave the United States to see their families again. — AFP

deportation drive he christened "Operation Aurora." Aurora was the scene of a viral video showing armed Latinos rampaging through an apartment block that spurred sweeping, false narratives about the town

being terrorized by Latin American migrants. Trump has similarly promoted the fictitious story that Haitian migrants in Springfield, Ohio, are eating residents' pets. — AFP

Reports that Trump spoke to Putin are 'pure fiction': Kremlin

WEST PALM BEACH/WASHINGTON: The Kremlin dismissed on Monday reports that US President-elect Donald Trump had spoken to Russian President Vladimir Putin in recent days as "pure fiction." A source told Reuters on Sunday that Trump, who has criticized the scale of US military and financial support for Kyiv and said he will end the war quickly, had spoken to Putin in recent days. The source told Reuters they were familiar with the conversation, first reported by The Washington Post, which cited unidentified sources as saying Trump had told Putin that he should not escalate the Ukraine war.

In an unusual move, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday no such call had taken place between Putin and Trump. "This is completely untrue. This is pure fiction, it's just false information," he told reporters. "There was no conversation." "This is the most obvious example of the quality of the information that is being published now, sometimes even in fairly reputable publications," he said.

Asked whether Putin had plans for any contacts with Trump, Peskov said: "There are no concrete plans yet." Trump spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky last Wednesday. Asked about the purported Trump-Putin call, Steven Cheung, Trump's communications director, said: "We do not comment on private calls between

President Trump and other world leaders."

Republican Trump will take office on January 20 after winning the November 5 presidential election. Biden has invited Trump to the Oval Office on Wednesday, the White House said. US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said on Sunday Biden's top message would be his commitment to ensure a peaceful transfer of power, and he will also talk to Trump about what's happening in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. "President Biden will have the opportunity over the next 70 days to make the case to the Congress and to the incoming administration that the United States should not walk away from Ukraine, that walking away from Ukraine means more instability in Europe," Sullivan told CBS News' "Face the Nation" show. Sullivan was asked whether Biden would ask Congress to pass legislation to authorize more funding for Ukraine. "I'm not here to put forward a specific legislative proposal. President Biden will make the case that we do need ongoing resources for Ukraine beyond the end of his term," he said.

Ukraine funding

Washington has provided tens of billions of dollars worth of US military and economic aid to Ukraine since it was invaded by Russia in February 2022, funding that Trump has repeatedly criticized and rallied against with other Republican lawmakers. Trump said last year that if he had been in the White House at the time, Putin would not have invaded Ukraine. He told Reuters Ukraine may have to cede territory to reach a peace agreement, something Kiev rejects and Biden has never suggested.

Zelensky said on Thursday he was not aware of any details of Trump's plan to end the war quickly



Russia's President Vladimir Putin (left) and US President-elect Donald Trump.

and that he was convinced a rapid end would entail major concessions by Kyiv. According to the Government Accountability Office, Congress appropriated over \$174 billion to Ukraine under Biden. The pace of the aid is almost certain to drop under Trump, with Republicans set to take control of the US Senate with a 52-seat majority.

Control of the US House of Representatives in the next Congress is not yet clear, with some votes still being counted. Republicans have won 213 seats, according to Edison Research, just shy of the 218 needed for a majority. If Republicans win both chambers, it will mean the majority of Trump's agenda will have a significantly easier time passing through Congress. Republican US Senator Bill Hagerty, a Trump ally who is considered a top contender for secretary of state, criticized US funding for Ukraine in a CBS interview. "The American people want sovereignty protected here in America before we spend our funds and resources protecting the sovereignty of another nation," Hagerty said. — Reuters

Lawmakers vote to keep embattled Ishiba as Japan PM

TOKYO: Japanese lawmakers voted for Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba to stay on as leader on Monday, after his scandal-tarnished coalition lost its parliamentary majority in a lower house election last month. Ishiba, who called the snap poll after taking office on October 1, must now run a fragile minority government as protectionist Donald Trump returns to office in main ally the United States, tension rises with rivals China and North Korea, and domestic pressure mounts to rein in the cost of living. His Liberal Democratic Party and coalition partner Komeito won the biggest bloc of seats in the election but lost the majority held since 2012, leaving him beholden to small opposition parties to pass his policy agenda.

"In light of the very challenging election, we must transform into a national party that serves the people, that empathizes with the peoples' struggles, their misery, and their joy," Ishiba said at a press conference after parliament voted to keep him in his job. Underlining his party's fragility, however, Monday's vote, broadcast on television, went to a run-off for the first time in 30 years, with no candidate able to muster majority support in the first round.

Ishiba prevailed in that run-off, garnering 221 votes, well clear of the head of the main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party and ex-PM Yoshihiko Noda, but still short of a majority in the 465-seat lower house. Japan will hold elections next year for the less powerful upper house, where the ruling coalition's slim majority could also be at risk if Ishiba cannot revive public trust roiled by a scandal over unrecorded donations to lawmakers.

Budget challenge

His imminent challenge is compiling a supplementary budget for the fiscal year through March, under pressure from voters and opposition parties to raise spending on welfare and take steps to offset rising prices. For approval he needs the backing of at least one opposition party, which is most likely to be the Democratic Party for the People (DPP) headed by Yuichiro Tamaki. He has held co-operation talks with Ishiba, but DPP lawmakers did not vote for Ishiba to stay on as prime minister.

Tamaki is also in a precarious position after admitting Monday to an extra-marital affair revealed in a tabloid magazine. With his premiership confirmed, Ishiba appointed three new cabinet ministers, one each for transport, justice and agriculture, two of whom replace LDP lawmakers who lost their seats in the lower house election.

Ishiba now has to prepare for a slate of international engagements, including a summit of the Group of 20 big economies in Brazil on November 18 and 19. He is also trying to arrange a stopover in the United States on the way to or from that gathering to meet Trump. The Japanese leader spoke to the president-elect for the first time on Thursday in a "friendly" five-minute conversation during which he congratulated him on his election victory. — Reuters



HARGEISA, Somalia: Supporters of the main opposition party Waddani dance and chant slogans while attending a final campaign rally in Hargeisa on November 8, 2024.



A girl holds a flag as supporters of the ruling Kulmiye party gather to dance and chant party slogans. — AFP photos

Somaliland erupts in a riot of color ahead of election

HARGEISA, Somalia: As the clock ticks down to Somaliland's presidential election, the breakaway region of Somalia changes color every day as political parties take turns to stage their campaign rallies. From Borama in the west to the Erigavo mountains in the northeast and the capital Hargeisa, cities and towns have erupted in a riot of color.

One day it was the green and yellow of the incumbent president Muse Bihi's party Kulmiye (Unity), another the orange of Wadani (National Party), or the dark green of the Social Justice Party. The self-proclaimed republic, which unilaterally declared independence from Somalia in 1991, is holding a direct election on Wednesday to choose a president.

The vote comes amid high tensions in the Horn of Africa over a maritime deal between Somaliland and Ethiopia that has enraged Mogadishu, which rejects Hargeisa's independence claim. Universal suffrage is a rarity in Somalia, where a complex clan-based indirect voting system has been in place for more than half a century. Bihi, who has led Somaliland since 2017, is facing challenges from Wadani's Ab-



A boy rides a bus decorated with electoral posters carrying supporters of the main opposition party Waddani.

dirahman Mohamed Abdullahi, also known as "Irro", and Faysal Ali Warabe of the Social Justice Party. The multi-party system is the pride of Somaliland's six million inhabitants, who believe their peaceful democratic norms should earn them the international recognition they have been seeking for 33 years.

'Pillars of democracy'

"There is no country in the world where people campaign like this," says Abdisamad, a 34-year-old social worker. "Democracy is a habit here. 'It's much better than an American election,' he smiles, referring to the tense climate of the campaign in the United States

that led to Donald Trump's November 5 election victory. The campaign has often been heated — with the opposition for example accusing Bihi of dividing Somaliland — and the outcome between the incumbent and his main rival Abdullahi is up in the air.

But in the streets and at the campaign rallies, the mood is more festive, with the crowds, mostly women and young people, shouting with joy. On Saturday, Hargeisa and other cities were filled with Bihi supporters waving umbrellas, flags and green and yellow caps, singing and dancing to the sound of the party's anthems. The day before, the same streets were filled with the blaring horns of Wadani's orange cars, buses and trucks and activists chanting "Muse out!" and "Wadani, victory, victory, victory!"

Like the last three direct presidential elections since 2003, "we want this election to be peaceful," says Anab Jamal Muhammad, an unemployed mother of nine, who says she will cast her ballot for Abdullahi. In a region of East Africa where elections often give rise to violence, many Somaliland voters say they want to show off their democratic model to the world, hoping it will help win the recognition of the international community. "Somaliland is a functional government, the people of Somaliland are democratic, they use direct democracy, they have held elections, elected their representatives, their presidents," says Mahmoud Mohamed Hassan, a 38-year-old social sciences professor. "All the pillars of democracy are present in Somaliland," he says. "Why don't (other) countries recognize us?" — AFP



TOKYO: Lawmakers applaud as Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba (standing left) is reappointed as leader during a special session of parliament in Tokyo on November 11, 2024. — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2024

COP29 talks stall from start

Talks come with warnings that world is far off track to meet Paris agreement goals

BAKU: The COP29 talks opened Monday with calls for global cooperation and fresh warnings about climate disasters—but proceedings quickly ground to a halt in a fight over the agenda.

Donald Trump's re-election is already hanging over the talks in Baku where negotiators are meant to agree new funding for climate action in poorer countries.

As they opened, UN climate chief Simon Stiell told countries: "Now is the time to show that global cooperation is not down for the count." And he warned rich

countries struggling to agree a new funding target to "dispense with any idea that climate finance is charity."

"An ambitious new climate finance goal is entirely in the self-interest of every nation, including the largest and wealthiest." But the official proceedings in the capital of oil- and gas-rich Azerbaijan stalled almost immediately. "They're not going to resume until they resolve... the agenda," said Alden Meyer, senior associate at climate change think tank E3G.

The COP29 president "can't put negotiating teams

to work" until they adopt it, he added. Negotiators must increase a \$100 billion-a-year target to help developing nations prepare for worsening climate impacts and wean their economies off fossil fuels. How much will be on offer, who will pay, and who can access the funds are some of the major points of contention.

Developing countries are pushing for trillions of dollars and insist money should be mostly grants rather than loans, but negotiators are tight-lipped over what final figure might emerge.

COP29 President Mukhtar Babayev acknowledged the need was "in the trillions" but said a more "realistic goal" was somewhere in the hundreds of billions. "These negotiations are complex and difficult," the former executive of Azerbaijan's national oil company said at the opening of the summit.

Developing countries warn that without adequate finance, they will struggle to offer ambitious updates to their climate goals, which countries are required to submit by early next year.

"The global North owes the global South a climate debt," said Tasneem Essop, executive director of Climate Action Network. "We will not leave this COP if the ambition level on the finance... doesn't match the scale at which finance must be delivered."

The small group of developed countries that currently contributes the money wants the donor pool expanded to include other rich nations and top emitters, including China and the Gulf states. That is firmly rejected by Beijing, with one Chinese official warning Sunday during a closed-door session that the talks should not aim to "renegotiate" existing agreements. Just a handful of leaders from the Group of 20, whose countries account for nearly 80 percent of global emissions, are attending. US President Joe Biden is staying away.

Afghanistan will however be sending a delegation for the first time since the Taliban took power. They are expected to have observer status. Diplomats have



BAKU: UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and COP28 President Sultan Ahmed Al-Jaber and COP29 President Mukhtar Babayev attend the official handover of the COP presidency in Baku on November 11, 2024. — AFP

insisted that the absences, and Trump's win, will not detract from the serious work at hand.

The talks come with fresh warnings that the world is far off track to meet the goals of the Paris agreement. The UN said Monday that 2024 is on track to break new temperature records, and the Paris climate agreement's goals were now "in great peril".

The period from 2015 to 2024 will also be the warmest decade ever recorded, the UN's World Meteorological Organization said in a new report. The climate deal commits to keep warming below 2 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels, preferably below 1.5C. If the world tops that level this year, it would not be an immediate breach of the Paris deal, which measures temperatures over decades.

But it suggests much greater climate action is needed. Last month, the UN warned the world is on a path towards a catastrophic 3.1C of warming this century based on current actions. More than 51,000 people are expected at the talks, which run from November 11 to 22. For the second year running the talks will be hosted by a country heavily reliant on fossil fuels, after the United Arab Emirates last year. Azerbaijan has also been accused of stifling dissent by persecuting political opponents, detaining activists and suffocating independent media. — AFP

Stocks and dollar climb, bitcoin hits record high

LONDON: US and European stocks powered higher, the dollar gained and bitcoin extended a record run on Monday, as traders took their lead from events in the United States and China. Chinese stock markets closed mixed and oil prices slid after China's latest plans to stimulate its economy fell short of expectations. Wall Street's three main indices pushed into record territory at the opening bell.

"Last week's huge post-election rally hasn't run out of gas yet," said Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare. Stocks rallied last week on hopes that a second Donald Trump administration—supported by a Republican Congress—would push through a slew of business-friendly policies including deregulation and tax cuts, offsetting concerns about possible trade wars.

O'Hare said there were no new developments fueling the rise. "In effect, it is a carryover of the 'old' news of the election outcome powering an ongoing momentum trade and a fear of missing out on further gains," he said. Another cut in US interest rates by the Federal Reserve also helped fuel the record run last week.

While Fed officials declined to provide further guidance until updated projections are ready for its December meeting, the market still largely expects it to cut rates again then. "If more rate cuts from the Fed continue to be what is expected, then we could see further positive sentiment in US stocks," said Daniela Sabin Hathom, senior market analyst at Capital.com. European stocks saw solid gains in afternoon trading.

"European markets are enjoying an upbeat start to the week, with the uncertainty around trade relations with the US seemingly being put on the backburner," said Joshua Mahony, analyst at traders Scope Markets. The mood was less upbeat in China after Beijing said Friday it would ramp up a local debt ceiling, but fell short of announcing any new growth-boosting measures. — AFP



Financial Results 9 Months 2024

136 Million
KD Normalized Net Income Growth
6%

REVENUE

2%

1.45

KD Billion

EBITDA

0.4%
Normalized EBITDA Growth

505

KD Million

EPS

31

Fils

CUSTOMERS

47.2

Million

Zain Group Q3 and 9M 2024 revenue reaches 15-year high

Normalized net income grows 6% to reach \$442 million for 9M 2024

KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its consolidated financial results for the third quarter (Q3) and nine-month (9M) periods ended September 30, 2024, serving 47.2 million customers.

For 9M 2024, Zain generated a 15-year high consolidated revenue of KD 1.45 billion (\$4.71 billion), up 2 percent YoY. Consolidated EBITDA for the period reached KD 505 million (\$1.65 billion), with normalized EBITDA growth (excluding number range claim) remaining stable YoY, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 35 percent. Net income for the 9-month period reached KD 136 million (\$442 million) representing normalized net income growth of 6 percent, adjusted for number range claim and Tower transaction gain during nine-month period of 2023. Earnings per share amounted to 31 fils (\$0.10) for the nine-month period.

In Q3 2024, Zain generated a 15-year high consolidated revenue of KD 501 million (\$1.64 billion), up 4 percent YoY. EBITDA for the quarter reached KD 180 million (\$589 million), reflecting a 36 percent EBITDA margin. Net income for the three months amounted to KD 54 million (\$177 million), an increase of 1 percent YoY. Earnings per share for Q3 amounted to 13 fils (\$0.04).

Key operational notes for 3M & 9M 2024

- Interim cash dividend of 10 fils totaling KD 43.3 million (\$141.5 million) was distributed to eligible shareholders on October 6, 2024 for the first half of 2024
- The Q3 2024 performance is highlighted by net income growth of 9 percent in Zain Kuwait; 116 percent in Zain KSA; 82 percent in Zain Iraq; and 6 percent in Zain Jordan
- Currency devaluation in Sudan negatively impacted Q3 '24 key financial KPIs (currency devalued from SDG 638/USD in Sep '23 to SDG 1,982/USD by end of Sep '24)
- 9M 2024 data revenue grew 1 percent YoY to reach \$1.8 billion representing 38 percent of consolidated revenue
- Zain invested \$340 million in CAPEX, mainly FTTH expansion; spectrum acquisitions; and 4G and 5G upgrades
- Fintech services witness revenue growth of 13 percent for 9M 2024 powered by Tamen and Zain Cash
- Overall Group wide Enterprise revenue for 9M 2024 grew 6 percent including B2B Mobility
- ZainTECH revenue for 9M 2024 grew 92 percent with the consolidation of STS Arabia and the expansion of regional offices in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia
- Digital services including Dizlee API platform witness customer growth, driven by the addition of new gaming and streaming services
- Digital operators 'Yaqoot' in KSA and 'oodi' in Iraq recorded 9-month revenue growth of 21 percent and 120 percent, respectively
- Zain Group awarded 'Excellence in implementing Innovative Data Architectures'

Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group Osamah Al-Furaih said, "The strong foundations we have established over the years continue to drive shareholder value and empower us to overcome the various socio-economic challenges across our footprint where we continue to implement purposeful ESG practices. Our investments in latest technologies, network upgrades, digital infrastructure, and new business verticals with a focus on exceptional customer experience delivery, have positioned Zain as the digital service operator of choice for consumers, enterprises, and governments."

"On the back of the solid results achieved throughout the year, combined with our strong balance sheet and financial solvency, and in line with our declared 35 fils per share minimum dividend policy for three years commencing 2023, on October 6, 2024, we distributed 10 fils per share as interim dividends to shareholders. This is the fourth consecutive year we have done so, with this disbursement amounting to KD 43.3 million (\$141.5 million)."

"The Board and the Group management team continue to work closely with our colleagues in Sudan to navigate the ongoing social unrest. Our focus is on ensuring the safety of our people and maintaining commercial operations, so the community remains connected. We are sincerely grateful to the various government authorities in Kuwait and across our markets for their support of the ICT sector, which empowers Zain to provide meaningful connectivity and drive systemic change."

Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi commented, "Across our markets, man-



Zain Group Chairman Osamah Al-Furaih

The strong foundations we have built over the years continue to drive shareholder value and empower us to overcome the various socio-economic challenges



Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi

Excellent operational performance across markets driven by cost optimization and monetization efficiencies helped us to mitigate the impact of the crisis and currency devaluation in Sudan



- Q3 2024 revenue up 4% YoY to reach KD 501 million (\$1.64 billion); with 9M 2024 revenue up 2 percent YoY to reach KD 1.45 billion (\$4.71 billion)
- Solid performance in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan and Bahrain for the Q3 2024 period
- A total of KD 43.3 million (\$141.5 million) in interim dividends distributed to shareholders on October 6, 2024
- Data revenue for 9M 2024 grew 1 percent to reach \$1.8 billion, representing 38 percent of consolidated revenue
- Overall enterprise revenue for 9M 2024 grows 6 percent including B2B Mobility
- ZainTECH revenue for 9M 2024 grows 92 percent with the consolidation of STS Arabia
- Robust revenue growth in digital operators, KSA's 'Yaqoot' and Iraq's 'oodi'
- Fintech services witness revenue growth of 13 percent for 9M 2024

agement teams have diligently and successfully overcome competitive and currency challenges, delivering excellent operational performances in line with expectations. Our operations in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, and Bahrain have all reported solid year-on-year growth in their key financial metrics. Furthermore, we are witnessing robust revenue growth in our strategic business verticals, namely ZainTECH, Zain Omantel International and in our Fintech and Digital Services entities. These all-round efforts have resulted in Zain recording 15-year revenue highs for both the 3rd quarter and 9-month periods."

"In Sudan, our concerted efforts to ensure network service availability combined with customer

and price revamp initiatives are mitigating the impacts of the ongoing crisis. However, the substantial and unavoidable currency devaluation in the market continues to impact heavily an otherwise impressive operational quarter for the Group overall."

"Five years ago we implemented our '4Sight' profitability-focused growth strategy that has resulted in the implementation of significant digital transformation, cost optimization, and data monetization initiatives across all facets of the company's business. This has been the main driver of our success and resilience in recent years. 4Sight also entailed the rollout of new business verticals, allowing us to capitalize on new and lucrative market opportunities

in ICT, Fintech, Venture Capital, Digital Services, Esports, Towers and Wholesale business areas. We are confident that the positive momentum of these new business verticals and others in the pipeline, will create substantial shareholder value, as we focus on accelerating their growth."

"The recognition for 'Excellence in Innovative Data Architectures' attained by Zain Group's Data Office, in collaboration with ZainTECH, validates the company's focus on becoming a leader in the ICT industry. By embracing a data-driven approach that is a catalyst for the uptake of AI, we are playing a pivotal role in turning potential into reality. We are empowering AI systems to learn, adapt, and drive innovation and digital transformation as our data practices help business users within Zain to access the right information at the right time, to make informed decisions for the company and customers alike."

Operational review of key markets

KUWAIT: Zain Group's flagship operation maintained its market leadership, with a customer base of 2.6 million. The Group's most profitable operation saw revenue for the third-quarter (Q3 2024) grow 4 percent to reach KD 94 million (\$308 million), EBITDA for Q3 grew 9 percent to reach KD 36 million (\$119 million), reflecting an EBITDA margin of 39 percent. Q3 net income also grew 9 percent YoY to reach KD 23 million (\$76 million). To maintain its growth momentum, the operator continues to invest in 5G upgrades and rollout out new appealing digital services enhancing its position as the operator of choice for consumers, enterprises and governments.

SAUDI ARABIA: Revenue for Q3 2024 grew 2 percent YoY to reach \$689 million, with EBITDA growing 2 percent to reach \$228 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 33 percent. Net income for Q3 soared 116 percent to reach \$40 million. The operator's 5G network, which now covers 66 percent of the country, powered a 4 percent growth in data revenue, accounting for 40 percent of total revenue in 9M 2024, while customer base expanded by 1 percent to reach 9 million customers. The company saw significant growth in revenue from the enterprise sector and widespread adoption of its 'Yaqoot' digital service and appeal of its fintech arm, 'Tamen'.

IRAQ: Revenue for Q3 2024 jumped 10 percent YoY to reach \$285 million, with EBITDA growing 19 percent reaching \$121 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 42 percent. Q3 net profit soared 82 percent to reach \$39 million. 9M 2024 data revenue grew 27 percent representing 38 percent of total revenue. Operator's customer base increased 8 percent to reach 19.5 million customers maintaining its market leading position. Socio-economic stability and operator's renewed focus on expanding its network across the country combined with new digital offerings and optimization efficiencies, coupled with solid growth of its digital operator 'oodi', are the key drivers for these outstanding results.

SUDAN: Revenue for Q3 2024 decreased 18 percent when compared to Q2 2024, to reach \$58 million, EBITDA dropped 34 percent when compared to Q2 2024 reaching \$23 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 39 percent. However, net income for Q3 2024 grew 1 percent when compared to Q2 2024, reaching \$34 million on account of USD 20m impairment of assets in Q2 2024. Customer base for Sudan reached 8.7 million.

Given the rapidly evolving situation and the significant currency devaluation in Sudan, the Q3 2024 performance has been compared to Q2 2024 instead of Q3 2023 to ensure a timely reflection of results.

JORDAN: Q3 2024 revenue grew 6 percent YoY to reach \$142 million, with EBITDA for Q3 growing 1 percent to reach \$56 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 40 percent. Net income for Q3 grew 6 percent to reach \$21 million. The ongoing expansion of 5G, FTTH and 4G services across the country-led to data revenue growth of 7 percent for the 9M 2024, which now represents 51 percent of total revenue. Zain Jordan served 4.3 million customers, up 7 percent, maintaining its market leadership.

BAHRAIN: Revenue for Q3 2024 grew 13 percent YoY to reach \$50 million, with EBITDA growing 11 percent YoY to reach \$17 million, reflecting an EBITDA margin of 33 percent. Q3 net income increased 1 percent to reach \$4.3 million. 9M 2024 data revenue grew 6 percent to represent 46 percent of total revenue.

Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) 2024 for the first nine months (9M) 2024

Consolidated Revenue	KD 1.45 billion - USD 4.71 billion
EBITDA	KD 505 million - USD 1.65 billion
EBITDA Margin	35%
Net Income	KD 136 million - USD 442 million
EPS	31 fils - USD 0.10

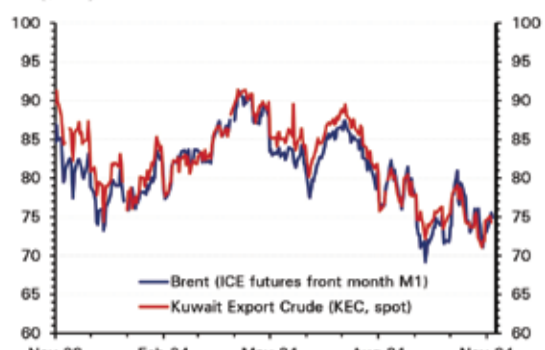
Group Key Performance Indicators (KD and USD) for third quarter (Q3) 2024

Consolidated Revenue	KD 501 million - USD 1.64 billion
EBITDA	KD 180 million - USD 589 million
EBITDA Margin	36%
Net Income	KD 54 million - USD 177 million
EPS	13 fils - USD 0.04

Oil prices below mid-year highs

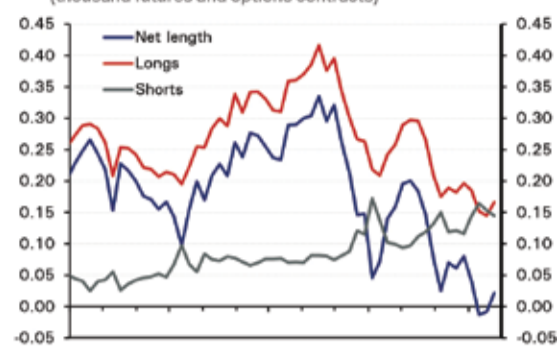
Global oil demand growth softening amid weak Chinese economic activity

Chart 1: Oil prices (\$/bbl)



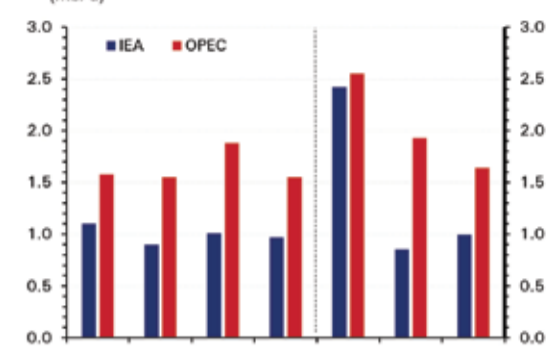
Source: LSEG Workspace, KPC

Chart 2: Money manager net length (thousand futures and options contracts)



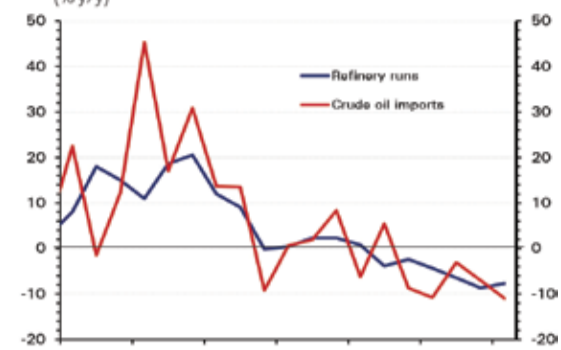
Source: Bloomberg, ICE

Chart 3: World oil demand growth (mb/d)



Source: IEA, OPEC, mees

Chart 4: China crude imports and refinery runs (% y/y)



Source: NBS, Haver; *Data averaged for Jan-Feb

KUWAIT: Oil prices have retreated well below their mid-year highs, now ranging in the low to mid-\$70s amid predominantly bearish sentiment linked to worries about a potentially oversupplied market due to softer oil demand growth. This drop came despite a resurgence in geopolitical risk stemming from an escalation in hostilities between Zionist entity and Iran.

China's economic troubles have been central to the weaker demand narrative, even as economic activity in the US and other advanced economies is supported by monetary policy easing by the US Fed and the ECB. International energy institutions the IEA and OPEC have, nevertheless, lowered their oil demand growth forecasts for 2024 and 2025, with the former projecting an oversupplied market in 2025 amid ongoing non-OPEC supply gains and irrespective of OPEC+ production policy decisions. OPEC, for its part, with one eye on prices and the other on global inventories, rolled over its 2.2 mb/d of output cuts twice in recent months and now sees January 2025 as the month in which to begin resupplying the market. The outlook for prices in 2025 is lower in this scenario, with Brent expected to average around \$70/bbl, down from an expected \$80 in 2024 and \$82 in 2023.

Macroeconomic concerns

Oil prices fell sharply in Q3 2024, weighed down by concerns over the health of the global and Chinese economies in particular and the weakening prospects for oil consumption. International benchmark Brent shed almost 17 percent in Q3, closing the quarter at \$71.8/bbl, having dropped briefly to a near-three-year low of \$69 in early September following the release of weak Chinese data. Local marker Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) shed 15.5 percent q/q to close Q3 down at \$74.3/bbl.

Further reinforcing the negative sentiment, OPEC, for the first time since setting its 2024 forecast, revised oil demand down in August, citing weaker than expected Chinese consumption. The organization has since followed this up with two further demand downgrades. Brent did tick up in October (+1.9 percent), ending the month at \$73.2/bbl, but this was almost entirely a reflection of the Zionist entity-Iran confrontation, which threatened at one point to escalate to a direct strike by the Zionist entity on Iran's nuclear or oil facilities. A hit on the latter would almost certainly have knocked out some Iranian supply and sparked a retaliation that could have endangered the crude production or processing facilities in the GCC.

Hedge funds

With oversupply concerns uppermost in traders'

minds, hedge funds turned net bearish on Brent in Q3 for the first time on record, according to trading data published by the International Commodities Exchange (ICE) Europe. In the week ending 10 September, the volume of 'short' contracts exceeded the number of 'long' contracts by 12,680.

This difference, known as net length, remained negative in the subsequent week as well (-8,141) and is the only time in data that goes back to 2011 that such a phenomenon has occurred. The bearish gauge was not limited to crude either: money managers were net short in diesel (-38,609 lots), while in gasoline the net long position (+5,193 lots) was the least bullish in more than seven years. Brent net length was back in positive territory in October and November as speculators rushed to establish long positions amid resurgent geopolitical risk in the Middle East.

Demand

Oil demand growth estimates were revised down in Q3 and again in October by the major reporting organizations as global economic prospects turned more uncertain and as China's economy looked to be in a weaker state than earlier thought. The International Energy Agency (IEA) now sees oil demand growing at about 0.86 mb/d in 2024, a steep decline from 2.4 mb/d in 2023 and well down on the historical annual average. In 2025, the IEA thinks there may be only a modest increase in oil demand growth, at 1 mb/d. (Chart 3.) For context, the IMF, in its October World Economic Outlook, while acknowledging the resilience of the global economy, explained that its forecast for economic growth, at 3.2 percent in both 2024 and 2025, is underwhelming.

The downgrade to oil demand growth by the OPEC secretariat, was perhaps more telling, given that the organization had pushed back against the weakening growth narrative with a far more bullish 2024 growth estimate of 2.25 mb/d that it had maintained for more than a year. In October, it brought that down to 1.93 mb/d for 2024, which is still an eye-catchingly wide divergence from the IEA, and 1.64 mb/d for 2025.

China's underwhelming economic performance in 2024 has been central to the weakening growth narrative. The government has unveiled a series of stimulus measures to kick-start the economy, albeit a modest one, aimed at the real estate sector specifically and consumption more broadly. The downturn in economic activity was visible in the year-over-year declines in both crude oil imports and refinery runs, the former by more than 10 percent in September.

The IEA reckons oil consumption in China was, at the last reading in August, trending around 3 percent lower (-500 kb/d) compared to the same period last year, such that its contribution to oil demand growth this year will be limited to 20 percent rather than 70 percent as it was last year. The IEA also went further than others in arguing that oil demand weakness in China is not just cyclical, but also structural, with natural gas and batteries increasingly replacing oil and its products, notably diesel, in the transportation sector.

Supply

OPEC+ extended voluntary cuts by two months in September and again, by one month, in November. Faced with weakening oil demand, an oversupplied market and the prospect of oil inventories building up, OPEC+ in September felt compelled to delay by two months to December the 2.2 mb/d of voluntary production cuts that were due to be unwound. Amid ongoing demand weakness and oil prices ranging in the low \$70s, the OPEC Secretariat recently announced a further extension of these cuts by one month to January 2025.

According to OPEC secondary sources, crude production from the 22-member OPEC+ group (officially retitled Declaration of Cooperation members, DoC) fell by 560 kb/d in September to 40.1 mb/d. Production among the 18 DoC members subject to quotas (excludes, Iran, Libya, Venezuela and Mexico) dropped by 171 kb/d m/m to 33.8 mb/d. (Chart 5.) Libya and Iraq were responsible for the bulk of the declines (-410 kb/d and -155 kb/d, respectively), the former due to the imposition of force majeure at oil fields and terminals as its two rival governments disputed leadership of the country's central bank, and the latter due to OPEC+ compensatory cut obligations. Iraq, though, even with production reduced to 4.1 mb/d in September, remains well off its post-compensatory cut quota of 3.9 mb/d.

Russian production, meanwhile, trended lower for the sixth consecutive month in September, reaching a multi-year low of 9.0 mb/d, which is only 23 kb/d above its own quota. Leading the gainers, however, was Kazakhstan, which raised its output by 75 kb/d to 1.54 mb/d in September — and further away from its own compensatory cut target of 1.40 mb/d. It is looking doubtful whether Kazakhstan — or Iraq for that matter — will ever make good on their pledge to compensate the group for months of overproduction. The two oil producers agreed with the OPEC Secretariat to implement additional production cuts worth 2.1 mb/d during August 2024-September

2025 but are yet to make meaningful headway with this, much to the irritation of other group members hoping to move ahead with unwinding of 2.2 mb/d worth of voluntary cuts in the knowledge that the impact on global balances could partly be offset by these deeper cuts.

Meanwhile, outside the DoC grouping, both OPEC and the IEA agree that supply growth has been robust, led predominantly by increases in the so-called 'Americas quartet' of the US, Canada, Brazil, and Guyana. According to the IEA, these four producers will account for 75 percent of non-OPEC+ supply growth, pegged at 1.5 mb/d and 1.6 mb/d in 2024 and 2025, respectively. It is worth noting that supply gains from non-DoC regions alone will comfortably outpace the projected increase in oil demand over this period, which is why the IEA has the 'call' on OPEC+ (the volume of crude that OPEC+ needs to produce to satisfy demand after accounting for non-OPEC supply) declining in both these years.

In the US, crude production continues to break records. Output (weekly) was at 13.5 mb/d in the week ending 25 October, according to US Energy Information Administration (EIA) data. The EIA sees output gains of 320 kb/d in 2024 and 420 kb/d in 2025, which would bring average annual production to 13.5 mb/d, cementing the US' status as the largest oil producer in the world.

Market balance

Abundant supplies and softer demand to weigh on prices in the short-term. According to the IEA, amid softer oil demand and increasing oil supplies, both from OPEC+ and outside the group, the global oil market balance is expected to flip from a modest deficit in 2024 of about 0.3 mb/d on average to a surplus of over 1 mb/d in 2025. The IEA maintains that the market will remain in surplus irrespective of OPEC+ rolling over or unwinding their supply cuts, implying that only further production cuts by the group or better-than-expected economic growth, primarily from China and the no-OECD, could have a material impact on balances and by extension oil prices. The improvement in China's growth trajectory is an upside risk that should not be discounted, especially if the authorities pursue with conviction further and more sweeping stimulus pressures. Geopolitical risk and the incoming Trump administration's policies towards the US energy sector and Iran could also factor but these may have opposite effects on the oil market going forward. Overall, taking a fundamentals-based approach, oil prices could trend soft, averaging \$70/bbl in 2025.

Trump win poses challenges for Fed independence

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's return to the White House could put the independence of the US Federal Reserve under strain, potentially weakening its ability to fight against inflation and unemployment free from political interference.

The Fed has a dual mandate from Congress to act independently to tackle both inflation and unemployment — primarily by raising and lowering interest rates. Anything that undermines the Fed's independence could spook traders in the financial markets, who might come to question if it could effectively tackle inflation. "The prevailing view for the past 30 years, with the exception of the first Trump administration, has been that it's best to give the Fed the widest possible latitude to conduct monetary policy," David Wilcox, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE), told AFP.

"Monetary policy is complicated enough even without having to take that additional consideration," added Wilcox, a former senior advisor to three Fed chairs who is also Bloomberg's director of US economic research. The Federal Reserve System includes a decentralized network of 12 regional reserve banks and a seven-member Board of Governors in Washington. Fed governors are nominated by the US president to serve staggered 14-year terms, and must be confirmed by the Senate.

The Fed chair and vice chairs are appointed from among these seven governors and, once appointed, cannot be removed without cause. The Fed Board of Governors also plays a role in approving nominations to run the 12 regional reserve banks. However, those nominations are made by the regional reserve banks' own directors, adding a layer of protection against too much meddling from the center.

Where a future President Trump can — and very likely will — have a significant influence over the Fed is in his choice of nominations. Jerome Powell is scheduled to step down as Fed Chair in May 2026, and Trump is not expected to renominate him. The president-elect is a fierce critic of Powell — whom he first nominated to run the US central bank — accusing him without evidence of supporting the Democrats, and once even questioning if he was a bigger enemy than Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The president-elect has also said he has "better



Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell departs after speaking during a news conference following the November 6-7, 2024. — AFP

instincts" on the economy than many Fed governors, and argued that the US president should have "at least" a say setting interest rates.

But once Powell steps down as Fed Chair, he will remain a governor until 2028, should he choose to stay on, complicating Trump's nomination process. To replace him with someone not currently on the board, Trump must either pressure an existing governor to quit, or replace Fed governor Adriana Kugler when her term expires in January 2026, and then nominate her replacement to the top job.

Given the "outsized influence" wielded by the US central bank chair, the next Trump-appointed Fed chief "could change the dynamic and the independence of monetary policy," Nationwide chief economist Kathy Bostjancic told AFP. "If someone is nominated and appointed and are seen to have political leanings, and it allows them to influence their monetary policy decisions, then that would become quite messy for the Federal Reserve," she said.

But even with Trump's Republican Party back in control of the Senate, the next Fed Chair is still likely to receive plenty of scrutiny. Steve Englander, Standard Chartered's head of North America macro strategy, told AFP. "It's not like you can pick a name out of a hat and drop him into the Senate, he gets confirmed the next day, and he's voted in the day after," he said. Senators "take their role very seriously," he added. A final backstop also exists in the bond markets, which take into account expectations of where the Fed's interest rates will be in the future, and which impact borrowing rates on everything from mortgages to car loans.

"You can't appoint someone 180 degrees out of the mainstream...because the bond market will reject that immediately," Englander said. "The bond market is a guardrail," he added. "There's a limit." — AFP

In 2016, Fed took note of Trump's plans

WASHINGTON: Within weeks of Donald Trump's 2016 election, US Federal Reserve policymakers began mulling the impact of expected tax cuts and tariffs on the economy, penciling in rough estimates of what was to come, with some among them concluding higher interest rates may be needed to keep inflation in check. That included Jerome Powell, then a Fed governor and now the central bank's chair with chief responsibility for setting the course of monetary policy through the first 16 months of Trump's next term. The Republican former president defeated Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris in last Tuesday's election and will be sworn into office in January 2025.

Transcripts of the Fed's Dec. 13-14, 2016, meeting, before Trump had taken office, show Powell then said that because of the "expansionary fiscal stance" anticipated under the incoming administration "somewhat tighter policy is likely to be needed."

The Fed at that meeting raised its policy rate for the first time since the previous December, an increase that had been telegraphed beginning well before Trump's victory over Democrat Hillary Clinton. But, for a variety of reasons, policymakers upped the expected pace of rate increases for 2017, and went on to deliver three rate hikes over the next 12 months instead of the two that had been expected prior to Trump's election.

The Fed is now facing a similarly uncertain moment and potential tension with a second Trump administration as central bankers

assess how far and fast they can cut interest rates while keeping inflation in check. The economic measures Trump promised during the recent campaign echo what he pledged in 2016 - including more tax cuts, tariffs, and stricter immigration policy. Now, though, they will land in an economy in a very different situation, arguably one with inflation risks still percolating.

Minneapolis Fed President Neel Kashkari, in television interviews Saturday and Sunday, noted the potential for mass deportations to disrupt some businesses. Meanwhile, rising tariffs, if they trigger a "tit for tat" response from other nations, could become "more concerning," he said, with the potential to lead to steadily rising prices. "We will have to wait and see what gets implemented," Kashkari said. "Right now we are just all guessing."

Inflation was a central issue in Trump's campaign against Harris, but he now faces the tricky task of delivering on a set of expansionary promises in an economy that is running close to or perhaps above capacity without reigniting the rising prices he railed against. Economic activity in 2016 was hampered by slack in labor markets and the wider economy, with the Fed hoping too-low inflation could be jolted higher. Now the economy is coming through a period of labor shortage, output is above estimates of potential, and the Fed is on guard against any sign price pressures are again building.

Though Powell at a press conference last Thursday said Trump's election would have no "near-term" influence on monetary policy, if 2016 is a guide then initial staff estimates of how tariffs, tax cuts, and the loss of some foreign-born workers could influence the outlook are likely to be presented when the Fed next meets on Dec 17-18. While reluctant to comment on the substance

of Trump's plans, central bankers may have already begun rethinking how fast and how far they can cut interest rates in the coming year. That could put them on an early collision course with the new administration if the "Trump 2.0" policies are seen as raising inflation risks the Fed has been fighting for more than two years to vanquish. For now, Bank of America analysts wrote, the Fed would take a "blinders on" approach and continue interest rate cuts meant to make policy less restrictive in acknowledgement of the sharp drop in inflation since 2022.

But those blinders may fall off fast. Fed staff by the December 2016 meeting had already ginned up estimates of what different tariff and tax cut proposals could mean, and noted the higher interest rates they might require.

At December's meeting policymakers will update their economic projections, showing if they still think rates can fall as far as they'd expected at September's meeting. Then the median estimate saw the benchmark rate dropping to 2.9 percent sometime in 2026. After a quarter-percentage-point cut at last Thursday's meeting, the rate is now in a range of 4.5 percent to 4.75 percent.

While Powell said the baseline outlook remained for monetary policy to gradually approach a "neutral" stance, he noted the "pace and destination" remained to be determined. Powell's comments at the press conference steered away from any direct discussion of the election or Trump, who elevated Powell to Fed chair but later branded him an "enemy" for pursuing monetary policy Trump considered too tight and disruptive to his own economic plans. But the Fed chair, whose current term lasts until May 2026, also offered a coda of sorts on the era that is closing and a prologue for what's ahead. — Reuters

Business

Gulf Bank signs agreement with Omnifintec to support SMEs

Partnership aims to enhance business activities of small businesses in Kuwait

KUWAIT: In its ongoing efforts to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs), Gulf Bank has signed a partnership agreement with Omnifintec, a financial services and solutions company, to provide comprehensive advisory and business services to its SME clients. This partnership aims to enhance their business activities and assist them in growing and expanding their operations.

Gulf Bank's SME clients will have access to a wide range of quality services offered by Omnifintec, including a complimentary initial assessment to identify key areas for business improvement and development. Omnifintec will charge a fee not exceeding 10 percent of the profit growth resulting from the consulting and services provided to clients. Additionally, the company will offer clients customized dashboards for business intelligence, which are digital tools that visually display data in a simple



Hashim Al-Aqeel

We are delighted to partner with Gulf Bank and assist its clients in growing and expanding their businesses.



Faisal Al-Adsani

We are dedicated to improving non-banking services for SMEs, enabling them to grow their businesses successfully.

format, enabling small and medium business owners to analyze their performance and make informed decisions based on this data. Training sessions on how to create customized business intelligence dashboards will also be provided. Omnifintec's services for Gulf Bank's SME clients include financial data analysis and assessment, as well as an exclusive 10 percent discount on market re-

search and feasibility studies.

On this occasion, Faisal Al-Adsani, General Manager of the Corporate Banking at Gulf Bank, stated: "This agreement aligns with Gulf Bank's strategy, which considers the SME sector a fundamental pillar. It aims to enhance the growth rates of corporate services and assist SMEs in expanding their product portfolios and banking services."

He added: "Alongside our exceptional banking services, Gulf Bank is dedicated to improving non-banking services for SMEs, enabling them to grow their businesses successfully. This, in turn, contributes to sustainable growth in the SME sector and the national economy as a whole." Hashim Al-Aqeel, Founder of Omnifintec, commented: "We are delighted to partner with

Gulf Bank and provide our exceptional services to its SME clients. We are dedicated to helping them excel and achieve growth through our expertise and capabilities."

He further stated: "We take pride in being reliable partners, assisting leading companies in achieving outstanding results and sustainable success. Customer satisfaction is our top priority."



Workers sort packages for delivery at a JD.com warehouse in Beijing on November 11, 2024, known as the Singles' Day shopping festival in China. -- AFP

China's 'Singles Day' shopping spree in spotlight

BEIJING: China's largest online shopping bonanza wrapped up on Monday, with analysts and investors watching for signs that consumption is rebounding in the world's second-largest economy after recent efforts by Beijing to boost activity.

"Singles Day"—launched by tech giant Alibaba in 2009 -- has ballooned into an annual blockbuster period for retail, with days of discounts luring customers to the country's online shopping platforms.

Its name is a riff on the four ones in its date of November 11, or "11.11"—the tongue-in-cheek celebration of singlehood is a key driver of sales for Alibaba and its main competitor, JD.com. Neither firm released detailed sales figures on last year's Singles Day for the second time running, with Alibaba saying only that it recorded growth during the period.

Sluggish domestic consumption is among the top issues now facing policymakers in China, which has struggled to achieve a full post-pandemic recovery. Beijing has in recent weeks announced a slew of the most aggressive measures in years aimed at bolstering growth, including key rate cuts and increasing the debt limit for local governments. But many economists argue that in the absence of large-scale fiscal stimulus aimed at encouraging consumer spending, a return to the country's robust pre-pandemic

trajectory may be difficult to attain.

This year's Singles Day could represent a major boon for retail giants as analysts watch for signs that recent measures are having an impact. Analysts from the ING banking group said in a note last week that it expects to see "solid growth numbers" during the event, which it said "should comfortably outpace the overall consumption growth momentum".

At a warehouse visited by AFP on Monday, employees from Chinese e-commerce giant JD.com were seen sorting a steady stream of parcels loaded on conveyor belts. At the end of the line, workers quickly stacked the packages onto trolleys, before transferring them to scooters for delivery to customers. Consumer prices in China rose at a slower rate in October, official data showed Saturday, in a further sign of languid demand.

Singles Day 2024 "is expected to generate over 1.2 trillion yuan (\$167 billion)... representing a growth of 15 percent compared to the previous year", wrote YO2 Asia Pacific, a consultancy specializing in the digital economy. While the promotional campaigns could be effective in driving short-term sales, managing partner Vincent Marion warned that the strategy could have negative repercussions.

"Many consumers buy in bulk to reach discount thresholds, only to return the products afterward," said Marion, warning that the practice "erodes profit margins and damages brand perception".

Alibaba, like its main rival JD.com, withheld sales figures on the Singles Day period for the first time ever in 2022, saying instead that sales were flat from the previous year. -- AFP

chips, to the next parliament session, the draft shows. It specifically targets chip foundry venture Rapidus and other suppliers of chips for artificial intelligence. Rapidus is headed by industry veterans and is targeting mass production of cutting-edge chips on the northern island of Hokkaido from 2027 in partnership with IBM and Belgium-based research organization Imec.

Last year, the Japanese government said it would allocate some 2 trillion yen (\$13 billion) to support its chip industry. The latest plan is part of the government's comprehensive economic package to be approved by cabinet on Nov 22 and will also call for a total of 50 trillion yen public and private sectors investment in chips over the next 10 years. The government expects the economic impact to total around 160 trillion yen, according to the draft. -- Reuters

Trump losing trade battle with China in South America

LIMA/BEIJING: In South American copper giant Peru, the incoming Donald Trump White House will find itself already on the losing side in a trade battle with China, part of a bigger power realignment around the resource-rich region in Washington's backyard. Peru, the world's no. 2 copper exporter, is set to host Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders this week, with China's President Xi Jinping expected to attend and inaugurate a major new Chinese-built port in the country. Outgoing US President Joe Biden is also on the guest list.

Peru reflects a wider challenge for the White House around South America, where China's presence has grown rapidly given its huge appetite for the region's main exports: corn, copper, soy, beef and battery-metal lithium. That's made Beijing the go-to trade partner from Brazil to Chile and Argentina, eroding Washington's regional political clout, a trend that widened under Trump's 'America First' inward turn during his first administration and again under Biden.

"The strategic value is that this is the United States' backyard," said Li Xing, professor at the Guangdong Institute for International Strategies, adding it helped counter US presence around the Indo-Pacific and offset trade war risks. "China can't start by building military bases there because it's too sensitive and will make China's conflict with the United States too pronounced... So it has made inroads with economic ties first."

Peru demonstrates the dramatic shift. China's trade lead there over the United States widened to \$16.3 billion last year, UN Comtrade data show, a stark reversal of just a decade ago when Washington was the dominant player. That's come

hand-in-hand with investment from energy to mining. China overtook the United States in 2015 on trade with Peru, widening the gap under Trump's previous administration from 2017-2021, and again under Biden. "China has entered the region aggressively, is learning quickly, and is prepared to remain for the long term," said Eric Farnsworth, a former State Department official now at the Council of the Americas and Americas Society.

"Unless the United States meaningfully prioritizes regional economic policy in a new and more effective way, the region will continue to tilt toward Chinese interests." The US embassy in Lima did not respond to a request for comment. Washington officials have repeatedly warned publicly that Chinese investment in the region comes with strings attached and said the United States is a more reliable partner.

A beacon of the change is a new megaproject 80 kilometers (50 miles) north of Lima in Chancay. It is being built by China's state-owned Cosco Shipping 1199.HK and promises to shorten sea routes to Asia both for Peruvian and Brazilian goods. The Chinese-controlled port, set to be inaugurated by Xi when he is in Peru, has sparked concern from the United States over regional security, but more importantly will turbocharge the region's trade highway to China.

"We will have direct routes to Asia, particularly to ports in China, which will be cut by 10, 15, 20 days depending on the route," Peruvian Minister of Transport and Communications, Raul Perez Reyes, told Reuters at the port. He added that it would compete with Mexico's Port of Manzanillo and eventually Long Beach in California.

"Our aim is to become the Singapore of Latin America." The Pacific coast port is leading to other investments to boost connectivity, especially for soy producers in Brazil, who are keen to cut down shipping costs and travel time to Asia, and avoid going through the Panama Canal to the north. Peru's government is pushing a potential \$10 billion rail project.

How China plans to cut hidden debt in massive shakeup

SHANGHAI: China has unveiled an ambitious plan to relieve public debt, aiming to turn local governments away from belt-tightening practices that have exacerbated a domestic downturn. Policymakers gathered in Beijing this past week approved a proposal to swap six trillion yuan (\$840 billion) of hidden debt belonging to local governments for official loans with more favorable terms. Hidden debts are defined as borrowing for which a government is liable, but not disclosed to its citizens or to other creditors. Here are some of the key points behind China's massive debt shakeup:

Much of local governments' hidden debt in the past two decades was accumulated through state-owned companies known as local government financing vehicles (LGFVs). While the provincial and regional authorities themselves faced restraints on their own borrowing, LGFVs were less regulated and used for taking out loans and issuing bonds in order to finance infrastructure projects.

But local governments today are running out of infrastructure needs to meet, which means that newer projects, like extra bridges and conference centers, tend to make less money back as there is little demand for them. And with the national real estate market crashing and hurting government land-sale revenues, LGFVs risk defaulting. China's local governments had an estimated 60.4 trillion yuan (\$8.4 trillion) of debt hidden in LGFVs as of 2023, according to the International Monetary Fund.

Burdened by debt, local authorities have in recent years turned to cost-saving measures like cutting civil servant salaries and pensions, suspending transport ser-



An employee cuts beef at a meat processing factory in Binzhou, in eastern China's Shandong province on November 11, 2024. -- AFP

vices and aggressively collecting fines and fees from businesses. According to the Chinese financial publication Caixin, local governments in the Guangxi, Shaanxi and Sichuan regions saw a significant increase in fines collected in the first half of 2022.

And the central government in Beijing this year warned localities not to raise revenue through fines, after a county in northern Hebei province was found in January to have forged signatures on nearly 2,000 traffic violation tickets. The penny-pinching has hurt business and consumer confidence, while local government creditors and infrastructure contractors remain unpaid. The debt swap plan announced Friday will raise the local government debt ceiling every year from 2024 to 2026, with a total of \$558 billion of hidden debt that can be replaced.

Meanwhile, \$112 billion "will be arranged from new local government special bonds every year for five consecutive years to supplement government financial resources", Finance Minister Lan Fo'an told reporters on Friday. The scale of the plan exceed-

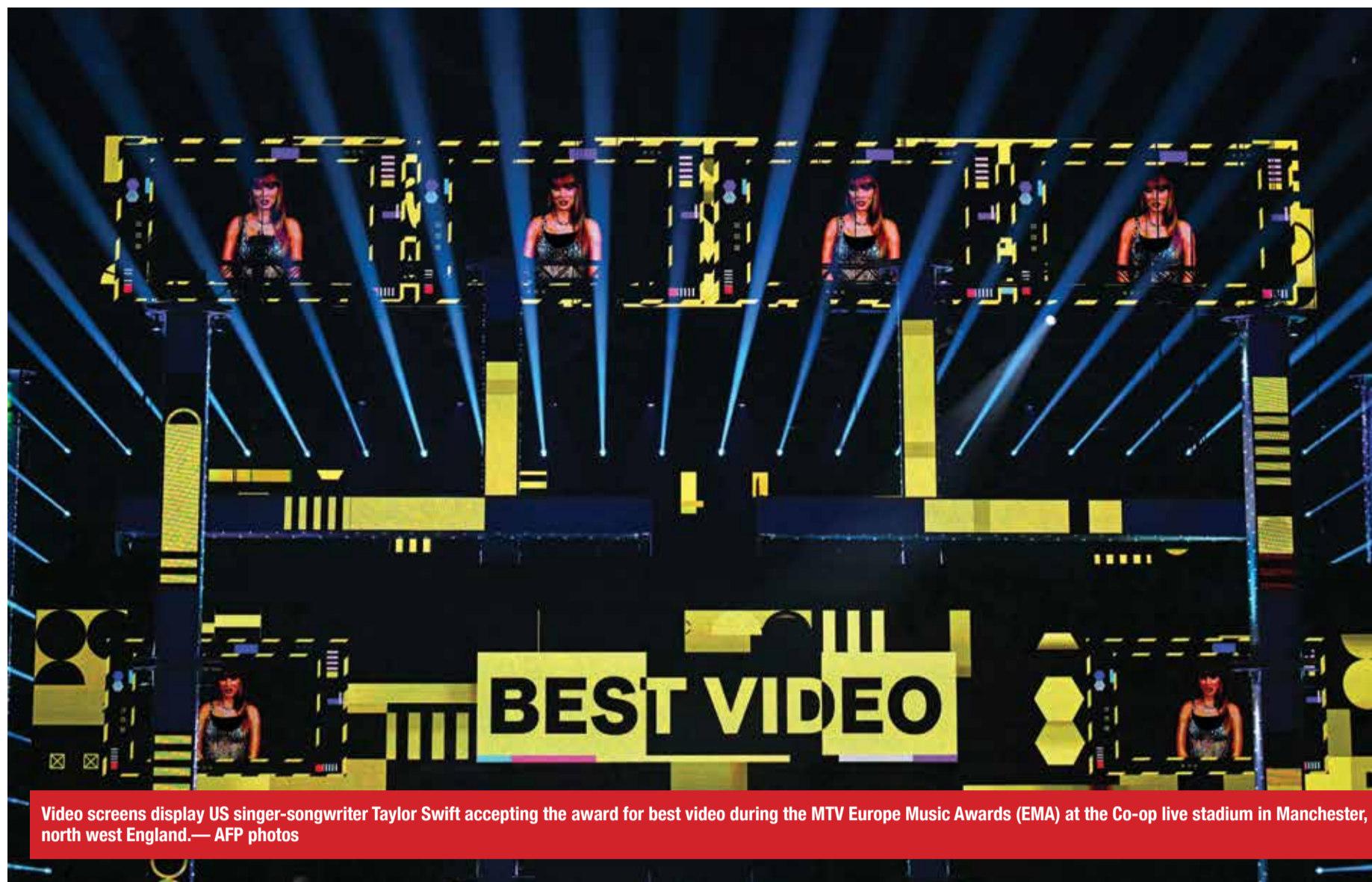
ed expectations, but analysts at Goldman Sachs warned on Friday that its impact would be small unless "the majority of the proceeds are used to pay corporate arrears and delayed civil servant salaries".

If used correctly, the new measures could "free up fiscal resources and allow local governments to function more normally", Societe Generale analysts wrote. This is not the first time China's central government has tried to rein in local debt. In 2015, Beijing rolled out a debt-for-bonds program that encouraged local governments to exchange loans for lower-interest bonds. This was followed over the years by a slew of debt-tackling measures including specific bonds intended to help refinance existing projects. The new debt plan is part of a raft of policies unveiled by officials since September, all aimed at lifting the country from a prolonged downturn. Beijing has eased home purchasing restrictions and cut interest rates to boost economic activity, but analysts have called for more detailed stimulus measures. -- AFP

Japan to propose \$65bn plan to aid chip industry

TOKYO: Japan's government will propose a \$65 billion plan to boost its chip industry with subsidies and other financial assistance over a period of "multiple years", a draft seen on Monday by Reuters showed. The plan, with financial support worth 10 trillion yen (\$65.10 billion) or more, comes as countries look to strengthen their control over chip supply chains after global shocks including trade tensions between the United States and China.

Japan's government intends to submit the plan, including bills to financially help mass production of next-generation



Video screens display US singer-songwriter Taylor Swift accepting the award for best video during the MTV Europe Music Awards (EMA) at the Co-op live stadium in Manchester, north west England.— AFP photos



British singer-songwriter Rita Ora speaks in memory of late former One Direction singer Liam Payne.



Mexican Singer Peso Pluma (right) presents a speech after accepting the award for best Latin artist.

TAYLOR SWIFT TRIUMPHS AT MTV EUROPE MUSIC AWARDS DOMINATED BY FEMALE ARTISTS



Member of the British band the Pet Shop Boys Neil Tennant performs on stage.

Taylor Swift led the way at the 2024 MTV Europe Music Awards in Manchester on Sunday, picking up four awards on a night dominated by female artists, including Tyla and Sabrina Carpenter. The ceremony's 30th edition, which brought the biggest names in world music to northwest England, saw Swift take home trophies for best artist, best live, best US act and best video for her collaboration with Post Malone in "Fortnight".

In a pre-recorded message, Swift expressed sadness for not being able to attend in person but said the honor was "just unbelievable". Tyla won three awards, including for best R&B, while Carpenter won for best song. British singer Rita Ora hosted the awards, which were held in Britain for the seventh time. Swift, whose ongoing "Eras" tour is the most lucrative in history, was nominated in seven categories following the release this year of her 11th album "The Tortured Poets Department".

In the best artist category she went up against compatriots Beyonce, Billie Eilish and Post Malone, and British star

Raye, who won a record six gongs at this year's Brit Awards. Carpenter, one of the stars of the summer with her hit "Please Please Please", completed the list of nominees. While Swift won that category, Carpenter's "Espresso" took best song, outshining Eilish's "Birds of a Feather", Beyonce's "Texas Hold 'Em", "Beautiful Things" by Benson Boone, Chappell Roan's "Good Luck, Babe!" and "We Can't Be Friends" by Ariana Grande.

As with the US music industry's Grammy awards, Latino artists, including stars such as Puerto Rican Bad Bunny and Colombian Karol G were left out of the top categories this year despite their global hits. Both were contenders in the best Latin field, alongside Shakira, who has revived her career with the hit "Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 53", about her separation from ex-footballer Gerard Pique. Other artists who picked up awards in Manchester included Lisa of the ultra-popular K-pop group Blackpink, Ariana Grande, Eminem and Liam Gallagher. Busta Rhymes received a global icon award. —AFP



US singer Benson Boone performs on stage.



US singer-songwriter Teddy Swims performs on stage.



British-Nigerian rapper Little Simz presents the award for global icon.



US rapper Busta Rhymes performs on stage.



South African singer Tyla accepts the award for best Afrobeats artist.



US singer Benson Boone presents a speech after receiving the award for best new artist.



British singer-songwriter RAYE performs on stage.



British band Blossoms pose on the red carpet upon arrival to attend the MTV Europe Music Awards (EMA).



British actor Jodie Turner Smith poses on the red carpet upon arrival to attend the MTV Europe Music Awards (EMA).



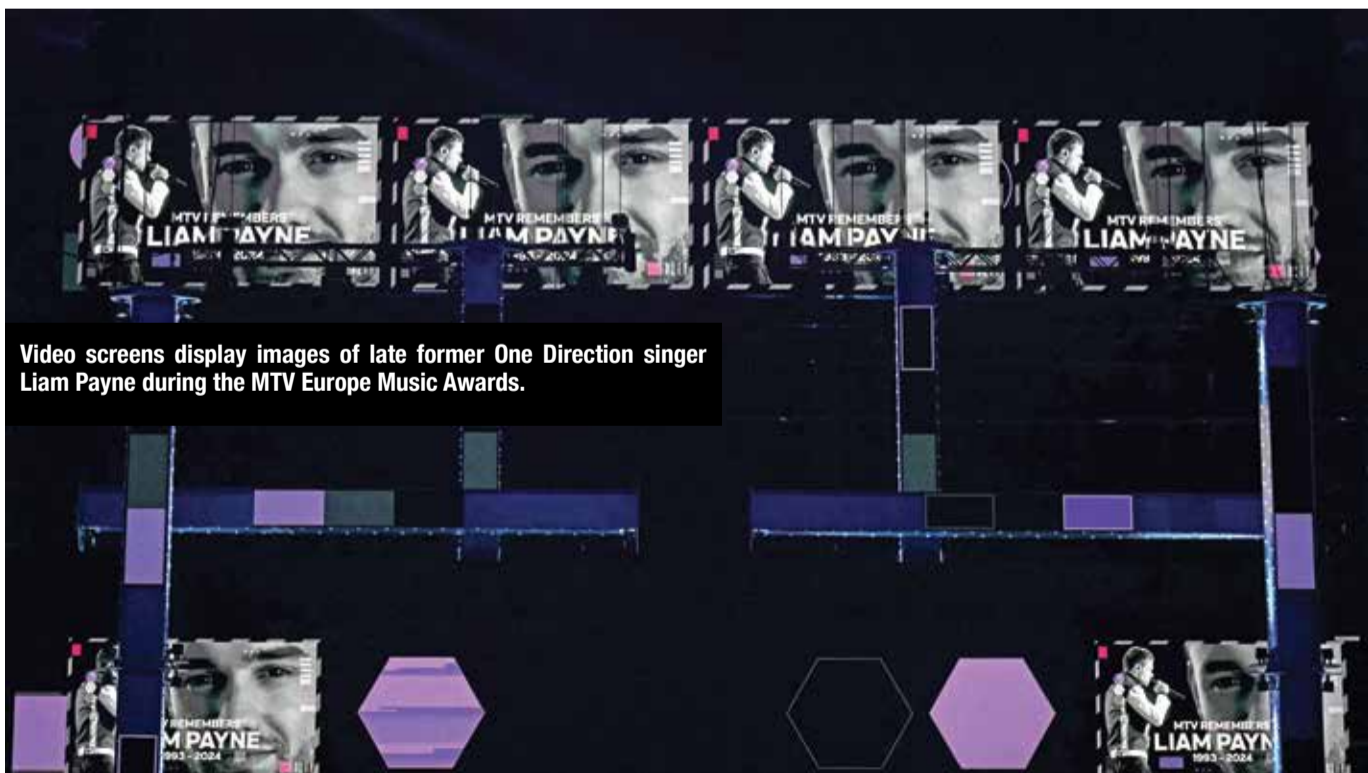
British band the Pet Shop Boys perform on stage.



US rapper Busta Rhymes (center) performs on stage.



South Korean band Le Sserafim perform on stage.



Video screens display images of late former One Direction singer Liam Payne during the MTV Europe Music Awards.

The Winners

- BEST SONG**
Sabrina Carpenter – "Espresso"
- BEST VIDEO**
Taylor Swift ft. Post Malone - "Fortnight"
- BEST ARTIST**
Taylor Swift
- BEST COLLABORATION**
LISA ft. Rosalia – "NEW WOMAN"
- BEST NEW**
Benson Boone
- BEST POP**
Ariana Grande
- BEST AFROBEATS**
Tyla
- BEST ROCK**
Liam Gallagher
- BEST LATIN**
Peso Pluma
- BEST K-POP**
Jimin
- BEST ALTERNATIVE**
Imagine Dragons
- BEST ELECTRONIC**
Calvin Harris
- BEST HIP-HOP**
Eminem
- BEST R&B**
Tyla
- BEST LIVE**
Taylor Swift
- BIGGEST FANS**
LISA
- BEST UK & IRELAND ACT**
RAYE



Swedish singer Neneh Cherry (right) and her daughter and Spanish born British singer Mabel present the award for best Hip Hop artist.



US rapper Busta Rhymes delivers a speech after accepting the award for global icon.



Mexican band The Warning perform on stage.



Mexican Singer Peso Pluma performs on stage.

Sports

Celtics defeat Bucks despite big night for 'child' Giannis

Stephen Curry scores 36 points to lead Warriors in a 127-116 victory at Oklahoma City

LOS ANGELES: Jayson Tatum delivered 31 points and 12 rebounds to spark the reigning NBA champion Boston Celtics over Milwaukee 113-107 on Sunday despite Giannis Antetokounmpo's 43-point performance for the Bucks.

The Celtics improved to 9-2, two games behind unbeaten Cleveland in the Eastern Conference, while the host Bucks slid to 2-8. Payton Pritchard scored 18 points off the Boston bench while Derrick White and former Buck Jrue Holiday each scored 15 points and Jaylen Brown added 14 for the Celtics.

"Team effort," Holiday said. "It's not easy doing it by yourself. We did it collectively." Greek star Antetokounmpo also grabbed 13 rebounds and elbowed Brown to the floor at one point, then offered a hand to help him up only to pull it away when Brown reached for it. "Giannis is a child," Brown said afterward. "I'm just focused on helping my team get a win."

Victory eased the memory of two lopsided Boston losses in Milwaukee last season. "It's nice," Holiday said. "We got blown out twice last year so getting this win here with my family in the building is awesome." The Bucks led 69-58 at half time but the Celtics grabbed a 87-84 edge entering the fourth quarter and closed with a 9-5 run to seal the triumph, Tatum scoring seven in the crucial stretch.

"We just picked up the intensity," Holiday said of the third-quarter rally. "We came out, hit shots, not getting too ahead of ourselves and getting back to Celtics basketball." In a showdown of Western Conference contenders, Golden State's Stephen Curry scored 36 points, hitting 7-of-13 three-point shots, to lead the Warriors in a 127-116 victory at Oklahoma City that left both clubs 8-2.

The Thunder, led by 24 points from Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, lost star big man Chet Holmgren in the first quarter with a right hip injury

after a fall and being helped off the court. At Minneapolis, Tyler Herro scored 26 points and reserve Nikola Jovic made a game-winning three-point play with 7.1 seconds remaining to give Miami a 95-94 victory at Minnesota.

Jaden McDaniels tipped in a three-point miss by Mike Conley with nine seconds remaining to give the Timberwolves a 94-92 lead, but Jovic answered with a layup and free throw for the deciding points. Conley missed a final three-point shot to seal Miami's triumph, which snapped a three-game Heat losing skid and three-game T-Wolves win streak.

Jokic, LeBron get wins

In another late thriller, Michael Porter's basket with 6.1 seconds remaining gave the Denver Nuggets a 122-120 home victory over Dallas. Three-time NBA Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic had a triple double with 37 points, 18 rebounds and 15 assists to lead Denver while Kyrie Irving scored a game-high 43 points for the Mavericks.

Also producing a triple double was LeBron James, who scored 19 points, grabbed 10 rebounds and distributed 16 assists to spark the Los Angeles Lakers over visiting Toronto 123-103. With forward Kevin Durant out due to a left calf strain, the Phoenix Suns fell to 8-2 with a 127-118 overtime loss to visiting Sacramento.

Keegan Murray tipped in a missed shot by DeMar DeRozan with 3.2 seconds remaining to give the Kings a 111-110 lead but Devin Booker's free throw lifted the Suns level to force overtime. DeRozan, who had a game-high 34 points, scored eight consecutive points for a 119-113 Kings edge and the Suns never led again.

Bradley Beal scored 28 to lead Phoenix, whose win streak ended at seven. The NBA-worst Philadelphia 76ers outlasted visiting Charlotte for a



PHILADELPHIA: Paul George #8 of the Philadelphia 76ers dribbles the ball during the game against the Charlotte Hornets on November 10, 2024 at the Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia. — AFP

107-105 overtime victory, improving to 2-7 on the season. LaMelo Ball's three-pointer with eight seconds remaining lifted Charlotte level at 97-97 to force overtime.

In overtime, Charlotte's Grant Williams made a free throw with 0.1 of a second remaining and missed the next in hopes of a game-tying tip-in, but the 76ers grabbed the rebound to win. At In-

dianapolis, Benedict Mathurin scored 38 points and Tyrese Haliburton added 35 to lead the Indiana Pacers over New York 132-121.

Orlando had 23 points from Franz Wagner in a 121-94 home rout of Washington while Houston edged host Detroit 101-99 behind Alperen Sengun's 27 points. Memphis routed host Portland 134-89. — AFP

Coach Gambhir backs 'incredibly tough men' Rohit, Kohli

MUMBAI: India coach Gautam Gambhir on Monday backed "incredibly tough men" Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli to prove their critics wrong and find form in Australia. Skipper Rohit and superstar batsman Kohli came under fire after India crashed to a humiliating 3-0 Test series home defeat to New Zealand.



Gautam Gambhir

Rohit scored 91 runs in three matches. Kohli made just 93. Speaking just before India flew off to Australia for a blockbuster five-match Test series, Gambhir said he had "no concerns for Virat and Rohit". "They are incredibly tough men," he said.

"They've achieved a lot for Indian cricket and they will continue to achieve a lot in the future as well." Gambhir hit out at Ricky Ponting after the former Australia captain questioned the longer-term form of the two senior batsmen. "What does Ponting have to do with Indian cricket?" Gambhir said. Gambhir said the Indian team as a whole were eager to prove themselves after the New Zealand defeat, only their second Test series whitewash at home.

"I feel there is a lot of hunger, especially after what has happened in the last series," he said. Gambhir believes the biggest challenge in Australia will be the quicker pitches compared to India, where conditions are traditionally spin-friendly.

But Gambhir said his under-the-cosh side were ready to "fire from ball one" in a series that starts in Perth on November 22. "We've been to Australia many times, so that experience will be crucial," said the coach, who has also faced some flak. "If we play to our potential, we play our best cricket, we can beat anyone on any wicket." — AFP

Kuwait's young gymnasts triumph at Guimagym Cup

MADRID: Kuwaiti female gymnasts excelled at the three-day international rhythmic gymnastics tournament, the Guimagym Cup 2024, held in Guimaraes, Portugal, featuring over 200 competitors from nine countries. Five Kuwaiti gymnasts, aged 10 to 13, won medals in their age groups at the international tournament which concluded on Sunday.

In a statement to KUNA, the Kuwaiti team's coach, Iryna Kovalchuk, expressed her pride in the team's accomplishments. Layan Behbehani, 13, won three bronze medals in the hoop, ribbon, and clubs categories.

Sarah Al-Bannai, 12, secured a gold in the ball competition and a silver in the hoop competition, and Nabila Al-Kharafi, 11, earned two gold medals with the ball and clubs. While Raya Al-Qassar, also 11, took home a clubs silver and a bronze in the ball competition, Talia Behbehani, 10, won two golds in the freehand and ball competition. Kovalchuk, who has coached the team since 2020, highlighted the athletes' dedication and shared that the gymnasts trained intensively, including a specialized training camp in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The team maintains a rigorous schedule of four hours of training daily, sometimes extending to seven hours in preparation for competitions. Kuwait's Ambassador to Portugal, Hamad Al-Hazeem congratulated the team, affirming Kuwait's commitment to supporting its athletes abroad, and

Ghizlan Ali wins 10m air pistol in shooting event

By Abdellatif Sharara

KUWAIT: The first gold medal of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah Annual Shooting Tournament was won by Ghizlan Ali in the 10m air pistol event. The silver medal was won by Athari Al-Beloushi while the bronze went to Israa Bahman.

The tournament will kick off today (Tuesday) with the mixed trap, followed by the 10 meter rifle for men and women, that besides the official training of the skeet event.

injured fast-bowling all-rounder Andre Russell and fielding debutant seamer Terrance Hinds who endured a baptism of fire against a rampant Buttler.

A second T20 International hundred looked his for the taking but after being badly dropped by Sherfane Rutherford at extra-cover off Romario Shepherd in the 13th over, the England skipper fell next ball as another attempted heave over the top found his West Indies counterpart, Rovman Powell at long-off.

Buttler inevitably dominated a second-wicket stand of 129 with Will Jacks, who contributed 38 off 29 balls with five fours and one six. "It was scratchy for the first couple of balls but when I got going I really enjoyed it. It was great to be back out there," said Buttler on receiving the "Man of the Match" award.

Jacks was the first of two wickets for Shepherd, taken at second attempt at long-off by Matthew Forde, who had earlier played his part together with the rest of the West Indies lower-order to give the innings useful late impetus after they were put in to bat on a surface freshened by steady rain throughout the early morning. Powell topscored with 43 off 41 balls (two fours, two sixes) but his demise in the 16th over left the innings in trouble at 102 for six. Shepherd's 22 off 12 balls breathed some late life into the home side's effort with the support of the tail. — AFP



Kuwait's gymnast team with their coach.

emphasized that this support aligns with directives from 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 Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya. Ambassador Al-Hazeem, who accompanied the Kuwaiti delegation, noted that sports diplo-

macy was a key element of Kuwait's efforts on the international stage, fostering cultural exchange, tolerance, and cooperation among nations, as well as strengthening bilateral relations.

The Guimagym Cup 2024 hosted participants from Kuwait, Portugal, Spain, Brazil, France, Georgia, Greece, Norway and Switzerland. — KUNA

Saudi Arabia's Shooting Federation CEO Abdullah Al-Dousary said Saudi Arabia is participating with four shooters, with the aim of preparing shooters for upcoming events. He added that the tournament that is organized by Kuwait Shooting Federation provides the necessary interaction with experienced coaches and this will enhance their levels.

Al-Dousary said the Saudi Federation will organize several championships as Kuwait does and made significant achievements at the Olympic and international levels.

He appointed the major role of KSSF in outstanding organization. Meanwhile, Oman's Shooting Federation Secretary General Hamad Al-Beloushi thanked Kuwait's Federation for the organization of HH the Crown Prince tournament and the Arab Shotgun Shooting Tournament, as Kuwait has always brought Arab shooters together as Kuwait is considered the House of Arabs, due to the outstanding fa-



(From left) Athari Al-Beloushi, Ghizlan Ali and Israa Bahman.

cilities it has, in addition to the experienced officials who are able to organize all important events.

Buttler blast powers England over West Indies in T20 series

BRIDGETOWN: Jos Buttler's rampaging 83 powered England to an emphatic seven-wicket victory over the West Indies in the second match of their T20 International series at Kensington Oval in Barbados on Sunday. Responding to the home side's total of 158 for eight, the visiting captain took the match by the scruff of the neck in belting eight fours and six sixes off only 45 balls to turn a potentially challenging target into a romp.

The tourists reached 161 for three off just 14.4 overs to take a 2-0 lead heading into the final three matches of the duel in St. Lucia starting next Thursday. Coming to the crease off just the second ball of the innings after Phil Salt, the century-making match-winner of Saturday's first match, had fallen first ball to spinner Akeal Hosein, Buttler wasted little time in setting about a West Indies bowling attack missing suspended pacer Alzarri Joseph,



BRIDGETOWN: Jos Buttler (R) of England hits 6 to bring up his 50 and Nicholas Pooran (L) of West Indies watches during the second T20i match between West Indies and England at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados. — AFP

Sports

Liga leaders Barca bemoan 'big mistake' in Real Sociedad defeat

Alvarez earns Atletico Madrid a 1-0 win at Mallorca to take Rojiblancos up to third

BARCELONA: La Liga leaders Barcelona fell to a 1-0 defeat at Real Sociedad on Sunday as they had a Robert Lewandowski goal controversially disallowed, with coach Hansi Flick labelling the decision a "big mistake". Earlier Julian Alvarez earned Atletico Madrid a 1-0 win at Mallorca to take the club's streaming platform Barca One.

Sheraldo Becker's 33rd-minute goal consigned Barcelona to their second league defeat of the season, leaving the Catalan giants six points clear of second-placed Real Madrid, having played an extra match. Lewandowski's early disallowed strike led to furious debate over whether the Polish forward had been offside or not. "It was the wrong decision, clearly, it's clear, but we have to accept it," Flick told the club's streaming platform Barca One.

"The referee, it was not his fault, we are humans, we make mistakes and today was a big mistake." Barcelona were without teenage star Lamine Yamal after he suffered a blow to his ankle in the Champions League win at Red Star Belgrade midweek and badly missed his spark.

The Catalans failed to score in a match for the first time this season across all competitions as Real Sociedad, eighth, held firm, while Barcelona did not manage a single shot on target. "The responsibility for this defeat is on us, we are responsible, we can play much better," admitted Flick.

"It's a tough place to go, where La Real push a lot... we have to learn from our mistakes and that's it," Barcelona midfielder Pedri told Movistar. "Normally we score goals but today we weren't accurate, I think it will be a one-off, and in the following games we'll be more precise."

"I think the team is working well and (not scoring) is not something that worries me." Playmaker Dani Olmo started on the bench while defender Pau Cubarsi played in a mask after suffering a cut which

needed stitches on his face in Serbia.

The Catalans have struggled in San Sebastian in the past and were given another uncomfortable night in the Basque country. Lewandowski thought he had fired Barcelona in front after 13 minutes when he reacted well to a blocked shot to fire home, but the goal was ruled out following a VAR review.

Referee Guillermo Cuadra Fernandez was told Lewandowski was offside, although the forward did not appear to be in front of Real Sociedad defender Nayef Aguerd. The semi-automated offside technology used in La Liga indicated the front of Lewandowski's boot was off, but Spanish media furiously debated whether the technology had misinterpreted Aguerd's heel as part of the veteran striker's boot.

La Real dominant With Barcelona's strike chalked out, the hosts took control and tested visiting goalkeeper Inaki Pena several times. Takefusa Kubo's low drive stung Pena's fingers after a fine dribble inside from the right flank by the Japan international.

Becker fired Real Sociedad ahead with a cool low finish after Luka Sucic nodded the ball into his path. Flick brought on Dani Olmo for the ineffective Frenkie de Jong at half-time but Barcelona remained second best.

Becker screwed a shot wide after Jules Kounde did just enough to put off the Real Sociedad winger, and Ander Barrenetxea also squeezed an effort wide from a tight angle after bursting into the area.

Despite scoring 40 goals in their first 12 league matches Barcelona were unable to find the net or even create any significant danger in the final stages. "We really wanted to win at home and there was no better team to do it against," said Real Sociedad midfielder Brais Mendez.

"They are the most in-form team in Europe and the fans deserved a night like this." Diego Simeone's



SAN SEBASTIAN: Barcelona's Brazilian forward #11 Raphinha (C) tries to get away from Real Sociedad's Spanish defender #06 Aritz Elustondo (L) during the Spanish league football match between Real Sociedad and FC Barcelona at the Anoeta stadium in San Sebastian. — AFP

Atletico side secured their fourth consecutive victory across all competitions in a tight clash at Mallorca's Son Moix stadium.

Alvarez netted his fourth league goal since joining Atletico from Manchester City in the summer in the

61st minute after being set up unselfishly by Diego Simeone's son Giuliano Simeone. "We knew it would be a tough game, we got better in the second half, the goal came and we took three important points," said Argentina international Alvarez. — AFP

Napoli hold Inter and keep lead in Serie A title race

MILAN: Napoli held Inter Milan to a 1-1 draw on Sunday and maintained their lead at the top of Serie A as a host of teams now line up to contend for top spot. Antonio Conte's Napoli are a point ahead of Inter and three other teams after escaping the San Siro with a hard-fought draw in which Hakan Calhanoglu slammed a 74th-minute penalty off the post.

Calhanoglu held his head in his hands after missing his first penalty in 18 attempts for Inter, after a soft foul on Denzel Dumfries which enraged Conte as VAR officials did not intervene. "There's a refereeing decision which can change a match of this importance but VAR can't intervene? What are we talking about? Is VAR here to correct mistakes or not?", a livid Conte told DAZN.

"VAR is there to correct decisions, end of story... this is something that pisses me off, and not just me but all coaches." Turkey captain Calhanoglu, who had fired Inter to a win over Arsenal from the spot in the Champions League midweek, blasted home the hosts' equalizer two minutes before the break after Scott McTominay tapped Napoli ahead midway through the first half.

From there Inter took the initiative and were unlucky not to go ahead

through Federico Dimarco in the 53rd minute, when the Italy full-back's low drive crashed out off the base of the post. "I'm sorry that I missed my first penalty, I knew that sooner or later it would happen but it's a shame that it happened today because it was a very important match," said Calhanoglu.

Inter sit fourth but only two points separate the top six, with Juventus just behind the four teams right on Napoli's heels. Second on goal difference are Atalanta, who won their sixth straight league match after coming back from a goal down at half-time to beat Udinese 2-1.

Gian Piero Gasperini's side came through thanks to Mario Pasalic's leveller 11 minutes after the break and an own goal from Isaak Toure moments later. Buoyant supporters jokingly chanted "we're going to win the league" after watching their team battle back after going behind on the stroke of half-time to a thunderous strike from Hassane Kamara. "You can't stop fans from dreaming... but the reality is that there's no point talking about the Scudetto now," said Gasperini.

Kean reborn at Fiorentina Fiorentina are also one of the quartet right behind Napoli—as are Lazio who won 1-0 at Monza—thanks to Moise Kean's first professional hat-trick, which earned his team a 3-1 win over Verona. Kean has scored 11 times in all competitions for Fiorentina since signing from Juventus in the summer, and his treble moved his new team up to third following a sixth straight league win.



MILAN: Inter Milan's Italian midfielder #23 Nicolò Barella fights for the ball with Napoli's Scottish midfielder #08 Scott McTominay and Napoli's Belgian forward #11 Romelu Lukaku (R) during the Italian Serie A football match between Inter Milan and Napoli at San Siro stadium in Milan. — AFP

The 24-year-old has been reborn in Tuscany after failing to score a single goal at Juve last season. "I can't deny that I wanted him when I was at Monza, I think he's a great striker," coach Raffaele Palladino told DAZN.

"He's gathering the fruits of his own hard work... It's also down to the team, everyone defended and attacked together today." Roma sacked Ivan Juric less than two months after he was hired to replace Daniele De Rossi as they languish just four points above the relegation zone in 12th following a 3-2 defeat to Bologna in front of livid fans, a large chunk of whom decided to

leave at half-time in protest. Former Italy coach Roberto Mancini is reportedly set to become Roma's fourth coach of 2024 following Juric, De Rossi and Jose Mourinho, who was fired in January. The capital club's technical director Florent Ghisolfi admitted that "history would suggest" that it was a mistake to sack De Rossi so early in the campaign.

Roma, who scored through a Stephan El Shaarawy brace, travel to Napoli after the international break before then having to face Tottenham Hotspur in London and Atalanta at home. — AFP

Guardiola vows struggling Man City will recover

LONDON: Pep Guardiola says Manchester City will "recover our best" after he suffered a fourth straight defeat for the first time in his stellar managerial career. City's 2-1 defeat at Brighton on Saturday came after losses to Tottenham in the League Cup, Bournemouth in the Premier League and Sporting Lisbon in the Champions League.

Guardiola's men, chasing an unprecedented fifth straight Premier League title, are now five points behind leaders Liverpool after 11 matches in the English top flight. "I was a football player and many times I lost a lot of games—four in a row, five in a row, six in a row," said the City boss.

"I never expect different, the fact we won in the past, that we are special. People can believe that but it's not true." City are struggling badly with injuries, with Ruben Dias, John Stones, Jeremy Doku and Jack Grealish among those absent for the defeat at Bournemouth.

"We are not consistent enough to maintain this level that helped us to win what we want for many years," said Guardiola. "Hopefully in the future we'll come back, and if we don't come back we'll learn from that."

City have been champions in six of the past seven seasons but it is not uncommon for them to stumble in the autumn. Last season they won just one league game in six during a spell in November and December but recovered to retain the title.

"Don't be complacent when you win a lot, know how difficult it is," said Guardiola. "That makes us believe how difficult it was and how nice it will be when we win again." He added: "Right now we are not in our best, it's obvious. But still it's November so hopefully we'll come back step by step. Every game will be tough for every team. We'll recover our best and then we'll see." After the current international break, City face a testing run-up to Christmas with matches against Tottenham, Liverpool, Nottingham Forest, Crystal Palace, Manchester United and Aston Villa. — AFP



KANSAS CITY: PJ Locke #6 of the Denver Broncos tackles Travis Kelce #87 of the Kansas City Chiefs in the fourth quarter of a game at GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium. — AFP

Chiefs escape Broncos to stay unbeaten after field goal drama

LOS ANGELES: The Kansas City Chiefs preserved their unbeaten start to the NFL season after blocking a last-gasp field goal to snatch a dramatic 16-14 victory over the Denver Broncos on Sunday. The reigning Super Bowl champions looked poised to suffer their first defeat of the campaign after rookie Broncos quarterback Bo Nix expertly engineered a late fourth-quarter drive to the Kansas City 17-yard line.

That left Wil Lutz with what should have been a straightforward 35-yard chip shot to win the game

with the final kick of an absorbing clash at Arrowhead Stadium. But Lutz and the Broncos were left stunned after Chiefs defensive end Mike Danna got a hand to the kick to block the attempt and leave Kansas City exhaling a collective sigh of relief.

Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes raced across the field in celebration with his teammates as Kansas City sealed a win that sees them improve to 9-0 for the season. "It just speaks to this entire team," Mahomes said of Kansas City's great escape. "I felt offensively we didn't do enough. Defensively we stepped it up in the second half, and then special teams... we're a full team. It's everybody, it was a special moment. "Everybody believes, no one has any doubts, we just keep pushing and we found a way in the end."

The defeat was hard on Broncos signal-caller Nix, who had shown superb composure throughout to help Denver take a 14-3 second-quarter

lead thanks to touchdown passes to wide receivers Devaughn Vele and Courtland Sutton. Denver's defense meanwhile gave Mahomes and the Chiefs offense a torrid time, sacking the Kansas City quarterback four times.

Mahomes gradually got his team back into the game, connecting with Travis Kelce for a touchdown that made it 14-10 at the half, before two Harrison Butker field goals in the second half gave them a slender 16-14 lead, setting up the closing drama.

Steelers pip Commanders The Washington Commanders suffered an agonizing 28-27 defeat in a thrilling shootout with the Pittsburgh Steelers that was effectively decided by a matter of inches. Pittsburgh took a one-point lead with 2min 22sec remaining after quarterback Russell Wilson floated a sublime pass to new receiver Mike Williams for a 32-yard touchdown. —AFP

Classifieds

Clinics

Clinics

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

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

Change of Name

I, Arshad holder of Indian passport No. X8048440 having Permanent address as R/O Karawara, Teh. Kherwara, Dist. Udaipur, Rajasthan-313804 residing in Kuwait at present do hereby change my name to Arshad (as given name) Makrani (as surname) for all purpose. I will henceforth be known in the name Arshad Makrani and I also undertake to carry out this name change

in all my documents. (#6191, 12/11/2024)

I, Ali Hussain, holder of Passport No. N7013272, do hereby change my name to Ali Hussain (as given name) Daruwala (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Ali Hussain Daruwala and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (#6192, 12/11/2024)

I, Kutbuddin Kaid Johar, holder of Indian Passport No. Z4826008 having permanent address as Bohra Bakhal, Chadni Chowk Ratlam (MP) residing in Kuwait at present do hereby change my name to Kaid Johar (as given name) Kutbuddin (as surname) for all purpose. I will henceforth be known in the name Kaid Johar Kutbuddin and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (#6190, 11/11/2024)

Padel showdown heats up in Kuwait

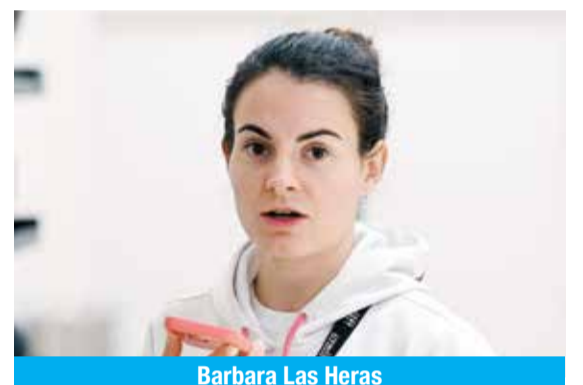
Top players battle in Premier P1 tournament as fans cheer on action



A doubles game. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Javier Navarro



Barbara Las Heras



Alawadhi

By Abdellatif Sharaa and Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: The Premier Padel Kuwait P1 tournament, sponsored by BNK, continues at Rafa Nadal Academy Kuwait, with the main draw starting Monday. In the round of 64, R Valenzuela and P Hernandez Alvarez defeated A Melen-dez and C Gutierrez, while M Lamperti and D Santigosa Sastre claimed victory over A Fernandez and J Jimenez Casas. J Esbri and F Gil bested J Solano Marmo-lejo and J Ramirez, and I Sager and S Oria overcame L Hernandez Quesada. F Guerrero and J Bautista defeated D Perino and J Ruiz, and A Patiniotis and J Moya triumphed over A Ala-wadhi and F Erguy.

Marc Arcusa, head coach of padel in Kuwait and a native of Cata-lonia, Spain, shared his insights with Kuwait Times, reflecting on his two years coaching in Kuwait and his current role in overseeing teams at Premier Padel P1 Kuwait.

While one of his teams, featuring Abdullah Al-Rawdan and Mohamed

Al-Qattan, faced an early exit in the qualifiers, he remains optimistic about their progress, noting strong team morale.

Arcusa expressed gratitude to BNK for organiz-ing the tournament, highlighting its role in advancing padel in Kuwait. He hopes to see more events like this in the future, as they provide valuable experiences not only for coaches and players but for the entire com-munity. He emphasized that continued investment in padel is essential for its growth.

Barbara Las Heras, a professional padel player, also spoke to Kuwait Times about her experiences, marking this as her second visit to Ku-wait. Her brand, she noted, is Kuwaiti, and she commended the tournament's flawless organization, which she said meets players' expectations.

Las Heras was delighted by the local enthusiasm for the matches, saying she felt the excitement from fans who antici-pated the players' arrival. Competing in the women's 32-pair draw and the 16-team female qualifiers, her tournament matches are set Wednesday. She expressed appreciation for BNK's support, which she said has made the ex-perience enjoyable for players and fans alike.

Javier Navarro, from Valencia, Spain, en-tered the tournament with a wildcard spot in the main draw. He described his experience in Kuwait as "amazing", appreciating the convenience of the facilities and the close proximity of amenities. "If there's any problem, you just ask, and you get whatever you need," he said.

Navarro praised the courts as "excellent and well-prepared", seeing Kuwait P1 2024 as a significant opportunity and potentially a major event in the future. He acknowl-edged the challenging matches ahead, noting the high level of competition but remained determined to compete and aim for victory.



Alawadhi in action.



A game in progress.