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Moscow lowers nuclear threshold

Putin approves new doctrine as Ukraine hits Russia with US missiles on war's 1,000th day

Amir, Trump reaffirm strong ties



KUWAIT: HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah congratulated US President-elect Donald Trump on his victory in the US presidential elections during a phone call on Tuesday. The leaders discussed the strong and strategic relations between Kuwait and the US, particularly in economic, security and military fields, and expressed a shared commitment to

further enhancing these ties. They also reviewed regional and international issues of mutual concern. HH the Amir extended an official invitation for Trump to visit Kuwait, while Trump expressed gratitude for HH the Amir's congratulations and reaffirmed US support for Kuwait's security and stability. He also invited HH the Amir to visit the US at a later date. — KUNA

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday lowered the threshold for a nuclear strike in response to a broader range of conventional attacks, as Ukraine used US ATACMS missiles to strike Russian territory, taking advantage of newly granted permission from the outgoing Biden administration on the war's 1,000th day.

Russia said its forces shot down five of six of the missiles, which were fired at a military facility in the Bryansk region. Debris of one hit the facility, starting a fire that was swiftly put out and caused no casualties or damage, it said. Ukraine said it had struck a Russian arms depot around 110 km inside Russia in an attack that caused secondary explosions. US President Joe Biden gave approval just this week for Ukraine to use the ATACMS, the longest-range missiles Washington has supplied, for such attacks inside Russia. Moscow has described their potential use as an escalation that would make Washington a direct combatant in the war and prompt its retaliation.

The attack took place as Ukraine marked 1,000 days of war, with weary troops at the front, Kyiv besieged by airstrikes, a fifth of Ukrainian territory in Moscow's hands and doubts about the future of Western support as Donald Trump heads back to the White House. Russia had been warning the West for months that if Washington allowed Ukraine to fire US, British and French



A Ukrainian serviceman fires a self-propelled howitzer towards Russian positions at an undisclosed location near Chasiv Yar in Donetsk region on Nov 8, 2024. — AFP

missiles deep into Russia, Moscow would consider those NATO members to be directly involved in the war in Ukraine.

The updated Russian nuclear doctrine, establishing a framework for conditions under which Putin could order a strike from the world's biggest nuclear arsenal, was approved by him on Tuesday, according to a published decree. Analysts said the biggest change was that Russia could consider a nuclear strike in response to a conventional attack on Russia or its ally Belarus that "created a critical threat to their sovereignty and (or) their territorial integrity". Washington said the update to the nuclear doctrine was no surprise

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NEWS IN BRIEF

98% of Kuwaitis submit biometrics

KUWAIT: A top interior ministry officer said on Tuesday that 98 percent of Kuwaitis have submitted their biometrics and only 20,000 citizens have not done the compulsory registration. The deadline expired for Kuwaitis on Sept 30. Brig Nayef Al-Mutairi, director of the personal identification division at the criminal evidence department, told Kuwait TV that 87 percent of expats have also completed the biometric registration. The deadline for expats is Dec 31.

3 Palestinians killed in West Bank

JENIN: Three Palestinians were killed in a Zionist military operation in Qabatiya village near Jenin in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday. "There are three bodies of martyrs that are now with the (Zionist) side, after they killed them," local governor Kamal Abu al-Rub said. The three men were between 24 and 32 years old, a Palestinian health ministry statement said, identifying Raed Hanaysha as one of the dead. — AFP

Hamas negotiators 'not in Doha'

DOHA: Hamas negotiators are not in Doha but their office has not been permanently closed, Qatar said on Tuesday following speculation that the Palestinian group had been ordered out of the Qatari capital. A senior Hamas member told AFP that a delegation led by the group's chief negotiator Khalil Al-Hayya was "on a mission outside Qatar", adding "no party asked Hamas to leave any country where Hamas leaders are present, including Qatar". The US issued a warning Monday against countries hosting members of Hamas, singling out Turkey. — AFP

Over 200 children killed in Lebanon in under two months

GENEVA: The UN said Tuesday that over 200 children have been killed in Lebanon since the Zionist entity escalated attacks targeting Hezbollah in September. "Despite more than 200 children killed in Lebanon in less than two months, a disconcerting pattern has emerged: their deaths are met with inertia from those able to stop this violence," James Elder, spokesman for the UN children's agency, UNICEF, told reporters.

"Over the last two months in Lebanon, an average of three children have been killed every single day," he said. "Many, many more have been injured and traumatized," he added, highlighting that in the past two months, more than 1,100 children had been hurt.

Since September, the Zionist entity has conducted bombing campaigns in Lebanon primarily targeting Hezbollah strongholds, though some strikes have hit areas outside the group's control. Since the clashes began, more than 3,510 people in Lebanon have been killed, according to authorities

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TYRE, Lebanon: Smoke billows following a Zionist airstrike which targeted the area of Al-Hosh on Nov 19, 2024. — AFP

Biden out of the picture as world leaders gather

RIO DE JANEIRO: If there was any doubt that Joe Biden is no longer in the picture for many world leaders, his final G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro provided a sure sign. Biden has been making a last pitch for global support on issues from Ukraine and Gaza to climate change before Donald Trump returns to the White House. But as his counterparts gathered for an official G20 photo beside the Brazilian city's stunning bay, there was a problem — the 81-year-old Biden was a no-show.

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RIO DE JANEIRO: Leaders pose for a group photo after the first session of the G20 Leaders' Meeting on Nov 18, 2024. — AFP



Local

Cabinet approves appointments, supports violation removal efforts

Ministers review meetings between HH the Crown Prince, world leaders

KUWAIT: Cabinet approved several decrees related to appointments in government positions and formation of key committees during its weekly meeting on Tuesday morning at Bayan Palace. The meeting was chaired by the Acting Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

Cabinet approved a draft decree appointing the chairperson and deputy chairperson of the Kuwait Financial Intelligence Unit for a period of four years. The ministers also approved a draft decree appointing the chairperson, deputy chairperson and members of the board of directors of the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport for a period of four years. They also approved a draft decree forming a committee to appeal decisions of the Central Agency for Public Tenders for a period of three years. These draft decrees were forwarded to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for approval.

Land violations removal

The Cabinet also reviewed a presentation by the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Housing, Abdullah Al-Meshari, on the efforts of the team responsible for removing violations on state-owned property. The team has been actively identifying and addressing various forms of violations and encroachments on state land. Ministers were briefed on the team's ongoing work, which includes issuing

violation reports and taking legal action against offenders in accordance with established procedures. The Cabinet expressed its full support for Minister Al-Meshari and his team, emphasizing the importance of strict compliance with laws and regulations governing state property and urging prompt and decisive action against any violations.

Additionally, Cabinet approved the minutes of the Supreme Committee to Investigate the Kuwaiti Citizenship, which included the revocation and withdrawal of Kuwaiti citizenship from individuals who had obtained it through fraud or forgery, in accordance with Law No 15 of 1959 on Kuwaiti Nationality.

Climate action, diplomacy

At the beginning of the meeting, the ministers praised the speech delivered by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as he represented His Highness the Amir at the World Leaders Climate Action Summit at COP29 held last Wednesday in Baku, Azerbaijan. In his speech, the Crown Prince highlighted the growing concerns over climate change, noting that its impacts are already being felt in Kuwait, with rising temperatures, dust storms, and decreasing rainfall affecting daily life. He reiterated Kuwait's commitment to achieving environmental sustainability and fulfilling its obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol. Cabinet also reviewed



KUWAIT: Cabinet ministers, led by Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Saud Al-Sabah (right) are seen during their weekly meeting on Tuesday. — KUNA

the meetings held by the representative of His Highness the Amir during the COP29 Summit, including discussions with several world leaders to strengthen Kuwait's international relations and cooperation on climate change and other issues.

Cabinet extended congratulations to Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al-Said of Oman on the occasion of the Sultanate's 54th National Day, acknowledging the strong and historic relationship between Kuwait and Oman. — KUNA

EU-GCC Business Forum to foster trade with Kuwait

By Anne Koistinen
EU Ambassador to Kuwait

The EU and Kuwait share a long history of strong partnership and close friendship. The European Union values the role that Kuwait has historically played as a driving force in GCC integration, and as a supporter of deepening EU-GCC ties. Building on the historic EU-GCC Summit that took place on



Oct 16 in Brussels and its upcoming GCC presidency, Kuwait can play a pivotal role in advancing EU-GCC cooperation across many sectors, including trade and economic relations.

Kuwait, with its long-standing a trading history and expertise, can be of substantial benefit in bringing EU-GCC trade relations to a new level. In this context, I am delighted to extend a special invitation to Kuwaiti business sector to join us at the 8th EU-GCC Business Forum, which will take place in Doha, Qatar on Nov 28, 2024, under the theme "Strengthening EU-GCC Connectivity for a Sustainable Future."

Discussions will cover strategic sectors such as green economy, transport and logistics, culture, heritage and tourism, healthcare innovation and digital transformation. The forum will serve as a platform to foster meaningful dialogue, facilitate cross-border partnerships between Europe and the GCC including Kuwait, and drive mutual growth across sectors that are strategic for our shared prosperity.

For Kuwaiti stakeholders, this is an excellent opportunity to showcase Kuwait's achievements, engage with cutting-edge ideas, and explore avenues for collaboration with European counterparts. On behalf of the European Union, I encourage Kuwaiti companies, business representatives, entrepreneurs, innovators and policymakers to attend the upcoming EU-GCC Business Forum in Doha. Together, let us explore new pathways to a sustainable and prosperous future for both Kuwait and the European Union.



KUWAIT: Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah poses for a photo with military officials.

New Kuwait National Guard chief thanks Amir for his trust

KUWAIT: Chief of Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah extended heartfelt gratitude to HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, for the trust placed in him following the issuance of the decree appointing him as National Guard Chief.

During a meeting at the National Guard headquarters, Sheikh Mubarak expressed appreciation in the presence of Deputy Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Undersecretary Lt Gen Hashim Al-Rifai and senior

commanders and officers, who congratulated him on his new role.

Sheikh Mubarak also thanked HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah for his unwavering support. He pledged to honor the trust bestowed upon him, striving to elevate the National Guard's status as a leading security institution.

Sheikh Faisal praised Sheikh Mubarak, calling his appointment a continuation of the legacy of the late Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah. He affirmed that the National Guard, alongside the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior and Kuwait Fire Force, would work tirelessly for Kuwait's security and development under the nation's wise leadership.

Undersecretary Rifai also congratulated Sheikh Mubarak, emphasizing the commitment of National Guard personnel to uphold their duties and advance the institution's success under his guidance. — KUNA



KUWAIT: (From left) Deputy Chief of Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and Undersecretary Lt Gen Hashim Al-Rifai are seen during a press conference Tuesday. — KUNA photos

Belgium, Kuwait mark 60 years of strong ties

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Dooms highlighted the strong ties between Kuwait and Belgium, emphasizing their enduring partnership over six decades. Speaking at a reception celebrating King's Day, he noted that 2024 marks the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations established after Kuwait's independence. Ambassador Dooms underscored Belgium's significant role in Kuwait's liberation during the Gulf War, with the Belgian navy playing a key part in mine-clearing operations as part of the international coalition.

On economic collaboration, he revealed that a planned Belgian economic mission to Kuwait this year was postponed to April 2025 for organizational reasons, with other projects in the pipeline. Highlighting historical ties, he shared that Kuwait was the first Gulf country to import cars more than a 100 years ago. The first car in Kuwait, appearing in 1911, was a Belgian Minerva, arriving two years before Bahrain imported its first vehicle.

The ambassador also expressed a commitment to enhancing connectivity between the nations, emphasizing the importance of establishing a direct flight between Brussels and Kuwait. "This is a crucial file I am working on," he stated.

Dooms praised Kuwait's humanitarian contributions, commending its support for Palestinians, as well as people in Lebanon and Sudan. He also noted Belgium's participation in the EU-GCC Summit on Oct 16, where discussions focused on regional crises, including the situations in Gaza, Lebanon, Sudan and Ukraine.



Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Dooms.
— Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

He highlighted the shared vision of Kuwait and Belgium in the Human Rights Council, emphasizing their advocacy for peaceful conflict resolution and adherence to the UN Charter. "Countries like ours, which have experienced invasions, have a role to play in promoting respect for international law," he concluded.

'Operation Turtle' beach cleanup drive celebrates 25 years

KUWAIT: The Embassy of Japan in Kuwait announced the 25th anniversary of the "Operation Turtle" beach cleanup campaign, organized by the Japanese Society in Kuwait. The event will take place on Saturday, Nov 23, 2024, from 10:00 am to 12:45 pm at the beach near the Cheesecake Factory restaurant on Gulf Road, close to Kuwait Towers.

Launched in 2000, the campaign seeks to restore Kuwait's beach environment to encourage the return of sea turtles and raise public awareness about environmental protection. This year, marking its milestone anniversary, the campaign will feature a special contribution from The Scientific Center in Kuwait, which will release rescued turtles back into the sea as part of the event.

The initiative is supported by several organizations, including the Embassy of Japan, Environment Public Authority (EPA), Kuwait Environment Protection Society (KEPS), The Scientific Center Kuwait (TSCCK), Kuwait Boy Scout Association (KBSA) and Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), along with voluntary contributions from UN-Habitat Kuwait, Kuwait Dive Team and Arabica Coffee. The Japanese Society welcomes the public to join the cleanup efforts, encouraging community members and media representatives to take part in this environmental initiative.



NBK receives gold for 'Excellence in Health and Wellbeing'

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) won the Gold Award for "Excellence in Health and Wellbeing" from the prestigious US-based Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) at the SHRM MENA STAR Awards 2024 held in Riyadh. The award was received by Emad Al-Ablani, GM for Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait, on the sidelines of the SHRM MENA Annual Conference and Expo 2024, held in Saudi Arabia. The event aimed to highlight key issues related to human capital development, especially those pertaining to attracting and retaining top talent and creating ideal future workplaces, as well as discussing advanced WorkTech tools and exploring future workplace strategies.

The "Excellence in Health and Wellbeing" Awards highlight the achievements of organizations and recognize their remarkable success in promoting employee health and wellbeing, demonstrating an effective understanding of the relationship between employee health and work productivity, implementing innovative and comprehensive health and wellbeing programs, and creating a supportive and healthy work environment that enhances employee wellbeing and organizational performance.

Underscoring its firm belief that employees are its most valuable asset, NBK places substantial emphasis on supporting employees and improving their physical and mental health. In this context, and to foster a healthy work environment, NBK provides a fitness gym equipped with the latest exercise equipment, which is open for employees, before, after and even during working hours for their convenience under the supervision of high-class trainers, aligning with the bank's initiatives to raise health awareness and promote a healthy lifestyle.

NBK also provides a well-equipped clinic managed by Wara Hospital, which provides medical checkups, tests, and on-site visits by specialized doctors, as well as frequent awareness sessions to educate employees on various topics related to physical and mental health. Furthermore, NBK provides many programs and activities focusing on employee wellbeing and care, and promoting a healthy lifestyle. It also allows flexible working hours and paternity leave, during which the new father is allowed to stay at home to bond with the newborn child.

NBK stands out as one of the few organizations in Kuwait with a unique work environment, akin to international peers by continuously providing employees with exceptional career development opportunities. This includes training programs and hands-on experience, which aim to help fresh graduates to navigate their way into the labor market and develop their skills and expertise through partnerships with leading international educational institutions to enable them to lead banking sector development in the future. This ultimately results in increasing employees' loyalty and



RIYADH: Emad Al-Ablani, GM for Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait, receives the award.

giving the bank the edge in a competitive labor market. SHRM, the Society of Human Resource Management, creates better workplaces where employers and employees thrive together. As the voice of all things work, workers and the workplace, SHRM is the foremost expert, convener and thought leader on issues impacting today's evolving workplaces. With 325,000 HR and business executive members in 165 countries, SHRM impacts the lives of more than 235 million workers and families globally.

Trailblazing Kuwaiti women lead in space, medicine

Dr Asma Alkandari, Lama Al-Oraiman's achievements inspire future generations

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti women have made remarkable strides, breaking traditional barriers and securing prominent positions across diverse fields, particularly in medicine, space science, and technology. This progress has been fueled by the strong support and attention from the nation's political leadership. These accomplishments underscore the vital role Kuwaiti women play in advancing medicine and space science. Their success goes beyond personal achievements, as they actively contribute to global scientific and technological advancements through their involvement in international conferences. The successes of Kuwaiti women reflect the importance of their role in achieving societal progress, in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, after proving their capabilities and competence as active partners in the country's development across various sectors.

Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) recently interviewed two trailblazing Kuwaiti women, Dr Asma Alkandari and Lama Al-Oraiman, who have made significant strides in the fields of medicine, space science, and technology, both regionally and internationally. Their success stories serve as powerful inspirations for women striving to achieve their ambitions.

One of the most notable achievements was that of Dr Asma Alkandari, a consultant in internal medicine, gastroenterology, and liver diseases at Jahra Hospital. Dr Alkandari was selected as the representative of the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) for the Middle East. She also participated in the global annual conference for endoscopy and gastroenterology, recently held in Milan, Italy. During this prestigious event, she performed two live endoscopic procedures that were broadcast to thousands of specialists around the world, offering valuable educational content and insight into the field.

Dr Alkandari expressed her pride and honor at being chosen to represent the ASGE in the Middle East, highlighting that her selection underscores the scientific and cultural competence of Kuwaiti women. Reflecting on the challenges in her field, she acknowledged a common barrier faced by female doctors—some patients' reluctance to be treated by women, often due to the misconception that male doctors are more skilled or experienced.



Dr Asma Alkandari poses for a photo with fellow healthcare professionals. — KUNA photos

Regarding her participation in the Milan conference, Dr Alkandari emphasized the importance of such engagements in advancing her career. She noted that the live broadcast of the procedures attracted a large number of viewers worldwide, underscoring the global demand for expertise in minimally invasive techniques, which are increasingly preferred due to their precision and speed. She also praised the Kuwaiti government's support for the healthcare sector, noting that Kuwait has the infrastructure and medical expertise to build patient trust.

In the realm of space science and technology, Lama Al-Oraiman, a Kuwaiti engineer, was appointed Vice Chair of Middle East and Central Asia Subcommittee (MECA-SC) by the International Astronautical Federation (IAF). This recognition highlights her significant contributions to the development of

space science and technology. Additionally, she won the IAF's Emerging Space Leaders Award, further cementing her status as a leader in her field.

Oraiman expressed her excitement about her appointment as Vice Chair of the IAF's Middle East and Central Asia Subcommittee. She sees this role as an opportunity to inspire both young men and women to pursue careers in space science and technology. Oraiman highlighted the vital role of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) in supporting researchers, innovators, and trailblazers in science and technology.

Oraiman also pointed out the significant attention space science, technology, and innovation have received from His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. She emphasized His Highness's commitment to foster-



Lama Al-Oraiman

ing a thriving scientific and technological culture in Kuwait. This was further demonstrated by the recent launch of the Kuwait National Space Research Center in September, which was inaugurated under the patronage of His Highness the Amir. The center aims to create a cutting-edge scientific environment, contributing to the nation's growth, particularly in space science.

Reflecting on receiving the Emerging Space Leaders Award, Oraiman expressed pride in the recognition and stressed the importance of increasing female representation at international space and technology conferences. She also shared her aspirations to stay at the forefront of advancements in space science and technology, bringing the latest innovations to Kuwait and empowering the next generation of talent in the field. — KUNA

Zain ranked regional leader in Global Child Forum's report

KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, commemorates World Children's Day with its recent ranking as a regional leader for the second consecutive year in the final scores of Global Child Forum's 'The State of Children's Rights and Business 2024' benchmark report.

Amongst 3,000 of the largest companies globally, Zain scored higher than the sector and industry averages and tripled the ranking of many regional corporates in key children's rights categories. In the benchmarking rankings, Zain scored 8.4/10 overall against a sector average of 5.6/10 and a regional average of just 2.8/10. The average of all companies benchmarked stood at 4.3/10.

Founded in 2009 by the Swedish Royal Family, Global Child Forum is a leading forum for children's rights and business, dedicated to innovative thinking, knowledge-sharing, and networking. The report, conducted in collaboration with Boston Consulting Group, assessed how companies implement children's rights, and sustainability governance using publicly available data. This global study covered nine sectors and assessed companies against 25 indicators.

As a leader, Zain was described in the report as a company that "has developed and implemented several policies and practices that address your organization's impact on children's rights across several important areas. Your company has taken concrete steps to move beyond policies and has embedded children's rights into company practice, following-up through monitoring, transparent reporting, and programs to create action for children's rights."

Jennifer Suleiman, Zain Group's Chief Sustainability Officer commented: "This ranking that coincides with World's Child Day on November 20 reaffirms Zain's commitment to protect and empower chil-



dren's rights across our markets. Our children are our future and at Zain, we understand that protecting children is not just a responsibility but a moral obligation, and we are dedicated to ensuring that children's rights and online safety are safeguarded through our core business practices. With the expansion and growth of Zain's activities across the region, we are fully committed to addressing the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 16.2, calling on ending all forms of violence against children by 2030."

The scoring categories

Zain scored perfect marks in several categories in the benchmarking exercise, including standards & frameworks; grievance mechanisms; collaboration with or donations to NGOs; minimum age of employment; decent working conditions & family friendly policies; materiality assessment; supplier assessment; product responsibility; resource use and damage to the environment; and community impacts, cementing its position as a leading proponent of corporate governance, sustainability, inclusion, diversity and equity, children's rights, and sound business practices.

Zain has organized several child awareness-focused campaigns. With the aim to raise awareness on children's rights and online safety, Zain expanded its partnerships with child and family helplines across its operating markets. The partnerships aim to enhance collaboration between the helplines, Zain, and key child protection stakeholders; work together to launch new technologies and software to enhance the helplines; create awareness campaigns; and expand services to include instant messaging and social media.



Zain Group headquarters

Zain has been actively working on implementing child sexual abuse material blocking mechanisms across its operations. The company is a part of the GSMA Mobile Alliance against Digital Child Sexual Exploitation. The Mobile Alliance focuses on taking proactive steps to fight technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation, adopting a multi-stakeholder approach, and engaging with key international stakeholders to ensure a well-coordinated response in countering digitally facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse.

As an advocate for children's rights and in alignment with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 16.2, which aims to end all forms of violence against children by 2030, Zain continued to support the cause by introducing a powerful campaign in response to the rising global violence that is impacting children disproportionately. This initiative followed the escalating crises and conflicts worldwide, where children are bearing the brunt of severe hardships and vio-

lence, affecting their physical and mental health.

The campaign, titled #EveryChildHasRights, was designed to highlight the critical threats faced by children in conflict-affected regions and support for their protection. It included a compelling video underscoring the urgent need to safeguard children's rights, engaging audiences in meaningful and emotional dialog. Through this campaign, Zain aimed to create a global call to action and foster a deeper understanding of the pressing issues at hand. In 2024, the campaign successfully garnered 16.5 million impressions across Zain's footprint, amplifying its message and driving significant awareness on this crucial issue.

Global Child Forum bases its benchmark scores on a company's publicly available information, systematically assessing a corporate's response to impacts on children's rights. Scores are not a measure of actual compliance with policies, outcomes of policies and/or programs, nor should scores be construed as investment advice.

Kuwaiti novelist among finalists of US book award

NEW YORK: The National Book Award Foundation in the United States will host, on Wednesday, the 75th National Book Award with the participation of the Kuwaiti novelist Bothayna Al-Essa. Al-Essa qualified in the category of translated literature with her novel "The Book Censor's Library", published by the Books Restless. The original novel, issued back in 2019 by Arab Scientific Publisher and Takween Publishing, discussed intellectual freedom and the impact of oppression on human identity in an interesting way that combined philosophical literature and science fiction.

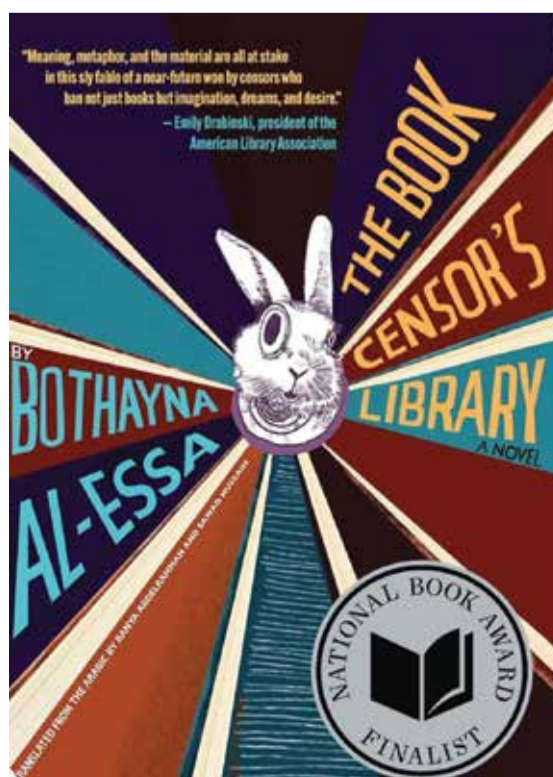
The Kuwaiti Novelist competes with the Swedish Linnea Axelsson with her novel (Aednan), the Congolese novelist Mwanza Mujila with his novel (The Villain's Dance), the Taiwanese novelist Yang Shuang-zi's (Taiwan Travelogue), and the



Bothayna Al-Essa

Syrian novelist Samar Yazbek's (Where the Wind Calls Home).

The National Book Award is one of the most prestigious competitions in the United States occurring annually since 1950. It celebrates literary creativity and supporting writers and authors across several categories, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, translated literature, and young people's literature. — KUNA



Women's housing team urges feedback from female citizens

KUWAIT: Sheikha Bibi Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah, Head of the Women's Housing Team at the Kuwait Public Authority for Housing Welfare, affirmed the team's commitment to engaging with female citizens by welcoming their feedback, suggestions and complaints on women's housing matters. In a press statement, Sheikha Bibi highlighted efforts to simplify communication, offering multiple channels: WhatsApp at 66855968, email at eskaan@pahw.gov.kw and the government's unified digital services app Sahel.

The women's housing team was formed in October by a decision from Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Minister of State for Municipality Affairs Abdullahif Al-Meshari. Sheikha Bibi was appointed as chair, with Bader Al-Subaei, deputy director general for distribution and documentation affairs, as deputy chair, alongside six other members. The team is tasked with reviewing and cataloging properties allocated to women, including the Sabah Al-Salem residential complex and the Taima and Sulaibikhat areas, to explore development opportunities. It is also authorized to evaluate management practices, recommend modifications, inspect buildings and propose solutions for project improvement. — KUNA

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In my view

Music and civilization



By Dr Nermin Al-Houti

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Every nation in the world has its own civilization, and one of the most important features of these civilizations is art, which serves as the most prominent and sensitive reflection of life. Art is a reflection and expression of the events and changes that affect the human soul, emotions, and inclinations. It also portrays the state of society, whether in times of hardship or prosperity, and the condition of the nation, whether at peace or at war, capturing all its varied circumstances.

Art is the voice through which humanity expresses its emotional, subconscious tendencies and positive beliefs. It represents the various stages of human civilization, capturing the ever-evolving psychological states of humankind. Music, as one of the most significant elements of art, is essential to life. It is an innate part of human existence that people turn to involuntarily. In it, they find a lush oasis that shields them from life's hardships and quenches their thirst with beauty and joy. In every era, music is the mirror that faithfully reflects a civilization, revealing its level of sophistication, dignity and prosperity.

From the beginning of civilization, music has been an integral part of human life. The philosopher Plato, for instance, regarded music as one of the foundational elements of his ideal republic. In ancient Egypt, music was a key component of their Pharaonic civilization. With the rise of the medieval era, and later the emergence of maqams in the East, music - along with its instruments, tones, and structures - played a pivotal role in strengthening and solidifying civilizations, enriching the present and inspiring the future through its melodies.

In conclusion, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all officials and organizers who contributed to the success of the musical events held this month in the Gulf's "bride", Kuwait. These events, showcasing both Arab and Western musical traditions, serve as a testament to the rich diversity of human culture and the role of music in uniting and celebrating the achievements of our peoples.

WHO designates Sabah Al-Salem university campus as Healthy City

Achievement a 'historic' milestone for Kuwait University: Officials

KUWAIT: In a historic achievement for Kuwait University, the World Health Organization (WHO) has officially designated the Sabah Al-Salem University City as a "Healthy City," making it the first university in Kuwait to receive this recognition. This milestone was celebrated during a special ceremony in which certificates of accreditation were also presented to Dasmah and Al-Oyoun designating them as healthy cities.

The event, held at the Dana Hall on the Sabah Al-Salem university campus, was attended by Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Nader Al-Jallal, Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi, WHO Regional Director Assad Hafeez, and Acting President of Kuwait University Osama Al-Saeed.

In his remarks, Minister Al-Awadhi expressed his pride that Kuwait University had become the first university in the country to earn the "Healthy City" designation locally. He also highlighted that, with the addition of Dasmah and Al-Oyoun, Kuwait now has seven officially recognized healthy cities, out of 18 registered in the WHO's Regional Healthy Cities Network.

"We aim to expand the number of healthy cities in Kuwait to ten by the end of this year, with Qortuba, Al-Daiya, and Al-Shaab expected to pass WHO's initial evaluation," he said. Al-Awadhi praised the collaborative efforts of the university, the Ministry of Health, and other stakeholders, emphasizing how this achievement reflects dedication to enhancing public health and community engagement.

Minister Al-Awadhi explained that the "Healthy Cities" initiative, launched by the WHO in 1986, aims to improve community health through partnerships between governments and civil society. The program focuses on fostering collaborations that lead to better health outcomes and quality of life.

WHO Regional Director Assad Hafeez also congratulated the university on its accreditation, noting that the Sabah Al-Salem campus' commitment to creating a healthy and thriving community serves as an exemplary model. "Your dedication to health and well-being is a clear testament to your belief in enhancing the health and prosperity of your community," he said. Hafeez further emphasized that during the WHO's evaluation of the university campus, it was evident that health was integrated into the university's daily operations. This integration not only enhances

the success of the institution but also improves the health of students, staff, and workers, while promoting environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

The WHO official explained that the "Healthy University" concept is based on a comprehensive approach to health, with a focus on creating an educational environment and organizational culture that promotes health, well-being, and sustainability. He

explained that the university has worked to strengthen the concept of community partnerships, which has resulted in the global accreditation of the Sabah Al-Salem University campus as an integrated educational and health system. He noted that the campus serves approximately 50,000 students and university staff daily from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm, and experiences smooth traffic with around 50,000 cars.



KUWAIT: Officials attend a ceremony celebrating the designation of Sabah Al-Salem University City, Al-Oyoun and Dasmah as healthy cities. — KUNA photos

said the Healthy Cities Department at the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the World Health Organization's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, introduced the concept of healthy universities for the first time at Sabah Al-Salem University City. Since then, several other initiatives have been implemented in the region and launched based on the standards of the Healthy Cities Program.

Acting President of Kuwait University, Al-Saeed,

He added that the university campus earned 110 points in the WHO's assessment, meeting all necessary criteria for the "Healthy City" designation. Minister Al-Jallal described the WHO's accreditation as a "historic achievement" for Kuwait University. He commended the collaborative efforts of various sectors in the country, noting that this recognition highlights Kuwait University's role in integrating health into its academic and organizational structures. — KUNA



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KUWAIT: Musicians perform at the concert held at the Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre.

Harmonizing cultures: Indian classical music connects Kuwait, India

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of the Embassy of India in Kuwait, the Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC) Kuwait organized a captivating violin concert that celebrated the beauty and depth of Indian classical music. The event took place at the Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre (JACC) and aimed to strengthen cultural exchange between Kuwait and India. The event featured a performance by the renowned violinist L Subramaniam, one of India's most respected maestros, accompanied by his son, Ambi Subramaniam, an accomplished musician in his own

right. The concert was a bridge connecting the cultural heritage of both countries.

During the event, Kaizar Shakir, Chairman of IBPC Kuwait, emphasized to Kuwait Times that while the council's primary mission is to promote and foster bilateral trade between Kuwait and India, it also places great importance on cultural exchange. "The Indian Business and Professional Council Kuwait fosters and promotes bilateral trade between Kuwait and India. However, our mission extends beyond business and commerce, as we also aim to enhance cultural exchange between the two countries," Shakir noted.

He further elaborated on the deep-rooted connection between Kuwait and India, saying that the relationship between the two nations is not only built on trade and business but is also profoundly enriched by shared cultural values. "Kuwait and India have long enjoyed a deep connection, not only in terms of trade and business but also through shared cultural values. This event is a testament to that enduring bond, and we are proud to celebrate it today," he concluded.



Kaizar Shakir, IBPC Kuwait Chairman



L Subramaniam (left) performs alongside his son Ambi Subramaniam.



Tens of thousands march in NZ Maori rights protest

Trouble brews in India's Manipur state

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Hong Kong court jails 45 democracy campaigners on subversion charges

'The righteous shall live, the wicked shall perish'

HONG KONG: A Hong Kong court on Tuesday jailed all 45 defendants convicted of subversion in the city's largest national security trial, with "mastermind" Benny Tai receiving the longest term of 10 years. International condemnation was swift, with Western countries and rights groups slamming the sentencing as evidence of the erosion of political freedoms in the city since Beijing imposed a security law in 2020. Tai's sentence was the longest yet handed out under the law, which was brought in to quash dissent after massive, sometimes violent pro-democracy protests in 2019. His 44 co-defendants were sentenced to shorter terms beginning from four years and two months.

All were charged with subversion after holding an informal poll in 2020 as part of a strategy to win a pro-democracy electoral majority. The group is made up of some of the most prominent figures of Hong Kong's once-diverse political opposition. Among them, former student leader Joshua Wong shouted "I love Hong Kong, bye bye!" to the packed courtroom as he was led away after sentencing. Wong gained international prominence in 2014 as a driving force behind protests known as the Umbrella Movement, which landed him on the cover of Time magazine when he was just a teenager.

'The wicked shall perish'

More than 200 people had queued in drizzle outside the court since dawn for a public seat. Inside, the 45 defendants were crammed into the dock, occasionally waving to the public. Many have already spent more than 1,300 days in jail. Outside after the sentencing, the mother of defendant Hendrick Lui silently held up a placard reading: "The righteous shall live, the wicked shall perish." She was taken away in a police van within seconds, according to video footage from Hong Kong media.

The second-longest sentence of seven years and nine months was handed to young activist



HONG KONG: Diplomats queue outside the West Kowloon Magistrates' Court in Hong Kong on Nov 19, 2024. Hong Kong's largest national security trial will draw to a close on Nov 19. — AFP

Owen Chow. Pro-democracy politicians Au Nok-hin, Andrew Chiu and Ben Chung were singled out as organizers, but received lesser sentences after testifying against Tai. "Long Hair" Leung Kwok-hung, the 68-year-old co-founder of the city's last standing opposition party, received a term of six years and nine months. His wife and party leader Chan Po-ying told AFP that it was "within our expectations". "It is what it is - no matter (whether) I laugh or I cry, so I choose to laugh a bit," she said.

Also included in the group are former lawmakers like Claudia Mo and Eddie Chu, and former journalist Gwyneth Ho.

'Refused to be tamed'

Former district councillor Leticia Wong told AFP that she thought the sentences were "encouraging people to plead guilty and testify against their peers". "For those who refused to be tamed, punishment is obviously heavier," Wong said. West-

ern countries and international rights groups condemned the trial. Australia's government said it was "gravely concerned" after dual citizen Gordon Ng received a sentence of seven years and three months, and said it would continue to advocate for his "best interests". The United States and Britain also condemned the sentences of the 45 activists. China responded that such Western criticism "seriously desecrates and tramples on the spirit of the rule of law", and warned against interference.

International NGO Human Rights Watch said the sentences show "how fast Hong Kong's civil liberties and judicial independence have nosedived". Another closely watched national security trial will see a key development on Wednesday when jailed pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai testifies in his collusion trial. China and Hong Kong have repeatedly pushed back against criticisms, saying the security law restored order following the 2019 protests. Hong Kong's security minister Chris Tang said Tuesday's sentences "reflected the severity of the crime", but added the government would decide whether to appeal individual sentences.

'Constitutional crisis'

Forty-seven people were initially charged after they were arrested in January 2021. Thirty-one pleaded guilty, and 16 stood a 118-day trial last year, with 14 convicted and two acquitted in May. The aim of the July 2020 primary was to pick a cross-party shortlist of pro-democracy candidates to increase their electoral prospects. If a majority was achieved, the plan was to force the government to meet the 2019 protesters' demands - including universal suffrage - by threatening to indiscriminately veto the budget. Three senior judges hand-picked by the government to try security cases said that would have caused a "constitutional crisis". The subversion charge could have carried a sentence of up to life in prison. — AFP



ALIAGA, Philippines: Residents using battery operated hooks and improvised inflatable buoys made from car tyre tubes fish along a swollen river in Aliaga, Nueva Ecija province on Nov 19, 2024, days after Super Typhoon Man-yi hit the area. — AFP

Burst dike leaves Filipino farmers under water

ALIAGA: Filipino farmer Ferdinand Pascua faces financial ruin after heavy rain brought by Typhoon Man-yi sent torrents of water down a river near his shanty, bursting through an earthen dike and inundating land he has tilled for a decade. Man-yi was a super typhoon when it slammed into the Philippines over the weekend - the sixth major storm to hit the archipelago nation in the past month. Pascua's farm in Aliaga municipality, three hours drive north of Manila, was not in Man-yi's path, but the nearby Talavera river brought the storm right to his door on Sunday.

"We heard the water's huge roar and the sound of collapsing earth," Pascua, 38, told AFP on Tuesday as he hauled wet clothes across knee-deep mud in his front yard. "We were worried and in shock. I took my children to my parents' home and returned to retrieve our stuff." The Talavera, swollen by heavy rain in the northern mountains of Luzon island where Man-yi crossed, took part of Pascua's shanty and destroyed around 200 hectares (500 acres) of farmland that should have been protected by the dike.

While the typhoon is now far away, officials say

the flooding will persist for the next three days as brown river water gushes through a 40-metre (130-foot) gap in the remains of the four-meter tall dike and flows through dozens of houses in Santa Monica village. "It (typhoon) did not hit us directly. The rain was not heavy. The problem is the rain that fell in Aurora flowed down here," Yolando Santos, the elected village chief, told AFP, referring to the neighboring mountainous province to the east where Man-yi made its second landfall on Sunday.

Deeper into debt

While no one was killed or injured when the dike burst, villagers told AFP they worried that the farms will be permanently silted with sand and unfit for cultivation. Many, like Pascua, had borrowed money from local loan sharks to finance the rice and corn crops that were wiped out, and they will now have to go deeper into debt. Santos said about 200 hectares of farmland in the villages of Santa Monica and nearby Santa Lucia were flooded. Corn crops on the other side of the river were also flattened as the waterway doubled in width to 80 meters. On Tuesday, farmer Eduardo Santos, 53, stood on the edge of the damaged dike about 300 meters from his flooded house and watched the torrent of water go past. Santos had borrowed 60,000 pesos (\$1,020) at five percent interest a month to plant three hectares of rice and two hectares of corn. — AFP

said two missiles had hit near the Anadolu S on Sunday and Monday without causing any damage. It said that on Monday, the ship was "ordered to alter course to the north", adding that the "vessel did not comply with the order and continued its transit". It later "reported a missile splashed" about three meters away from the vessel's stern but caused no casualties or damage, noting that the ship continued on its path.

The following day, another missile hit one nautical mile from the vessel, the CTF's Joint Maritime Information Center said, also without causing damage. "Vessel and crew are reported safe and continuing to next port of call," it said. "The JMIC has investigated and found an indirect association to Zionist entity," Saree had said that the rebels had targeted the ship "because it did not respond to the warnings of the naval forces and because the company that owns it violated the ban decision on entry to the ports of occupied Palestine (Zionist entity)". — AFP

Houthi target cargo ship in the Red Sea

SANAA: Yemen's Houthi rebels announced Tuesday they had targeted a cargo ship in the Red Sea, while a multinational naval task force said two missiles had struck near the Panama-flagged vessel. Since last November, the Iran-backed Houthis have been targeting shipping in and around the Red Sea in a campaign they say is in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. Houthi spokesman Yahya Saree said the rebels "carried out an operation targeting the ship 'Anadolu S' in the Red Sea with a number of appropriate ballistic and naval missiles", adding that the "hit was accurate and direct".

But the Bahrain-based Combined Task Force later

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International

Tens of thousands march in NZ Maori rights protest

Over 35,000 demonstrators pour into Wellington

WELLINGTON: Booming Indigenous Maori "haka" chants rang out across New Zealand's capital on Tuesday, as tens of thousands rallied against a conservative push to redefine the nation's founding treaty. More than 35,000 demonstrators poured into the harbourside city of Wellington, police said, shutting down busy streets as their spirited procession inched its way towards parliament.

Bare-chested men draped in traditional feather cloaks were joined by horse riders waving the red, white and black Maori flag. Children marched alongside adults bearing distinctive full-face Maori "moko" tattoos and clutching ceremonial wooden weapons. Protests have been swelling throughout New Zealand after a minor party in the conservative coalition government drafted a bill to redefine the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi. Although the bill has almost no chance of passing, its mere introduction has triggered one of New Zealand's largest protests in decades.

'Heads held high'

After it was presented for debate in parliament last week, 22-year-old Maori Party MP Hana-Rawhiti Maipi-Clarke took to her feet in the chamber, ripped the bill in half, and launched into a haka. She joined the crowds of protesters gathered on the lawns Tuesday outside New Zealand's beehive-shaped parliament building. "I may have been suspended for 24 hours and not let into the gates of the debating chambers, but the next day I showed up outside the steps with a hundred thousand of my people, marching with our heads held high and our

flags waving with pride," she told them. "We are the king makers, we are the sovereign people of this land and the world is watching us here."

Many critics of the bill - including some of New Zealand's most respected lawyers - see it as an attempt to strip long-agreed rights from the country's 900,000 strong Maori population. "It's not the best way to have a conversation. We will not accept unilateral change to a treaty that involves two parties," said Ngira Simmonds, a key advisor to New Zealand's Maori queen. "There is a better way," he told AFP from Wellington. Many demonstrators arrived in Wellington after a nine-day "hiko" - or protest march - that began hundreds of kilometres away at New Zealand's northern tip.

A country divided

At the centre of the outcry is government minister David Seymour, the outspoken leader of the libertarian ACT Party - a minor partner in the governing coalition. Seymour has long railed against affirmative action policies designed to help Maori, who remain far more likely to die early, live in poverty, or wind up in prison. His bill would look to wind back these so-called "special rights". Incumbent Prime Minister Christopher Luxon has voiced his opposition to Seymour's bill, meaning it is all but doomed to fail when it comes to a parliamentary vote.

But former conservative prime minister Jenny Shipley said just putting it forward threatened to "divide New Zealand in a way that I haven't lived through in my adult life". Seen as the country's

society. He has been held apart from other inmates in high-security facilities for more than 12 years. "We want the court to consider his progression, he has a right to... develop and have better living conditions so he can have some kind of future," Storrvik said.

'Unbridled violence'

In February 2024, Breivik lost a lawsuit brought against the Norwegian state in which he argued that his extended isolation was a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, which prohibits "inhuman" and "degrading" treatment.

The state argued that his strict, yet comfortable, conditions were justified due to the "extreme risk of totally unbridled violence". On July 22, 2011, the right-wing extremist set off a truck bomb near government offices in Oslo, killing eight people, before heading to the island of Utoya, where disguised as a police officer he shot dead 69 people, mostly teens, attending a Labor Party youth-wing summer camp.

He said he killed his victims because they embraced multiculturalism. Storrvik said external psychologists had conducted a comprehensive evaluation of Breivik for the first time in 12 years, and would present their 109-page report to the court. Storrvik declined to disclose its conclusions but said: "I think it can be useful for us." Prosecutor Hulda Olsen Karlsdottir told news agency NTB the report had not changed her mind. "The new evaluation has not changed the prosecution's view on the issue of his release," she said. During court hearings earlier this year, Breivik said he was depressed and addicted to Prozac, at times breaking down in sobs. The date for the court's ruling has yet to be set. — AFP

Asked whether publication of the decree was linked to Washington's decision on allowing Ukraine to fire US missiles deep into Russia, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the doctrine had been published in a "timely manner". "Nuclear deterrence is aimed at ensuring that a potential adversary understands the inevitability of retaliation in the event of aggression against the Russian Federation and/or its allies," Peskov said.

The warring sides have both been escalating in recent weeks in an attempt to secure a stronger position at any negotiations. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky says Kyiv must do everything for the war to end diplomatically next year. "At this stage of the war, it is being decided who will prevail. Whether us over the enemy, or the enemy over us Ukrainians... and Europeans. And everyone in the world who wants to live freely and not be subject to a dictator," he said in an address to parliament on Tuesday marking 1,000 days of war.

Thousands of Ukrainian citizens have died, over six million live as refugees abroad and the population has fallen by a quarter since Putin ordered the invasion by land, sea and air that began Europe's biggest conflict since World War Two. Military losses have been huge, although casualty figures remain closely guarded secrets. Public Western estimates based on intelligence reports say hundreds of thousands have been wounded or killed on each side.

"In the frozen trenches of the Donetsk region and in the burning steppes of the Kherson region, under shells, hail, and anti-aircraft guns, we are fighting for the right to live," Ukraine's top commander Oleksandr Syrkyi wrote on Telegram. Tragedy has touched families in every corner of Ukraine, where military funerals are commonplace in cities and far-flung villages, and people are exhausted by sleepless nights of air raid sirens and anguish.

In a move decried in the West as an escalation, Russia has now deployed 11,000 North Korean troops, some of whom Kyiv says have clashed with Ukrainian forces in Kursk. Zelensky said Pyongyang could send 100,000 soldiers. Russia for its part continues to advance village by village in eastern Ukraine, claiming to have captured another settlement on Tuesday. — Reuters



WELLINGTON: Members of the Maori community and their supporters take part in a protest outside the parliament in Wellington on November 19, 2024. — AFP

founding document, the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 to bring peace between 540 Maori chiefs and colonizing British forces. Its principles today underpin efforts to foster partnership

between Indigenous and non-Indigenous New Zealanders and protect the interests of the Maori community. The anniversary of the treaty's signing remains a national holiday. — AFP

Norway's killer Breivik seeks parole 13 years after massacre

OSLO: Right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik, who killed 77 people in Norway in twin attacks in 2011, on Tuesday asked a court for parole for the second time, a request widely expected to be denied. Under Norwegian law, the 45-year-old is allowed to seek conditional early release once a year after having served 10 years of his sentence. His first parole request in January 2022 was denied, with the court concluding there was a "clear risk" he would resume the behavior that led to the July 22, 2011 attacks. "He's asking for parole, but that's not so probable," his lawyer Oystein Storrvik told AFP ahead of the three-day hearing that opened Tuesday.

Breivik appeared wearing a black suit and tie and carrying a sign with several political messages. He has also used his previous court appearances to express extremist views. In a brief statement to reporters before proceedings got underway, Breivik said: "If I am given an exit opportunity in the future, I will be a tremendous help to the Norwegian state, and that's something I take very seriously." "Alternatively, I can keep my mouth shut for the rest of my life. But that's up to the judge." Asked by a reporter whether he regretted his 2011 actions, Breivik replied: "I will talk about that in my explanation."

He was sentenced in 2012 to 21 years in prison, at the time Norway's harshest sentence, which can be extended as long as he is considered a threat to

'Macho' society must change attitude on rape, Pelicot says

AVIGNON: Gisele Pelicot, the French woman drugged by her ex-husband so she could be raped and sexually abused by him and dozens of strangers, said on Tuesday that it was time for a "macho" society to change its attitude on rape. "It's time that the macho, patriarchal society that trivializes rape changes," said Gisele Pelicot in her closing statement at the trial of her ex-husband and dozens of other men on rape charges. "It's time we changed the way we look at rape," she added.

Since early September her ex-husband Dominique Pelicot has been in the dock in the southern city of Avignon along with 49 other men. Another defendant is still at large. Gisele Pelicot has become a feminist icon by refusing to be ashamed and demanding the trial be open to the public to raise awareness about the use of drugs to commit sexual abuse. Gisele, 71, said the marathon hearings marked a trial of "cowardice" on the part of the men who took part in the rapes organized by her husband. "I've seen people take the stand who deny rape, and some who admit it," she said.

"I want to say to these men: at what point did Mrs Pelicot give you her consent when you entered the room? At what point do you become aware of this inert body? At what point do you not report it to the police?" None of her abusers alerted the police. "I

can hear this gentleman saying 'a finger is not rape,'" Gisele Pelicot added, in reference to testimony from another defendant. Investigators have counted around 200 instances of rape, most of them by her husband and more than 90 by strangers.

Gisele said her former husband "had a lot of fantasies that I couldn't fulfill". "But why did it come to this? I think what he wanted was Mrs Pelicot and not someone else," she added. "As I didn't want to go to a swingers' club, he thought he'd found the solution by putting me to sleep." "I've lost 10 years of my life that I'll never make up for," she added. "This scar will never heal."

The trial enters its final stages this week. Dominique Pelicot was also set to address the court before the civil parties' deliver their closing arguments. Prosecutors are then scheduled to give their closing arguments and make their sentencing demands for the defendants. On Monday, the couple's three children spoke in court of their heartbreak and grief, with the daughter insisting she has been "forgotten" despite being also abused. Gisele's daughter, who uses the pen name Caroline Darian, believes she was also assaulted by her father.

The case of 71-year-old Dominique Pelicot has sparked horror, protests and a debate about male violence in French society. Dominique Pelicot has confessed to being a rapist. If convicted, he would emerge from the historic trial with a record as one of France's worst sex offenders. Of the co-defendants, only 14 have admitted the charges of aggravated rape, for which most of them face up to 20 years imprisonment if convicted. The 35 others deny having raped Gisele Pelicot and maintain that they thought they were taking part in sex games. — AFP

Moscow lowers nuclear threshold...

Continued from Page 1

and cited "more of the same irresponsible rhetoric from Russia". The US National Security Council said it had not seen any reason to adjust the US nuclear posture. The previous doctrine, contained in a 2020 decree, said Russia may use nuclear weapons in case of a nuclear attack by an enemy or a conventional attack that threatened the existence of the state. The doctrine said any attack by a non-nuclear power supported by a nuclear power would be considered a joint attack, and that any attack by one member of a military bloc would be considered an attack by the entire alliance, it said.

"We will be taking this as a qualitatively new phase of the Western war against Russia and we will react accordingly," Putin's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, said in English, adding that US personnel and data must have been used in the ATACMS attack on Russia. Lavrov said Russia would do everything to avoid nuclear war, and pointed out that it was the US which used nuclear weapons against the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Russia also included a broader definition of the data that could be used to indicate Russia was under mass attack from aircraft, cruise missiles and unpiloted aircraft. The war is entering what some Russian and Western officials say could be its final and most dangerous phase as Moscow's forces advance at their fastest pace since the early weeks of the conflict and the West ponders how the war will end.

The Kremlin said Russia considered nuclear weapons a means of deterrence and that the updated text was intended to make clear to potential enemies the inevitability of retaliation should they attack Russia. "Now the danger of a direct armed clash between nuclear powers cannot be underestimated, what is happening has no analogues in the past, we are moving through unexplored military and political territory," said Sergei Ryabkov, Russia's deputy foreign minister overseeing arms control and US relations.

Over 200 children killed in Lebanon...

Continued from Page 1

in the country, with most fatalities recorded since late September. Elder said that since the Gaza war erupted last year, at least 231 children had been killed in Lebanon. "We must hope humanity never again witnesses the ongoing level of carnage of children in Gaza, though there are chilling similarities for children in Lebanon," he said.

He pointed to the hundreds of thousands of children made homeless in Lebanon, and "disproportionate attacks, of which many frequently hit infrastructure children rely on". "Medical facilities are being attacked and health workers are being killed at an increasing speed," he said. He highlighted that as of Nov 15, more than 200 health workers had been killed and 300 injured, according to Lebanese authorities.

"The most worrying parallel to Gaza," he said, was that "the escalation of children killed is eliciting no meaningful response from those with influence". "In Lebanon, much the same as has become the case in Gaza, the intolerable is quietly transforming into the acceptable. And the appalling is slipping into the realm of the expected." The health ministry in Gaza said the death toll from the Zionist war had reached 43,972 people, a majority civilians. The UN peacekeeping mission

in Lebanon meanwhile decried "numerous hits on its assets and personnel". "This has been definitely a very difficult moment," UNIFIL spokesman Andrea Tenenti said, lamenting that the force had been "deliberately attacked by IDF (the Zionist military) in recent months". In the past 13 months, it had suffered "162 impacts, with more than one-third in the less than two months", he told reporters by video from Beirut. "More than 20 peacekeepers have been injured so far," he said.

Tenenti said UNIFIL "towers and some of our positions have been attacked and heavily damaged". He stressed that UNIFIL would remain. "We are still there in all our 50 positions," he said. "It's important to stay, to be there, to monitor, to assist as much as we can the population in south Lebanon."

US special envoy Amos Hochstein said during a visit to Beirut on Tuesday that an end to the Zionist-Hezbollah war was "now within our grasp" as he met with officials to discuss a truce plan largely endorsed by Lebanon. Following a meeting on Tuesday with Hezbollah-allied parliamentary speaker Nabih Berri, who has led mediation on behalf of the group, Hochstein told reporters he saw "a real opportunity" to end the fighting.

Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem had been expected to give a speech, but the group postponed the address shortly after it was announced. A Lebanese official said Monday that his government had "a very positive view" of the truce plan, while another said Lebanon had been waiting for Hochstein "so we can review certain outstanding points with him". — Agencies

Biden out of the picture as world...

Continued from Page 1

Instead of the US president, it was China's Xi Jinping, India's Narendra Modi and Brazil's Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva who joked and chatted in the front row before posing together.

Frustrated American officials blamed it on "logistical issues" and said the picture was taken too soon, as Biden was still making his way to the area from talks with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. "They took the photo early before all the leaders had arrived. So a number of the leaders weren't actually there," a US official said on condition of anonymity. Trudeau and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni also missed out.

But while the issue did not appear to have been a deliberate snub, it reflected the increasingly sidelined status of the lame-duck US leader as Trump's

comeback looms. The fact that it was the leaders of three BRICS countries in the front row that see themselves as a counterpart to a Western-dominated world did not help.

In another incident, US officials played down footage of the leader of the world's biggest economy and most powerful military apparently straying from the red carpet on the way into the summit. The US officials said that "several" leaders from "countries that face huge threats" took a different route like Biden did, even if Brazilian media said they did not see any others.

However, the missteps come in the twilight of a presidency whose achievements are set to meet a Trump-shaped wrecking ball come Jan 20. Biden dropped out of the US presidential election against Trump after a disastrous debate raised concerns about his age, but he still saw his Democratic replacement, Kamala Harris, lose heavily to the Republican. Now his six-day tour of South America has turned into a desperate frenzy to reassure world leaders amid uncertainty about what Trump will bring, from trade wars to threats to upending old alliances. — AFP

International

Trouble brews in Manipur

India to send 5,000 extra troops to quell Manipur unrest

NEW DELHI: Violence in India's northeastern state of Manipur surged this month, the latest clashes in a bitter 18-month-long conflict between ethnic forces that has killed at least 200 people. Fighting since May 2023 has fractured the state of nearly three million people between the predominantly Hindu Meitei majority and the mainly Christian Kuki community. Conflict in the state ruled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) erupted from a complex mix of causes including competition for land and public jobs. Manipur's capital Imphal, the only city in the largely rural state, lies more than 1,700 kilometers east of New Delhi, bordering war-torn Myanmar.

Why did fighting begin?

The Kuki, also known as the Kuki-Zo, make up around 16 percent of Manipur's people, according to India's last census in 2011. Living largely in rural areas, they are listed under India's constitution as a "Scheduled Tribe", one of several disadvantaged groups who benefit from affirmative action. In May 2023, Kuki activists protested a high court order supporting Meitei demands that they should also receive reserved public job quotas and college admissions. Kuki protesters feared the Meitei would also acquire reserved land, triggering violent demonstrations.

The order was later scrapped, but the spark had been lit. The Meitei form more than half of the population, and mainly live in town. They dominate the state legislature, with a government led by Hindu-nationalist BJP member Biren Singh rejecting Kuki demands to split Manipur in two. Human Rights Watch has accused the government of facilitating the conflict with "divisive policies that promote Hindu majoritarianism". The Kuki also share many cultural ties with people across the porous border in Myanmar. But they reject accusations they are linked to insurgents from Myanmar, and deny any role in poppy cultivation or drug smuggling.

How bad is the violence?

Divisions have hardened into bitter cycles of

revenge attacks that have included the burning of homes, Christian churches and Hindu temples. Tens of thousands of people have been forced to flee their homes. At the start, mobs looted police stations, seizing thousands of rifles. But with communities since dividing into ethnic enclaves, the unrest has morphed into scattered insurgent attacks. Both Kuki and Meitei groups have multiple militia forces.

Some are organized as village defense units manning barricades armed with assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades. Others operate as guerillas. Many Kuki view state police as being close to Meitei forces. Thousands of extra federal forces have been sent to Manipur, with a further 5,000 paramilitary troops being deployed this week. They face a tough task acting as a "buffer" between deeply divided rivals. The Times of India warned in an editorial, saying they are placed in an "impossible situation".

What sparked the clashes?

In early November, the burned corpse of a woman from the Hmar community—a smaller group close to the Kuki—was found in Jiribam district, sparking fury. Jiribam was one of the few areas where there had been little conflict between the Kuki and Meitei communities. On November 11, at least 10 Hmar men were killed by police, who said they had tried to storm their station. Days later, the bodies of six people believed to be from the Meitei community were discovered, triggering protests. Protesters tried to storm the homes of politicians in Imphal, and the government on Saturday ordered an internet shutdown and curfew, the latest to be imposed.

What are politicians doing?

Critics say government efforts to stem the violence have failed. The Hindu newspaper argued that peace can only be achieved through a "political arrangement of accommodation", but that there has been little sign of that so far. "The vicious insider-outsider rhetoric continues, internet bans are back and the army and police still do not see eye-to-eye," the Indian Express wrote in an editorial on



IMPHAL: Demonstrators block streets with burning tyres as they protest to condemn the alleged killing of women and children by suspected Kuki minority forces, in Imphal, capital of India's violence-hit northeastern state of Manipur. - AFP

Tuesday. Seven state lawmakers have withdrawn from the BJP-led coalition, a step that political analyst Samrat Choudhury argued was potentially positive as a "first indication of the crisis moving to resolution stage". Opposition lawmakers have demanded federal powers take over power from the BJP state government.

5,000 extra troops

Meanwhile, India will deploy an extra 5,000 paramilitary troops to quell unrest in Manipur, authorities said Tuesday, a week after 16 people were killed in fresh clashes in the troubled state. Manipur in India's northeast has been rocked by periodic clashes for

more than 18 months between the predominantly Hindu Meitei majority and the mainly Christian Kuki community, dividing the state into ethnic enclaves.

New Delhi has "ordered 50 additional companies of paramilitary forces to go to Manipur", a government source in New Delhi with knowledge of the matter told AFP on condition of anonymity, as they were not authorized to speak with media. Each company of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), a paramilitary unit overseen by the home ministry and responsible for internal security, has 100 troops. The Business Standard newspaper reported that the additional forces would be deployed in the state by the end of the week. - AFP

Canada foiled Iran plot to assassinate former minister

OTTAWA: Canadian authorities recently foiled an alleged Iranian plot to assassinate Irwin Cotler, a former justice minister who has been a strong critic of Tehran, Cotler's organization said Monday. The 84-year-old was justice minister and attorney general from 2003 to 2006. He retired from politics in 2015 but has remained active with many associations that campaign for human rights around the world. The Globe and Mail newspaper reported that he was informed on October 26 that he faced an imminent threat - within 48 hours - of assassination from Iranian agents.

Authorities tracked two suspects in the plot, the paper said, citing an unnamed source. In an email to AFP, the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, where Cotler is international chair, confirmed the Globe and Mail report. Cotler "has no knowledge or details regarding any arrests made," said Brandon Golfman, an organization spokesman. Tehran late on Monday denied what it described as "the claim of Canadian media that Iran tried to assassinate a Canadian person," the official IRNA news agency reported, citing Issa Kameli, the director general for the Americas at the foreign ministry.

The Iranian diplomat denounced the report as "ridiculous storytelling and in line with the misinformation campaign against Iran". A spokesperson for Canadian Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc declined to comment, telling AFP: "We cannot comment on, nor confirm specific RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) operations due to security reasons." Another senior government minister, Francois-Philippe Champagne, called the plot "very concerning." Jean-Yves Ducloux, the government's senior minister in Quebec province, where Cotler lives, said it was likely "very difficult for (Cotler), in particular, and his family and friends to hear" about it.—AFP

Can Trump-Musk 'bromance' last?

WASHINGTON: The world's richest man, Elon Musk, has been an ever-present sidekick for President-elect Donald Trump since the US election at the start of the month. "I can't get him out of here," Trump joked about Musk at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida last Thursday. "I like having him here as well. He's done a fantastic job, an incredible mind." But can the bromance between the world's wealthiest man and the soon-to-be US president survive some major policy differences and their own combustible personalities? AFP looks at six possible areas of friction:

Who's the boss?

Musk is famed for his manic working habits and self-described "hardcore" style, running his companies as personal fiefdoms in which his authority is rarely challenged. From factory production lines to the boardroom, he is used to getting his way with an abrasive style that sees him fire people on the spot and sometimes insult their intelligence in public. Trump, also a tycoon fond of firing and humiliating people publicly, demands total loyalty and has chafed against sharing the limelight with others in the past. He also likes to play his advisors and cabinet members against each other, former aides say. Musk reportedly had a first public row with Trump transition official Boris Epshteyn last week, according to the Axios news site. And he openly endorsed brokerage billionaire Howard Lutnick for US Treasury secretary on Saturday, setting up an early test of his influence.



TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (right) and his Syrian counterpart Bassam Al-Sabbagh give a joint press conference in Tehran on Nov 19, 2024. - AFP

Tehran slams new EU, UK sanctions as unjustified

TEHRAN: Iran's foreign ministry Tuesday slammed as unjustified the new sanctions by the European Union and Britain against Tehran over its support for Russia's war on Ukraine. "While the president of Ukraine has admitted that no Iranian ballistic missiles have been exported to Russia, the measures of the European Union and United Kingdom in applying sanctions against Iran cannot be justified," ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said in a statement.

The European Union and Britain on Monday widened sanctions against Iran over its alleged support for Russia's war on Ukraine, including targeting national seafaring company, vessels and ports used to transfer drones and missiles. Acting in parallel, Britain also announced fresh sanctions against Iran on Monday, freezing the assets of Islamic Republic of

Iran Shipping Line (IRISL). The sanctions also included the national airline, Iran Air, for transporting ballistic missiles and military supplies to Russia for use in Ukraine.

Iran has repeatedly rejected Western accusations that it has transferred missiles or drones to Moscow for use against Kyiv. Ahead of the new sanctions' announcement, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Sunday the EU was using the "non-existent missile pretext" to target its shipping lines. "There is no legal, logical or moral basis for such behavior. If anything, it will only compel what it ostensibly seeks to prevent," Araghchi wrote on X. "Freedom of navigation is a basic principle of the law of the sea. When selectively applied by some, such shortsightedness usually tends to boomerang."

Iran's economy is already reeling from biting US sanctions following the unilateral withdrawal of Washington in 2018 from a landmark nuclear deal between Iran and world powers. Baghaei said the new sanctions against Iran that "affect the interests and fundamental rights of Iranians, are clear examples of systematic violations of human rights". "The Islamic Republic of Iran will use all of the capacities of cooperation with its partners to ensure its interests and national security," he added.—AFP

Energy transition

Musk has bet big on the energy transition, making his fortune from Tesla electric cars, but also developing domestic battery technology and solar-powered roof tiles. Trump ran pledging to "drill, baby, drill" and is expected to approve new fossil fuel infrastructure and permits, even opening up protected federal land to oil and gas companies. Musk used to deride the "mine-and-burn hydrocarbon economy" that Trump openly champions. The president-elect has nominated a fracking magnate as his energy secretary. Chris Wright publicly dismissed climate change and the energy transition last year.

China

Trump's aggressive stance on China and the risk of a trade war between the world's two biggest economies could be another major thorn in the relationship between the billionaires. China is a major market for Tesla, where the company has one of its so-called "Gigafactories" and is trying to compete with fast-growing home-grown manufacturers. Musk never says a negative word about the ruling Communist Party, putting him at odds with the China hawks like US Senator Marco Rubio who have been tapped to join Trump's cabinet.

An unsparing cost-cutter in his own companies, Musk has been tasked by Trump with leading the "Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)," which will take an ax to government spending. Plans to gut programs will almost certainly, however, face severe political pushback, even from Republicans. As mid-term elections approach, whether it's rescuing Medicaid checks for the poor or handing out defense contracts to benefactors, Trump's political priorities could waver from Musk's.—AFP

Man held after crashing car near school in China

BEIJING: Police said Tuesday a man was in custody after crashing a car outside a primary school in a central Chinese city, injuring multiple children. China has witnessed a spate of deadly incidents in recent months - from mass stabbings to car ramming - a rare development for a country with a proud reputation for public security. The issue has prompted soul-searching about the state of society, with some despairing about why an increasing number of people seem willing to "take revenge" on random civilians.

Many initial videos of Tuesday's incident already appeared to have been removed from China's tightly controlled social media platforms, echoing other mass casualty events. State news agency Xinhua reported that "multiple students were injured", while state broadcaster CCTV said the "specific casualties" were still being investigated. Police in the central city of Changde, home to over five million people, in Hunan province, said the crash took place just before 8:00 am. They also said a 39-year-old man surnamed Huang was being held in custody, adding that the injuries sustained by the victims were not life-threatening.

Footage circulating on Chinese social media - which matched online images of the school - appeared to show the aftermath of the incident, with dozens of children running in panic away from the site of the crash yelling "help, help". In one clip, several people including a young child can be seen lying on the ground. Another showed a bloodied man being hit with sticks by passersby shouting "beat him!" as he lay on the ground next to an SUV.

The crash took place outside Yong'an primary school in Hunan province's Changde. Asked about the incident, the central government in Beijing declined to give further details. "The Chinese government has always taken and will continue to take effective measures to ensure people's safety and social stability," foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a regular briefing.

Spate of deadly incidents

China has this year seen a string of mass casualty incidents, which some analysts have linked to growing anger and desperation at the country's slowing economy and a sense that society is becoming more stratified. Beijing's top public prosecutor vowed "zero tolerance for crimes that infringe students' rights and interests and endanger campus safety" at a meeting on Tuesday, according to a post on its official WeChat account. It also pledged to "make every effort to safeguard the safety of campuses and students".

Tuesday's crash was the third seemingly random outbreak of carnage in just over a week. Last week a man killed 35 people and wounded more than 40 more when he rammed his car into a crowd in the southern city of Zhuhai - the country's deadliest attack in a decade. But authorities took almost 24 hours to release that toll, and videos of the attack later appeared to be scrubbed from social media. Police said the suspect, surnamed Fan, had been "triggered by... dissatisfaction with the division of property following his divorce". On Saturday, eight people were killed and 17 wounded in a knife attack at a vocational school in the eastern Chinese city of Yixing. Police said the suspect was a 21-year-old former student who was meant to graduate this year but had failed his exams.—AFP



NEW YORK: US President-elect Donald Trump (left) and Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk watch a fight during UFC 309 at Madison Square Garden in this file photo. - AFP

Climate change

Musk invested in Tesla in 2004 partly out of concern about global warming. In 2017, he resigned from Trump's business advisory councils to protest the then-president's decision to pull the United States out of the Paris climate change accord. "Climate change is real. Leaving Paris is not good for America or the world," Musk wrote on Twitter at the time. Trump, who has called climate change a "hoax," is widely expected to abandon US commitments again after President Joe Biden re-joined the Paris Accord in 2020. Musk has shifted his views recently, telling Trump during a live conversation on X in August that "if 50-100 years from now we're mostly sustainable I think that will probably be OK." The world's top climate scientific body, the UN's IPCC, says average global temperatures are on track to reach 1.5C above pre-industrial times in the early 2030s, a key level with major consequences for ecosystems.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2024

Defiant Lebanese harvest olives in the shadow of war

World Bank estimates \$1.1bn in losses to Lebanese farm sector in 12 months

BEIRUT: On a mountain slope in south Lebanon, agricultural worker Assaad Al-Taqi is busy picking olives, undeterred by the roar of Zionist entity warplanes overhead. This year, he is collecting the harvest against the backdrop of the raging Zionist entity attacks. He works in the village of Kfeir, just a few kilometers (miles) from where Zionist entity bombardment has devastated much of south Lebanon since Zionist entity escalated its campaign against Hezbollah in September. "But I'm not afraid of the shelling," Taqi said, as he and other workers hit the tree branches with sticks, sending showers of olives tumbling down into jute bags.

"Our presence here is an act of defiance," the 51-year-old said, but also noting that the olive "is the tree of peace". Kfeir is nine kilometers (six miles) from the Zionist entity-occupied Golan Heights, in the mixed Christian and Druze district of Hasbaya, which has largely been spared the violence that has wracked nearby Hezbollah strongholds. But even Hasbaya's relative tranquility was shattered last month when three journalists were killed in a Zionist entity strike on a complex where they were sleeping. Zionist entity and Hezbollah had previously exchanged cross-border fire for almost a year over the Gaza conflict. The workers in Kfeir rest in the shade of the olive trees, some 900 meters (3,000 feet) above sea level on the slopes of Mount Hermon, which overlooks an area where Lebanese, Syrian and Zionist entity-held territory meet.

They have been toiling in relative peace since dawn, interrupted only by sonic booms from Zionist entity jets breaking the sound barrier and the sight of smoke rising on the horizon from strikes on a south Lebanon border village. Hassna Hammad, 48,

who was among those picking olives, said the agricultural work was her livelihood.

"We aren't afraid, we're used to it," she said of the war. But "we are afraid for our brothers impacted by the conflict", she added, referring to the hundreds of thousands of Lebanese displaced by the fighting. Elsewhere in south Lebanon, olive trees are bulging with fruit that nobody will pick, after villagers fled Zionist entity bombardment and the subsequent ground operation that began on September 30. A World Bank report this month said that "the disruption of the olive harvest caused by bombing and displacement is expected to lead to \$58 million in losses" in Lebanon.

It said 12 percent of olive groves in the conflict-affected areas it assessed had been destroyed. Normally, the olive-picking season is highly anticipated in Lebanon, and some people return each year to their native villages and fields just for the harvest. "Not everyone has the courage to come" this time, said Salim Kassab, who owns a traditional press where villagers bring their olives to extract the oil. "Many people are absent... They sent workers to replace them," said Kassab, 50.

"There is fear of the war of course," he said, adding that he had come alone this year, without his wife and children. Kassab said that before the conflict, he used to travel to the southern cities of Nabatiyeh and Sidon if he needed to fix his machines, but such trips are near impossible now because of the danger. The World Bank report estimated that 12 months of agriculture sector losses have cost Lebanon \$1.1 billion, in a country already going through a grueling five-year economic crisis before the fighting erupted. Areas near the southern border have sustained "the



HASBAYA: Workers sort freshly harvested olives near the southern Lebanese town near the Zionist-Lebanese border on Oct 29, 2023. — AFP

most significant damage and losses", the report said. It cited "the burning and abandonment of large areas of agricultural land" in both south and east Lebanon, "along with lost harvests due to the displacement of farmers". Elsewhere in Kfeir, Inaam Abu Rizk, 77, and her husband were busy washing olives they plan to either press for oil or jar to be served

throughout the winter. Abu Rizk has taken part in the olive harvest for decades, part of a tradition handed down the generations, and said that despite the war, this year was no different. "Of course we're afraid... there is the sound of planes and bombing," she said. But "we love the olive month — we are farmers and the land is our work". — AFP

Nov 30, 2024, final date to enter Gulf Bank's AIDanah draw for KD 2m

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has announced that the journey for the AIDanah Millionaire Account, offering a grand prize of KD 2 million, has entered its final phase. The draw for this record-breaking banking prize is set to take place on February 13, 2025, in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young.

This milestone reinforces Gulf Bank's commitment to delivering extraordinary rewards and surprises. In October 2024, the bank achieved a historic moment by naming the largest number of banking prize winners in Kuwait, with 100 individuals each receiving KD 1,000. For the first time, the quarterly prize of KD 100,000 was shared among multiple winners rather than being awarded to a single recipient.

Gulf Bank has updated the AIDanah prize structure, making it even more rewarding for participants. The enhancements include raising the grand prize from KD 1.5 million to KD 2 million and redistributing the quarterly prize of KD 100,000 among 100 winners, each receiving KD 1,000. The updated structure now features two major prizes annually: KD 2 million in the annual draw and KD 1 million in the semi-annual draw. Additionally, monthly draws continue to award KD 1,000 to 10 winners, along with extra KD 100,000 draws, one of which is divided among 100 winners.

The AIDanah Millionaire Account is regarded as one of Kuwait's best savings accounts, offering regular draws with valuable prizes and unique benefits for account holders. Monthly opportunities include KD 1,000 for 10 winners, two quarterly draws worth KD

Walmart raises annual forecasts, after strong Q3

NEW YORK: Walmart on Tuesday raised its annual sales and profit forecast for the third consecutive time, with people buying more groceries and merchandise online and at its stores, a sign that it may be gaining market share ahead of the holiday season. The retailer is among the first major US chains to provide insight into the all-important holiday quarter and how consumers are planning spend as inflation ebbs.

"In the US, in-store volumes grew, pickup from store grew faster, and delivery from store grew even faster than that," Walmart CEO Doug McMillon said. Though inflation has not made much headway in recent months, it is on a downward trend, raising purchasing power. Walmart said it saw share gains across income cohorts mainly led by upper-income households, which make more than \$100,000 in annual income.

The retail bellwether now forecast fiscal 2025 consolidated net sales to rise in the range of 4.8 percent to 5.1 percent, compared with prior expectations of 3.75 percent to 4.75 percent growth. It also expects fiscal 2025 adjusted profit per share to be between \$2.42 and \$2.47, compared with its previous forecast of \$2.35 and \$2.43. Retailers including Walmart, Amazon.com and Target kicked off the holiday shopping season earlier than usual, offering deals on everything from toys to household items. Walmart and Target stocked more private-label brands and upped their grocery offerings as consumers seek to purchase essentials and gifts at the lowest price possible.



100,000 each, a semi-annual draw with a KD 1 million prize, and the annual grand prize of KD 2 million.

A unique advantage of the AIDanah Millionaire account is that it is the only account in Kuwait where your chances of winning carry over from one year to the next, as part of the bank's loyalty and reward program. To increase their chances of winning, customers must maintain a minimum deposit of KD 200 in the account or increase their balance to improve their odds of winning in the monthly, quarterly, and annual draws.

Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait's leading bank, fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace to deliver exceptional customer service while contributing sustainably to the community. Through its extensive branch network and innovative digital services, the bank empowers customers to conduct banking transactions conveniently and efficiently, ensuring a seamless experience.

In alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, "New Kuwait," and its commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships, Gulf Bank is dedicated to driving robust sustainability initiatives across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions. The bank is committed to implementing strategically selected and diverse sustainability programs both internally and externally.

Trump company shares soar on report of crypto bid

NEW YORK: Shares in Donald Trump's social media company soared on Monday after a Financial Times report that it was in talks to buy a cryptocurrency exchange. Trump Media and Technology Group, which operates Truth Social, was up more than 16.5 percent at the close of trading after the newspaper reported it was in advanced talks to buy crypto platform Bakkt. Many in the crypto sector are expecting the US president-elect to enact reforms that will benefit the industry once he is in office.

The purchase, if it goes through, would give Trump further personal exposure to any favorable regulations his administration enacts. Bakkt shares shot up more than 160 percent after the financial daily's report, which cited anonymous sources familiar with the matter. Bakkt's parent company, Intercontinental Exchange (ICE), did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Bakkt has previously entered into business partnerships with Starbucks and Mastercard in moves intended to make cryptocurrencies more accessible to consumers.

The company, which went public in 2021, has not yet turned a profit although its losses have narrowed in recent years. TMTG posted revenue of just \$2.6 million in the first three quarters of this year, while reporting a loss of \$363 million. Trump has a 53 percent stake in the company.

He also has ties to crypto platform World Liberty Financial. Groups affiliated with the crypto industry spent millions supporting candidates across both US political parties in the November election, including Trump. — AFP



WASHINGTON: A Walmart Supercenter is seen in Washington, DC. — AFP

"The majority of our customers are maintaining their holiday plans year over year amidst the election, the calendar shift, the economic backdrop," Walmart said. In the third quarter ended Oct 31, Walmart's US comparable sales rose 5.3 percent, beating analysts estimates of a 3.61 percent increase, according to data compiled by LSEG. It saw sales growth across categories including the general merchandise segment that had suffered declines for over two years due to sticky inflation. Walmart also posted comparable sales

growth in its health and wellness category, helped by strong demand for GLP-1 or weight-loss drugs. As purchasing power increases, analysts expect upper and middle income consumers to mainly drive the shift back in spending on non-essential, nice-to-have merchandise. The company has invested billions on automation in its supply chain to help stock fresher produce and improve delivery times as consumers increasingly prefer the convenience of purchasing groceries online. — Reuters



EVERETT, United States: A Boeing 777X airplane takes off on its inaugural flight at Paine Field in Everett, Washington on January 25, 2020. — AFP

Boeing plans to cut 2,200 jobs at historic sites

NEW YORK: The US aviation giant Boeing sent out its first redundancy notifications on Monday as part of a previously announced plan to cut its global workforce by 10 percent. Boeing intends to cut almost 2,200 jobs in the US state of Washington, which is home to many of its oldest factories, according to a statement released Monday.

Companies in the United States are required by law to submit a "WARN" notice (Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification) to local authorities 60 days before any layoffs. In its notice, Boeing said it expects to start laying people off permanently starting December 20. A total of 2,199 people will be affected.

The group has been plagued by production quality problems, and has just endured a strike lasting more than 50 days that paralyzed two crucial factories. On October 12, Boeing unveiled plans to reduce its global workforce by 10 percent over the coming months, without giving any further details.

Boeing's employees numbered some 170,000 people at the end of last year, with close to 67,000 of them in Washington state, where the company was founded and where it produces its best-selling 737 line of aircraft, along with the 777, 767 and several military planes. Its plants in Renton and Everett, located near Seattle, were recently hit by a strike involving more than 33,000 members of the local branch of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), who were negotiating over pay and work conditions.

"As previously announced, we are adjusting our workforce levels to align with our financial reality and a more focused set of priorities," a company spokesperson told AFP. According to Boeing, most of the employees receiving redundancy notices this week will leave the company in mid-January. Benefits and health insurance will continue to be paid for up to three months after that.

According to WARN notices on Monday, the aviation giant also intends to lay off 50 staff in Oregon and 63 in Colorado. In South Carolina, where the 787 Dreamliner factory is located, 220 people are expected to lose their jobs in January. Boeing employs thousands of workers across these three locations. The engineers' union SPEEA (Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace) was notified on Thursday evening that 438 of its members were to be laid off, according to a spokesman. The union has more than 19,000 members across the United States, around 16,500 of whom work for Boeing. — AFP

Business

NIC successfully executes partial exit of KD 13.3 million from Bursa Kuwait

6.5 million shares were sold, representing 3% of Bursa Kuwait's capital



شركة الاستثمار الوطنية
NATIONAL INVESTMENTS COMPANY

KUWAIT: The National Investments Company (NIC) announced the partial exit of one of the company's primary investments, Bursa Kuwait, by selling 6.5 million shares, equivalent to 3 percent of Bursa Kuwait's capital, at a value of KD 13.3 million. The company retains an influential stake in Bursa Kuwait, approximately 12.46 percent.

Khaled Waleed Al-Falah, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Investments Company, explained that the partial exit process of the investment is in line with the company's precise and balanced strategy, which the Board of Directors set to maintain a cautious balance for all the company's leading investments. The company maintains a positive outlook on the evolution of its business models.

Al-Falah confirmed that the exit process was carried out in collaboration with one of the renowned investment companies to select potential high-net-worth international investors to sell to them. This expanded Bursa Kuwait's shareholders base to include prestigious international investment companies and funds with long-term investment plans.

"The positive results of this exit will enhance the company's cash balances by at least KD 13 million and offset by a decrease in investments in "financial assets listed at fair value through other comprehensive income." This step allows the company to seize distinctive investment opportunities with attractive returns that directly enhance the company's revenues. Furthermore, these transactions resulted in a realized profit of KD 11.8 million, which was reclassified from the cumulative change of fair value to retained earnings following the relevant accounting standards and policies, noting that this transaction has no material impact on the consolidated income statement", explained Al-Falah.

Notably, the Capital Markets Authority initiated the privatization of Bursa Kuwait in early 2019, with NIC playing a pivotal role in establishing a prominent investment consortium. This consortium, comprised of leading local companies and the Athens Stock Exchange, successfully acquired 44 percent of Bursa Kuwait for approximately KD 19 million. Additionally, the General Organization for Social Insurance Secured 6 percent, while 50 percent was allocated for public subscription to citizens.

Al-Falah stated that the restructuring and development of the business model created by the Board of Directors of Bursa Kuwait over more than three years were carried out systematically and thoughtfully. This has significantly increased revenues while controlling expenses, positively impacting the net profit. In conclusion, Al-Falah praised the role of the Capital Markets Authority in its endeavor to provide a safe and enabling regulatory environment for the development and expansion of capital markets



Khaled Al-Falah

- NIC retains an influential stake in Bursa Kuwait, approximately 12 percent.
- The company maintains a positive outlook on the evolution of its business models.
- We have strategically selected high-net-worth international investors to broaden Bursa Kuwait's shareholder base.

in Kuwait and developed markets. This always has an effective and positive role that casts a shadow on the market and contributes to the development of the national economy.

He also appreciated Bursa Kuwait's executive and administrative body, which collaborated with Kuwait Clearing Company for affluent and more straightforward procedures, significantly impacting the transaction's completion.

The National Investments Company is one of the most vital investment companies in Kuwait and the region. Established in 1987 and listed in 1988, the company's capital is KD 79.8 million, its assets are approximately KD 272 million, and the funds under management for the benefit of others are roughly \$3.5 billion.

The company recently achieved positive results with a net profit of approximately KD 10.2 million for

the parent company's shareholders, equivalent to 12.8 fils per share, as of September 30, 2024.

With a proven track record, NIC is the preferred choice for many investors, companies, and institutions. The company's achievements included establishing multiple successful listed companies and completing IPOs, including Ali Thunayan Al-Ghanim Company and Beyout Investment Company. NIC also acted as an investment advisor and sales agent for several distinctive deals worth hundreds of millions of dollars, including a recent education deal worth over \$200 million, the largest in Kuwait's history. The National Investments Company is also the first to issue preferential shares to one of its largest clients, with multiple listings. It also serves as a selling advisor for several unique billion deals, such as Americana, Zain, The Heavy Engineering Industries and Shipbuilding Company, and Kuwait Foundry.

Indian state votes amid farmers' anger

SATARA, India: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken several pro-farmer but inflation-stoking measures in recent months, such as easing curbs on rice and onion exports, but that may not prove enough for him to sway an election on Wednesday in a key state. Maharashtra, which includes the city of Mumbai,

is a major grower of sugarcane, soybean, cotton and onions, but opinion polls - which have a patchy record in India - suggest Modi's alliance may struggle to retain the local legislature as farmers say they have yet to benefit from the recent measures.

An opinion poll by Lok Poll, covering more than 86,000 people in Maharashtra, showed last week that a coalition of opposition parties including Congress could wrest back the state with up to 162 of the 288 seats. It said low prices for crops such as soybean and cotton were a factor. Other surveys have also said the BJP alliance could lose. Votes will be counted on Nov 23. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lost its parliamentary majority in national elections held between April and June partly due to farmers' anger with the

export curbs, which they felt prioritized Indian consumers above growers by keeping domestic prices low. In that national election, opposition parties won two thirds of the parliamentary seats in Maharashtra.

"We faced a setback during the parliamentary elections because of the restrictions on onion exports," senior BJP leader and Maharashtra deputy chief minister, Devendra Fadnis, told an election rally on Sunday. "We have now lifted those curbs and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government will not impose export bans abruptly." India has removed export restrictions on rice and onions, and raised the tariffs on imported edible oil in a bid to help local growers of mustard and soybean get better prices at home.

But farmers say the steps have come too late, as

they had already harvested and sold their produce like onions to traders, who are now benefiting from a surge in domestic prices. Retail inflation soared to its highest level in 14 months in October, partly due to high prices of edible oils, onions and tomatoes. "When we were selling onions in March and April, the government didn't allow exports," said farmer Mahesh Gore in Maharashtra's Nashik district. "We were forced to sell onions at 10 rupees per kg. If they had allowed exports then, we could have got double the price. Now prices are at 50 rupees, but only traders are benefiting." In recent years, India restricted onion exports whenever wholesale prices rose above 20 rupees. Other farmers say they are not getting a good price for crops like soybeans because of a global glut now.—Reuters



Activists hold a silent protest inside the COP29 venue to demand that rich nations provide climate finance to developing countries, during the COP29 in Baku. — AFP

COP29 negotiators strive for deal after G20 'marching orders'

BAKU: Negotiators toiled Tuesday to break a deadlock at UN climate talks after G20 leaders acknowledged the need for trillions of dollars for poorer nations but left key sticking points unresolved. With three days left in the COP29 conference, ministers haggling in Azerbaijan had been waiting for the G20 meeting in Rio de Janeiro to issue a declaration that might jump-start the stalled negotiations.

Activists and diplomats gave the text a mixed verdict, saying the statement lacked enough direction on climate finance and failed to explicitly mention the need to transition away from fossil fuels. The lead negotiator of COP29 hosts Azerbaijan, Yalchin Rafiyev, said the G20 statement sent "positive signals" to the efforts in Baku. "G20 delegations now have their marching orders for here in Baku," UN climate chief Simon Stiell said in a statement. "We urgently need all nations to bypass the posturing and move swiftly towards common ground, across all issues," he said.

Rich nations are being urged to significantly raise their pledge of \$100 billion a year to help developing countries adapt to climate change and transition to clean energy. But efforts to finalize the deal in Baku are hampered by disputes over how much the deal should entail, who should pay for it, and what types of financing should be included. Those key questions were not answered in the G20 statement.

"We were waiting for a boost. Our expectations were maybe too high," a European negotiator told AFP. The declaration, however, recognizes "the need for rapidly and substantially scaling up climate finance from billions to trillions from all sources". It also states the need to increase international collaboration "with a view to scaling up public and private climate finance

and investment for developing countries". Michai Robertson, a negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States, said the G20 paragraph on climate finance "is not saying much". "I don't know if it's sending that much hope to this process," he said. "It now rests in the hands of ministers here, at least from our perspective. The leadership that some may have wanted from the G20, it hasn't really been able to materialize itself."

Adonia Ayebare, the Ugandan chairman of the G77+China grouping of developing nations, told AFP the Rio statement was a "good building block" for the climate talks. But Ayebare said he was "not comfortable" with the wording saying the money should come from "all sources". "We have been insisting that this has to be from public sources. Grants, not loans," Ayebare said. Harsen Nyambe, head of the 55-nation African Union delegation at COP29, said the G20 "had a statement of goodwill". "But it's up to the countries who are negotiating here at the end of the day to decide what they want to put forward for the globe," he told reporters. A new draft deal on climate finance is expected by Wednesday night. Some developing countries, which are the least responsible for global greenhouse gas emissions, want an annual commitment of \$1.3 trillion. "The reality of the situation is that 1.3 trillion pales in the face of the seven trillion that is spent annually on fossil fuel subsidies," Fiji's deputy prime minister, Biman Prasad, told COP29 delegates.

"The money is there. It is just in exactly the wrong place," he said. Developed nations, facing their own debt problems and budget deficits, say the private sector must play a key role in climate finance.

The United States and European Union are also pushing for the donor base to be expanded to include countries such as China, which has become the world's second-biggest economy but is still officially listed as a developing nation. Negotiators say the talks have also been held up by Saudi Arabia's resistance to any reference to last year's pledge at COP28 in the United Arab Emirates for the world to move away from fossil fuels.—AFP

Eaton Middle East urges vigilance against counterfeit products

Protect lives by purchasing only genuine Eaton products

Counterfeit electrical and safety products: A silent threat to homes and businesses

Choose safety with Eaton: Superior standards and genuine products only from authorized distributors

KUWAIT: Intelligent power management company Eaton, is raising awareness about the critical threat posed by counterfeit electrical and life safety products in the Middle East. These counterfeit items, often made from sub-standard materials, pose severe risks, including fires, electrocution, and failure of emergency systems, potentially leading to loss of life.

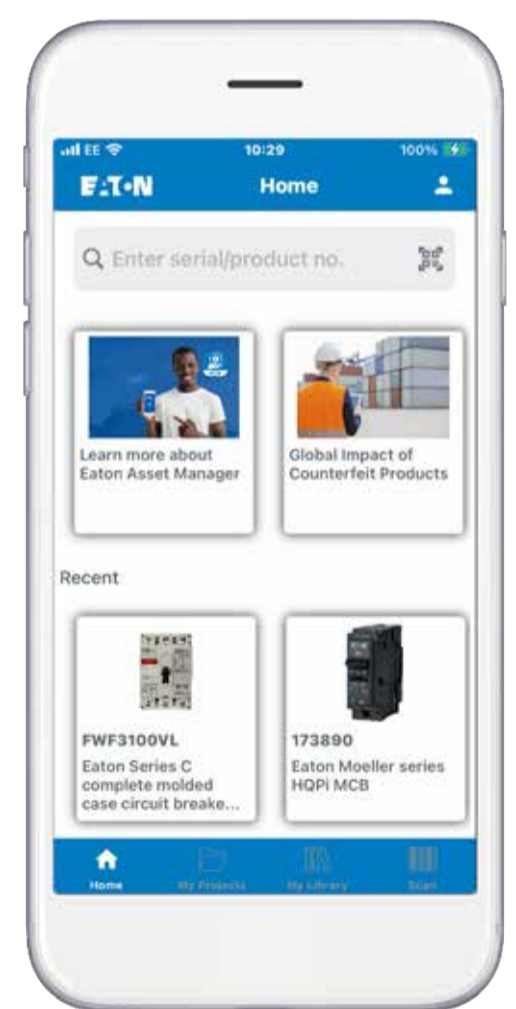
Eaton's genuine products are designed and tested to exceed international safety standards, offering unparalleled protection. Qasem Nouredin, Managing Director of Eaton Middle East, stressed, "Our commitment to safety is absolute. We urge all stakeholders to ensure they purchase from authorized distributors, as counterfeit products not only violate intellectual property but also put lives at risk."

The scale of the counterfeit problem is significant. In Saudi Arabia, counterfeit goods represent 3.3 percent of global trade, with electrical items among the most frequently seized products. In the UAE, despite a decline in recent years, customs authorities remain vigilant, having seized billions of dirhams worth of counterfeit goods, including life safety products, which are crucial in emergencies.

Ensuring safety across all sectors: Residential, commercial and data centers

In residential settings, counterfeit electrical products can pose severe risks to families, potentially leading to electrical fires, electrocution or failure of life safety systems like emergency lighting. Eaton's commitment to safety ensures that every product sold through authorized distributors meets rigorous quality standards, providing peace of mind for homeowners.

For commercial and industrial applications, such as data centres and large infrastructure projects, the stakes are even higher. The use of counterfeit products can lead to catastrophic failures, jeopardizing valuable assets and critical operations. Eaton products, available only



through authorized distributors, are designed to maintain operational integrity and safety, ensuring that businesses can rely on consistent, dependable power management solutions. By choosing genuine Eaton products, companies protect not only their investments but also the safety of their employees and clients.

Eaton continues to innovate and strengthen its safety protocols, ensuring its products remain the safest choice on the market. The company encourages customers to verify the authenticity of their purchases through authorized distributors to ensure the safety and reliability of their products.

Business

Farmers descend on London to overturn inheritance tax change

Protesters fear new rules to break up farm sector, hit food security

LONDON: British farmers massed in London on Tuesday for protests against controversial government plans to change inheritance tax rules for land ownership, which they claim threatens to break up the sector and hit food production. Farming businesses previously qualified for 100-percent relief on inheritance tax on agricultural and business property, reducing the amounts that farmers and landowners pay when farmland is passed on after a death.

From April 6, 2026, however, total exemption from death duties will only apply to the first £1 million (\$1.27 million) of combined agricultural and business property. The center-left Labour government has faced a furious backlash from farmers since the change was announced by finance minister Rachel Reeves last month, with even tech billionaire Elon Musk wading in on the row.

Musk, who has been critical of Prime Minister Keir Starmer, on Monday claimed on his X social media platform that "Britain is going full Stalin", in an apparent reference to Soviet leader Joseph Stalin's forced collectivization of privately owned farms in the 1920s and 1930s.

He shared a Guardian newspaper comment piece that accused farmers of having "hoarded land for too long", and which argued the inheritance tax change could break up farms and give younger farmers a chance to buy land. The National Farmers Union (NFU), which represents more than 45,000 members in England and Wales, said its "mass lobby" of parliament will help explain the effects of the policy change on farms, farming and food supply.

It is expecting some 1,800 members to take part. Several tractors drove through the streets before a

rally near government buildings where thousands are expected, despite driving rain and snow.

Under former leader Tony Blair, the Labour government faced a furious backlash from farmers and rural communities over its plans to ban foxhunting with dogs in England and Wales. In September 2002, more than 400,000 people marched through London, according to organizers the Countryside Alliance. On Tuesday, a defiant NFU president Tom Bradshaw told Sky News that the latest protests would continue for as long as it takes.

"This will carry on," he said. "They (the government) cannot have a policy in place which has such disastrous human impacts and think we're going to go quiet." Bradshaw met Monday with Environment Secretary Steve Reed and said afterwards he had shown a "level of understanding" over the farmers' complaints.

But both sides appear to be digging in for a prolonged battle. Across the Channel, European farmers, including in France, have mounted rolling protests over a long list of burdens they say are squeezing revenue.

Central to the row in Britain, where farmers have been struggling due to lack of funding and labor shortages since the country's departure from the European Union, is how many people could be hit by the tax. Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Monday said "the vast majority of farms" will not be affected.

The government maintains the actual threshold before paying inheritance tax could be as much as £3 million (\$3.8 million), once exemptions for each partner in a couple and for the farm property are taken into account. The Treasury maintains that this means as such nearly three-quarters of farms would



Farmers in tractors wait at traffic lights outside the Houses of Parliament in London on Nov 19, 2024. — AFP

not be liable to pay death duties. But the NFU insists that more farms could have to pay the tax when land, property and equipment are taken into account, pointing to Defra figures that show that 66 percent of farm businesses in England have a net value of more than £1 million.

"There's huge mistrust in the numbers, even Defra and the Treasury can't agree on the number," Bradshaw said Tuesday. "Our numbers suggest that 75 percent of commercial farms, those farms producing this country's food, are caught in the eye of this storm." — AFP

French farmers back on streets over Mercosur talks

PARIS: Farmers staged protests across France on Monday at the prospect of a trade deal between the European Union and South America's Mercosur bloc, which will further intensify competition for the French agriculture sector. The EU and four Mercosur members - Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay - are pushing to conclude long-running trade negotiations by the end of the year.

Monday's protests were the biggest since French farmers held weeks of large-scale demonstrations last winter over cheaper imports, burdensome regulations and meager incomes. The protests were mostly peaceful on Monday but tractors briefly blocked part of a highway near Paris in the morning, while others dumped manure in front of government buildings.

"We have the same demands as in January, nothing has changed," Armelle Fraiture said on her dairy farm north of Paris. "We must make the government understand that enough is enough." This year French farmers have had to contend with rain-hit harvests, livestock disease outbreaks and a parliamentary election that delayed measures promised to defuse the previous protests.

A Mercosur deal would represent a bitter "cherry on the cake", Arnaud Rousseau, head of France's main farmers' union, the FNSEA, told BFM TV. Tens of thousands of farms in France, the EU's biggest agricultural producer, were in financial trouble, he said.

French farmers fear a Mercosur accord will bring more beef, chicken, sugar and maize from



A farmer, member of the Rural Coordination joins others as they set up a roadblock along the A9 motorway to block freight between Spain and France, at the border in Le Boulou, southwestern France on Nov 19, 2024. — AFP

Brazil and Argentina, countries they say use pesticides on crops and growth antibiotics in livestock that are outlawed in Europe. Protests are planned to run into December, FNSEA said.

"There's a lot of anger out there," the head of Young Farmers group Pierrick Horel told RMC radio. "Even if we don't approve the destruction of products, there comes a time when, unfortunately, it comes out, sometimes very strongly, very vehemently." French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday reiterated his opposition to a deal with Mercosur as proposed.

But with France lacking EU allies in the Mercosur talks, and rural grievances running deep, the authorities may struggle to placate the farmers. Similar frustration was voiced by farmers across Europe last winter after a surge in imports from Ukraine following Russia's invasion in 2022. — Reuters

Thyssenkrupp books another hefty annual loss

FRANKFURT: German industrial giant Thyssenkrupp reported Tuesday a massive annual loss for the second year running, as it battles challenges including a crisis in its historic steel division.

The conglomerate, whose products range from steel to submarines, booked a loss of 1.5 billion euros (\$1.6 billion) for the 2023-24 financial year, after a loss of over two billion euros the previous year. Once a symbol of German industrial might, Thyssenkrupp has suffered as high manufacturing costs at home, falling prices for its products and fierce competition from Asian rivals hammered its traditional steel business. Chief executive Miguel Lopez said "very challenging market conditions" had weighed on the Essen-based group but insisted that it had made "key progress" in pushing through a major restructuring. The group, which runs its financial year from October to September, is predicting a return to profit in the next fiscal year of 100 million to 500 million euros. Several key units—including steel, automotive, and materials—saw falling orders and sales in 2023/24, with Thyssenkrupp pointing to "significantly weaker demand" from major industries. Total sales for the year fell seven percent to 35 billion euros.

The troubled steel division, Steel Europe, reported an 18 percent fall in operating profits. The group has been seeking to spin off the unit but the process is proving difficult.

Earlier this year, it completed a key step by selling a stake to a group owned by Czech billionaire Daniel Kretinsky. But the crisis at the division deepened in August when its boss and the head of its supervisory board quit after clashing with Lopez about the best way forward. Thyssenkrupp has previously said it plans to cut jobs and reduce production at its key steel plant in Duisburg, though the exact number of losses has not yet been announced. — AFP



NOVOSOFIIVKA, Ukraine: A combine harvests wheat on a field near Novosofiivka village, Mykolajiv region on July 4, 2023. — AFP

Ukraine expects higher wheat crop in 2025

KYIV: Ukraine's wheat harvest may increase to up to 25 million metric tons next year from an expected 22 million tons this year thanks to a larger sowing area, the first deputy agriculture minister Taras Vysotskiy told Reuters in an interview. In the first official forecast for next year's harvest, Vysotskiy said the sowing area could reach 5 million hectares in 2025 versus 4.6 million in 2024.

Ukraine, a global major grain grower and exporter, used to sow six million hectares of winter wheat before the Russian invasion in 2022 but reduced the area sharply after large areas have either been occupied or mined. Ukraine harvested 22 million tons of wheat in 2024 versus average harvests of 25-28 million tons before the war. "If we take into account the average yield, we would have at least 22 million tons (of wheat), but if the weather is positive, it could be 25 million tons," Vysotskiy said.

"The area has grown - half a million hectares is significant. In fact, it will be up to 5 million hectares," he added. Winter wheat generally accounts for 95 percent of overall Ukrainian wheat output each year.

Vysotskiy said most of the sowing area had emerged so far, but the harvest would depend on the weather in winter and spring. A record drought this summer and autumn led many farmers to sow grain in dry soil in the hope that autumn rains and a mild winter would allow seeds to germinate and produce a good crop. The Ukrainian national agricultural academy said that weather in October, as well as September, was unfavorable for development of winter crops, most of which lack moisture.

State weather forecasters last month said that most of Ukraine's winter crop was under threat, with almost all seedlings underdeveloped. "On all territories wheat has grown, germination is more than 90 percent. The question is what will happen next. As of today, there is no apocalyptic scenario," Vysotskiy said.

Ukraine is a traditional grower and exporter of corn, but difficulties in exports forced farmers to cut the sown area sharply to 3.9 million hectares in 2024 from 5.5 million hectares in 2021. Farmers also increased the area under soybeans seeking more profit from high prices, taking the country's soybean output to an all-time high of 6 million tons this year. Vysotskiy said a large harvest had caused a decrease in prices and farmers would return to corn in 2025.

"We see that corn prices are holding high and soybeans are down because we have overproduction of soybeans. Corn could add 0.5 million hectares in 2025, while soybeans could lose 0.5 million hectares," Vysotskiy said. He added that the area under sunflower would be stable at up to 5.5 million hectares in 2025. — Reuters



Farmers thresh rice in a field on the outskirts of Varanasi on Nov 18, 2024. — AFP

Indian farmers, short on time, burn crop waste

MANSA, India: Swaran Singh is among a handful of farmers in Bhikhi village in India's northern state of Punjab who, instead of burning his crop waste this year, has invested in a tractor and equipment to collect it for removal by a private contractor. The paddy waste, or stubble left after harvesting, has been chopped and stacked in a corner of his farm for four or five days, he says, waiting for the contractor to dispose of it.

But time is running out, with sowing due again. "I will wait for a few days and if no one comes to clear it, then I will set it on fire," said Singh. "I cannot wait further as I have to sow seeds to cultivate the next crop." Crop residue fires set by farmers like Singh in Punjab, India's breadbasket state, are illegal and blamed every year for blanketing northern India and neighboring Pakistan with a toxic smog made up of

smoke, construction dust and vehicle emissions. Air quality has deteriorated this year too, with the start of the harvest season and farm fires in late September, contributing to a public health crisis.

The air quality index (AQI) in capital Delhi touched a peak of 494 on a scale of 500 on Monday, forcing authorities to restrict vehicle movement and construction activities, and order schools to conduct classes online. Punjab reported the highest number of fires on a single day this season on Monday at 1,251, state authorities said. India defines an AQI reading of 0-50 as "good" and above 401 as "severe", which is a risk to healthy people and "seriously impacts" those with diseases.

Farmers in Punjab and neighboring Haryana and Uttar Pradesh states say they have a small window to clear the earth between the paddy harvest and sowing the winter wheat crop. Efforts to persuade them to use machines to chop the stubble or chemicals to dissolve them have failed due to the high costs involved with the machinery, and low success rate of the chemicals. Penalties and subsidies have converted some farmers, but not enough to reduce pollution levels, experts say. — Reuters

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2024



French singer Charles Dumont performs during the Francofolies New York "Tribute to Edith Piaf", at the Beacon Theatre in New York, September 19, 2013.



Photo taken on January 24, 1984 shows French singer Charles Dumont during a radio show on the radio station network Europe 1 in Paris. - AFP photos



French singer Charles Dumont poses during a portrait session at his apartment in Paris on March 19, 2018.

Composer of Piaf's 'Non, je ne regrette rien' dies aged 95

Songwriter and singer Charles Dumont, who composed the song "Non, je ne regrette rien" ("No, I do not regret anything") made world famous by Edith Piaf, has died aged 95, his partner told AFP Monday. Dumont, who had also collaborated with American singer Barbra Streisand and French-Italian 1960s star Dalida, died at home after a long illness. French Culture Minister Rachida Dati called Dumont "a towering figure of French chanson". A trumpeter by training, Dumont saw his career transformed at the turn of the 1960s when he convinced the star singer Piaf to perform one of his compositions, after having been forcefully refused several times.

"We turned up at her home, and she let us in," Dumont told AFP in 2018 about the day in 1960 when he managed to see Piaf together with his lyricist, Michel Vaucaire. "I played the piece on the piano, and ... we became inseparable," he said, adding that the song - which he had written in 1956 aged 27 - revived Piaf's career that he said had been flagging. "Non, je ne regrette rien" has since become an unforgettable classic of Piaf, who died in 1963.

"My mother gave birth to me, but Edith Piaf brought me into the world,"



French singer Edith Piaf leaves the Olympia concert hall after her show, surrounded by fans, beside her lyrics writer Charles Dumont (right) in Paris on December 30, 1960.

Dumont told AFP in a 2015 interview. "Without her, I would never have done everything I did, neither as a composer nor as a singer," he added. For Dumont, this meeting marked the beginning of a fruitful working relationship with Piaf, resulting in his writing more than 30 songs for her.

'Goodbye young man'
On occasion she straightened him

out, like one night after a concert when he complained to her that the audience had not been good. "She looked me straight in the eye and said: 'It's not them who are bad. It's you who was no good'," he remembered. The collaboration with Piaf gave Dumont the confidence to approach Streisand, who was already a star in the 1960s and well on her way to becoming one of the biggest-selling recording artists ever.



French singer Edith Piaf smiles after her show at Olympia concert hall beside her lyrics writer Charles Dumont (center) in Paris on December 30, 1960.

A music publisher suggested he should offer her his services, advice he later described as "destiny" giving him "a kick in the behind". He went to New York, and played for her on a piano in her dressing room in a Broadway theatre. "She said to me 'I like this very much. I'll make the record. Goodbye young man'," he said.

Streisand released a single with Dumont's "Le Mur" sung in French on the A

side, and its English version "I've Been Here" on the B side, in 1966. Dumont's last appearance on stage was in 2019 in Paris. "When you come back in front of an audience, who come to see you as they came 20, 30 or 40 years ago and give you the same welcome, then they give you back your 20s," he said. — AFP



Morning Mama owner Qurrata Ayuni makes coffee at her cafe in Banda Aceh.



Morning Mama owner Qurrata Ayuni (right) makes coffee at her cafe in Banda Aceh.



Morning Mama owner Qurrata Ayuni speaks during an interview with AFP at her cafe in Banda Aceh.

Woman-owned cafe in Indonesia's Sharia stronghold shakes stigma

In what claims to be the only woman-run cafe in the capital of Indonesia's most conservative province, owner Qurrata Ayuni says she and her baristas provide an alternative to rowdy, smoke-filled male haunts. The 28-year-old opened Morning Mama last year to create a space that caters to women in Banda Aceh, known as the city of 1,001 coffee shops. "I thought why not open a place that is comfortable for women?" she said. While the province has long been known as the site of the world's deadliest tsunami and a decades-long separatist insurgency, Aceh's draw for visitors is often the coffee.

The traditional "sanger" latte, mixed with condensed milk, is a popular staple. Aceh's strong connection to coffee started hundreds of years ago with Dutch colonial rulers. Now, its farmers cultivate world-renowned beans in lush highlands. Aceh still catches attention for its ultraconservative values, including by-laws that require Muslim women to wear hijabs. While women are not banned from working in the only region in Muslim-majority Indonesia to impose

Islamic law, running a coffee shop is seen as a man's job.

"It's extremely difficult for women in Aceh to pursue education or a career, facing not only legal restrictions but also social bullying," said Andreas Harsono of Human Rights Watch. Despite widespread criticism, public whipping remains a common punishment for a range of offences in the province, including gambling, alcohol consumption and relations outside marriage. Independent career paths are mostly viewed as out of reach for Aceh's young women, but Qurrata was undeterred.

'Time for change'

Qurrata, who owns her cafe without a business partner, saw a demand for a space for women to work or meet friends. She and her team of baristas pour fresh coffee to mostly hijab-wearing customers, with children's books and menstruation pads on sale nearby. "There's no cigarette smoke, it's not noisy, it's really cosy," she said, adding that some men also have coffees at her shop. "It's a statement that women can

own businesses, make decisions and lead," she said. "Now is the time for change." The entrepreneur says women are stepping up, pointing to at least 1,000 applying for a barista job.

"I want to offer them the chance to change the course of their lives," she said. Caca, a 23-year-old barista, said it was a "really cool job" rare in Aceh. The cafe's regulars hail Morning Mama as a spot where women can be themselves. "I feel more connection if I ask something with a woman barista," said 21-year-old student Meulu Alina. "I don't feel any nervousness. It's more like talking with your sister."

Helping others

Before starting her business, Qurrata overcame the loss of her parents at the age of eight in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which killed more than 200,000 people. Her village near Banda Aceh was completely destroyed, but she survived and was raised by her aunt and uncle. Qurrata said she wants to channel her grief into helping other women. "It's a platform to help

others find their own resilience, much like I did," she said. Photography jobs allowed her to build savings and confidence, taking a leap into business after her uncle encouraged her and helped financially.

Other women were still "afraid to start", she said, for fear men will say bad things. "People here tend to believe that women should stay at home," she said. But "the older generation understands that times have changed." Owner of Aceh's popular Solong coffee shop, Haji Nawawi, said he would not employ women but locals had accepted them making coffee elsewhere, calling it "normal" as values "from outside" Aceh had entered the province. Qurrata employs five women alongside two men. Revenue fluctuates, but Qurrata says her ultimate aim is to inspire other women. "Women are capable of so much more than we're often given credit for. We can be leaders, creators, and innovators," she said. "So don't just sit back. Don't be afraid." — AFP



Morning Mama owner Qurrata Ayuni (right) works alongside staff members at her cafe in Banda Aceh.



Morning Mama owner Qurrata Ayuni (center) poses alongside staff members at her cafe in Banda Aceh. - AFP photos



A barista receives orders at Morning Mama, a cafe founded by Qurrata Ayuni.

'Critically endangered' African penguins just want peace and food



African Penguins walk on the beach at the Boulders penguin colony. — AFP photos



A view of the seabird hospital at SANCCOB (Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds) sea-bird rescue centre in Tableview, near Cape Town.



A staff member treats an injured African Penguin in the seabird hospital at SANCCOB sea-bird rescue center in Tableview, near Cape Town.



A view of an x-ray of an injured African Penguin in the seabird hospital at SANCCOB sea-bird rescue center in Tableview, near Cape Town.

Mashudu Mashau says it takes about two minutes to catch a penguin, a task he does weekly to investigate sightings of injured or sickly seabirds. "We don't rush... we go down, sometimes we crawl, so that we don't look threatening, and when we're close, we aim for the head, hold it and secure the penguin," the 41-year-old ranger told AFP. Sometimes, when penguins waddle up from South Africa's coastline onto nearby streets and hide under cars, it is more of a struggle.

"We had one today. They're not easy to catch because they go from one side to the other side (of the car), but we got it," said Mashau, who has dedicated the past eight years to working to protect the species. Once caught and placed with care into a cardboard box, the small feathered animals are sent to a specialist hospital for treatment.

But conservationists and veterinarians are worried their efforts aren't sufficient to stop the decline of the African Penguin, listed as critically endangered last month by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). "No matter how much we do, if there isn't a healthy environment for them, our work is in vain," said veterinarian David Roberts, who works at the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) hospital. Fewer than 10,000 breeding pairs are left globally, mainly in South Africa, down from 42,500 in 1991, and they could become extinct in the wild by 2035, the BirdLife NGO says.

'Starving' penguins

The dwindling numbers are due to a combination of factors including a lack of food, climate change, disturbances, predators, disease, oil spills and more. But the biggest threat is nutrition, says Allison Kock, a marine biologist with the South African National Parks. "So many of the penguins are starving and are not getting enough food to breed successfully," she told AFP. When penguins do not eat enough, preferably sardines or anchovies, they tend to abandon breeding. Authorities have imposed a commercial fishing ban around six penguin colonies for 10 years starting in January. But SANCCOB and BirdLife say the no-fishing zones are not large enough to have a significant impact, and have sued the environment minister over the issue.

"Ideally we would want more fish in the ocean but we cannot control that. What we can ask for, is to limit direct competition for the remaining fish between the industrial



Visitors look at African Penguins from a viewing deck at the Boulders penguin colony.



African Penguins rest on the beach at the Boulders penguin colony.

fisheries and the penguins," SANCCOB research manager Katta Ludynia told AFP. The South African Pelagic Fishing Industry Association says the impact of the fishing industry on penguin food sources is just a small fraction. "There are clearly other factors that have significant negative impact on the population of the African Penguin," chairperson Mike Copeland said.

The environment ministry has proposed a discussion group "to resolve the complex issues," a spokesperson said. While a court hearing is scheduled for March 2025, the minister — only in the post since July — has called for an out-of-court settlement. Apart from the no-fishing zones, many other initiatives are underway to save the African Penguin, including artificial nests and new colonies.

Tourist traffic

Being labelled "critically endangered" can be a double-edged sword. While conservationists are hoping to get attention and funding, it also makes penguins even more attractive to tourists who sometimes disturb them. "Penguins are very susceptible... and the level of disturbance, people

with selfie sticks, it's becoming more and more of a challenge," Arne Purves, coastal conservation and compliance officer for Cape Town, told AFP.

"Especially as the penguins are now even more high-profile."

Tourism is a vital sector for South Africa and each year thousands of people visit the penguin colonies, bringing in millions of dollars in profit. For those on the frontlines to save the flightless black and white birds, like Mashau, the spotlight has been a long time coming. "In the last five years, it was the rhinos... we hope we'll get the same respect now and the same assistance," he said. It is also about protecting the environment. "This is a species that is an indicator of a healthy ecosystem that humans are also part of... and the healthier the penguins, the more humans also benefit," he said.—AFP



A baby African Penguin emerges from the artificial burrow in which it nests at the Boulders penguin colony.

'Red One' tops North America box office but could end up in the red

Amazon and MGM's new winter holiday film "Red One" opened solidly atop the North American box office this weekend with estimated ticket sales of \$34.1 million, but with a budget estimated at \$250 million analysts say it faces a tricky path to profitability. "This is a soft opening for a movie that was designed from the beginning to launch a new Christmas action comedy series," said analyst David A. Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research.

He said the film was a crowd-pleaser but that its

\$250 million budget — including a reported \$50 million cost overrun — meant its opening was "not a disaster but ... not enough" to ensure profitability.

The Christmas comedy has Dwayne ("the Rock") Johnson, as head of North Pole security, enlisting the help of a hacker (Chris Evans) to track down a kidnapped Santa Claus (played by the not-exactly-jolly J.K. Simmons) on Christmas Eve. "Red One" unseated Sony's horror movie "Venom: the Last Dance," which slipped to second, taking in an estimated \$7.4 million in its fourth weekend out. "Venom," starring Tom Hardy, has now earned \$127.6 million domestically and \$308 million internationally.

In third place was Lionsgate's comedy-drama "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever," at \$5.4 million. Pete Holmes stars in the tale of a notoriously rowdy bunch of

siblings who end up giving a surprising performance in a small town's Christmas show. A24's horror movie "Heretic," which has famous charmer Hugh Grant turning decidedly fiendish, dropped one spot from last weekend to fourth, with ticket sales of \$5.2 million. Slipping to fifth but still raking in \$4.3 million in its eighth weekend out was Universal's family-friendly animation "The Wild Robot." Rounding out the top 10 were:

"Smile 2" (\$3 million)

"Conclave" (\$2.9 million)

"Hello, Love Again" (\$2.4 million)

"A Real Pain" (\$2.3 million)

"Anora" (\$1.8 million)—AFP



(From left) Nick Kroll, Dwayne Johnson, Lucy Liu, JK Simmons, Kiernan Shipka, Mary Elizabeth Ellis and Chris Evans attend the premiere of Amazon MGM Studios' "Red One" at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center on Nov 11, 2024 in New York City. — AFP



Late US record producer Quincy Jones appears on screen as he receives and honorary award.

The late Quincy Jones was posthumously awarded an honorary Oscar at an emotional and star-packed Hollywood gala on Sunday that also handed golden statuettes to the producers of the James Bond movie franchise. US music industry titan Jones died from pancreatic cancer at the age of 91 just two weeks before he was set to receive one of the Academy's coveted lifetime achievement prizes at the Governors Awards. His daughter, the actress Rashida Jones, accepted the Oscar, telling the audience that the legendary hitmaker had been "really excited to attend tonight."

"He often said 'live every day like it's your last and one day you'll be right.' And he did that... the best, most beautiful life," she said, to a huge ovation. Jones was best known for producing smash hit records for a who's who of music industry legends from Frank Sinatra to Michael Jackson.

"Truth is, the man had an equally powerful impact on the world of film," said actor Jamie Foxx, introduc-



US singer and actress Jennifer Hudson performs onstage.



British screenwriter and director Richard Curtis (left) poses with the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award, British-US film producer Michael G. Wilson (second left) poses with the Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award, US casting director Juliet Taylor (third left) poses with an honorary award, US record producer Quincy Jones' daughter US actress and filmmaker Rashida Jones (fourth left) poses with an honorary award for her late father and British-US film producer Barbara Broccoli (fifth left) poses with the Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award. — AFP photos



British-US actor Andrew Garfield

ing his award. Jones produced seminal Hollywood movies including "The Color Purple," and received multiple Oscar nominations for film songs and soundtracks including "In Cold Blood" and "The Wiz." Selena Gomez, Jennifer Lopez and Zoe Saldana were among A-listers holding back tears in the audience as Jennifer Hudson sang a musical tribute.

Hosted by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the swanky black-tie Governors Awards each year honor film industry veterans, many of whom are felt to have not received their dues at the regular Oscars. The event also offers a chance for stars and studios to court Academy voters - and size up their rivals - as the next Oscars campaigns begin to take shape.

At Sunday's reception, "Succession" stars Kieran Culkin and Jeremy Strong - campaigning for their news films "A Real Pain" and "The Apprentice" - enjoyed a lengthy catch-up. Acclaimed Spanish director Pedro Almodovar ("The Room Next Door") conversed with his exiled Iranian counterpart Mohammad Rasoulof ("The Seed of the Sacred Fig.")

Bond, James Bond

Daniel Craig - who stars in this year's William S. Burroughs adaptation "Queer" - chatted with friends by the bar, his lips firmly sealed about the identity of his successor as James Bond. Barbara Broccoli and Michael G. Wilson, the half-siblings who have controlled the beloved 007 espionage franchise since 1995's "Goldeneye," were among the honorees Sunday.

Passed the reins by Broccoli's film producer father Albert, the duo have overseen several of the Bond series' biggest-ever movies including the \$1 billion-grossing "Skyfall" in 2012, in which Craig played the suave British spy with a license to kill. Anticipation continues to swell for the announcement of who will next play the world's most famous fictional spy.

"Just to get something out the way, we came here this evening to find out who the next James Bond is," joked Craig, on stage introducing their award. "Don't look at me. But he might be in the room," he added - before insisting he was joking. British writer and director Richard Curtis, 68, who created "Notting Hill," "Bridget Jones's Diary," "Love Actually" and "Four Weddings and a Funeral," received the Jean Hersholt statuette, which is specifically for humanitarian work by a film industry figure.

Curtis co-founded Comic Relief, a British charity that has raised some \$2.5 billion over four decades by bringing together comedy and entertainment stars for zany challenges and wildly popular fund-raising telecasts. A fifth honorary Oscar went to Juliet Taylor, the acclaimed casting director behind "The Exorcist," "Taxi Driver," "Annie Hall," "Sleepless in Seattle" and "Schindler's List." — AFP



US actress Demi Moore



British actor Daniel Craig speaks on stage.



US singer and actress Jennifer Hudson (right) performs onstage in tribute to US record producer Quincy Jones during the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' 15th Annual Governors Awards at the Ray Dolby Ballroom in Los Angeles.



US actress Angelina Jolie and her son Knox



English actor Jude Law



US actor Jamie Foxx speaks on stage.



British-US film producer Barbara Broccoli (left) and British-US film producer Michael G. Wilson (right) accept the Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award.



(From left) US actress Selena Gomez, US actress Zoe Saldana and Spanish actress Karla Sofia Gascon.

Italy book BJK Cup final

Paolini, Errani overcome Swiatek, Katarzyna Kawa 7-5, 7-5

MALAGA: Italy reached a second consecutive Billie Jean King Cup final with a dramatic 2-1 victory over Iga Swiatek's Poland on Monday in Malaga. Swiatek came from a set down to beat Jasmine Paolini in her singles rubber but the Italian earned immediate revenge over the five-time Grand Slam winner in the deciding doubles clash. Paolini and veteran Sara Errani overcame Swiatek and Katarzyna Kawa 7-5, 7-5 to send the four-time champions through to Wednesday's final. Great Britain face Slovakia in the second semi-final on Tuesday.

In the opening singles rubber, Italy's Lucia Bronzetti beats Magda Linette 6-4, 7-6 (7/3). That was followed by Swiatek's battle with Paolini, which ran over two-and-a-half hours and saw the Pole win 3-6, 6-4, 6-4. "It was tough today... the intensity was insane, I was a little bit tired but I said to myself, you still have to play the doubles, you have to give everything for Italy, for my team," said Paolini. "When I lost the (singles) match I was a little bit sad, but then tried to go in the locker room and think positive about the doubles."

Poland were in the semi-finals for the first time but came undone just when it seemed they had done enough for a tie-break, losing the last six games of the final set in the doubles. "Honestly I don't think I've ever been so tired," said Swiatek. Linette, the world number 38, was largely outclassed by Bronzetti, ranked 78th, in the first singles rubber. At 4-1 down in the second set, Linette battled back strongly to force a tie-break but was eventually beaten when she slapped a return into the net after saving one match point.

It left the pressure on Swiatek to deliver, which she did in thrilling fashion. Beaten every time in their three prior clashes and having never managed to take a set

off Swiatek, Paolini battled with fierce determination from the outset. Swiatek crushed the world number four in straight sets in the French Open final earlier this year but found a vastly tougher opponent in Malaga. The Pole saved two break points to hold at 2-2 and then broke with a fizzing forehand to take the lead.

It did not deter Paolini, who doubled down and won the next four games, securing two breaks of her own, to claim the first set. Swiatek spurned three break points in the final game and showed signs of tiredness after helping Poland reach the semi-finals by winning both her singles match and a doubles rubber against the Czech Republic.

Paolini had done the same for last year's runners-up Italy against Japan but dug deep to keep Swiatek at bay until the 10th and final game of the second set, which the Pole won to force a third. After the players exchanged breaks in the decider, Swiatek eventually triumphed when Paolini went long. Swiatek won 13 of the 16 break points she faced, proving the stronger in the key moments. "For sure it was tough, my energy level was down in the second set but I managed to get back and that was the most important thing," said Swiatek, explaining she had "no time to celebrate" as the job was not done yet.

'Found the way'

In the first set of the doubles decider, the teams stayed on serve until Italy's combination of Errani and Paolini broke for a 6-5 lead and then held to claim the set. Swiatek and Kawa responded strongly, opening up a 5-1 lead in the second set before suffering a collapse. The relentless Italians fought back in stunning fashion by winning six games straight, sealing the



MALAGA: Italy's Jasmine Paolini and Sara Errani return the ball to Poland's Iga Swiatek and Katarzyna Kawa during their semi-finals doubles tennis match between Poland and Italy at the Billie Jean King Cup Finals at the Palacio de Deportes Jose Maria Martin Carpena arena in Malaga. — AFP

victory when Swiatek overhit a forehand. "It was not easy, it was a really long day, I didn't start the doubles that well... but then I found the way, I think we played a really good match," said Errani. The 37-year-

old served for the last point of the match underarm, a habitual move of hers. "I did it many times this year, (when there's) tension it's a good combination sometimes to do it," she added. — AFP

Europe Ryder Cup stars play 'for the badge' not money, Rose says

HONG KONG: Major winner Justin Rose on Tuesday echoed Rory McIlroy's stance on European stars not being paid to play in the Ryder Cup, saying "we play for the badge". Northern Ireland's McIlroy said last week he would "pay to play" for Europe in the Ryder Cup in the wake of reports that American golfers will each receive \$400,000 to compete in next year's contest. McIlroy said Europe's finest do not need financial incentives to give their all in the biennial match against the United States.

"The two purest forms of competition in our game right now are the Ryder Cup and the Olympics, and it's partly because of that, the purity of no money being involved," McIlroy had told the BBC. Englishman Rose won Olympic gold in 2016 and had been part of four Ryder Cup-winning sides. "They are two of my top three moments in my career and none of them have been about the financial rewards," Rose said in response to a question from AFP on the sidelines of the Hong Kong Open, which begins Thursday.

The thorny issue of being paid to play was "about what's right collectively for your team," added the 44-year-old former world number one. "I think for us we play for the badge and we also play for the European Tour," he said. "The Ryder Cup probably does underpin quite a lot of things on the European Tour and it's a great way of supporting the tour that gave us so much early in

Kohli form, opening woes dog India ahead of Australia Test series

NEW DELHI: India play Australia in five Tests starting Friday in Perth after their first red-ball series defeat at home in more than a decade exposed the visitors' growing vulnerabilities. India won 2-1 against Australia on both of their last two Test tours, but suffered a 3-0 whitewash at home to New Zealand last month. AFP Sport looks at five problems India face ahead of the series, which is crucial in deciding the finalists of the World Test Championship.

Kohli and Rohit struggling

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli were both poor with the bat against New Zealand. Skipper and opening batsman Rohit managed just 91 runs in three matches and Kohli only 93, including four single-digit scores across six innings. Coach Gautam Gambhir backed his premier batsmen as "incredibly tough men" ahead of the side's departure for Australia, and this will be the time to prove it. Doubters say there are signs of a longer-term decline in the 36-year-old Kohli. For years one of the world's most feared batsmen, he has managed only two Test centuries in the last five years. As for Rohit, batting great Sunil Gavaskar warned he could struggle in particular against Australian quick Mitchell Starc's "lengths and lines". The 37-year-old Rohit appears set to miss the first Test following the birth of his second child.

Opening woes

Rohit's form has damaged India's ability to start well in recent times and placed the onus on young

Kuwait women sports lauded

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: A member of the Women Committee at the Kuwait Olympic Committee, Sheikha Bibi Al-Salem Al-Sabah, has lauded the meeting of the National Committee for the implementation of the Security Council titled "Role of the Kuwait Women's

Growing Role in Sports." The meeting was held by Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Ambassador Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaj Al-Sabah on Monday at the Foreign Ministry in the presence of several women sports leaders.

Sheikha Bibi Al-Salem Al-Sabah said there were extensive discussions about the women's sports in Kuwait, adding that the attendees include athletes, coaches, and referees. All speakers spoke transparently about all that is related to Kuwait women's sport in its current state, the achievements they made in the past few years,

as well as the most notable obstacles.

Sheikha Bibi Al-Salem said the women's committee at KOC submitted a worksheet during the meeting in which the major obstacles facing women's sports were mentioned along with the proposals that will contribute to finding deep-rooted solutions to these problems. She said there is no doubt that Kuwaiti women are leaders in all fields, and they have represented their homeland at various regional, Arab, Asian, and international levels. The latest of which is a historic participation at the Paris Olympics with four women athletes.



Sheikha Bibi Al-Salem Al-Sabah



MALAGA: Spain's Rafael Nadal serves to Netherlands' Botić van de Zandschulp in the quarter-final singles match between Netherlands and Spain during the Davis Cup Finals at the Palacio de Deportes Jose Maria Martin Carpena arena in Malaga on Nov 19, 2024. — AFP

Tennis great Federer hails Nadal ahead of imminent retirement

MALAGA: Tennis great Roger Federer hailed his former rival Rafael Nadal on Tuesday ahead of the Spaniard's imminent retirement from tennis at the Davis Cup. "Rafa, I have to say: What an incredible run you've had. Including 14 French Opens - historic!" Federer wrote on social media platform X. "You made Spain proud... you made the whole tennis world proud." Nadal, a 22-time Grand Slam winner, will bow out from professional tennis after competing with Spain in Malaga this week.

David Ferrer's team face the Netherlands in the quarter-finals on Tuesday, although it is unknown if Nadal will participate in the tie. Spanish media reported the 38-year-old has been chosen to play the first singles rubber, with the captain's selection decisions to be officially announced by organizers around 1500 GMT. Nadal has struggled badly with injury in the last few years, leading him to the decision to quit professional tennis. Retired Swiss star Federer and Nadal faced each other 14 times at Grand Slam tournaments with Nadal holding a 6-3 advantage in finals.

The Spaniard also had a 24-16 winning record overall in their 40 head-to-head meetings. "I keep thinking about the memories we've shared... always cracking each other up," wrote Federer. "Wearing each other out on the court and then, sometimes, almost literally having to hold each other up during trophy ceremonies." Federer won 20 Grand Slams, a tally only beaten in the men's game by Nadal on 22 and Novak Djokovic, who holds the record at 24. "You beat me - a lot. More than I managed to beat you. You challenged me in ways no one else could," Federer continued. "You made me reimagine my game—even going so far as to change the size of my racquet head, hoping for any edge."

'It wasn't just hype'

Federer recalled Nadal partnering him in doubles at his own emotional retirement at the Laver Cup in 2022. "It meant everything to me that you were there by my side - not as my rival but as my doubles partner," added Federer. "Sharing the court with you that night, and sharing those tears, will forever be one of the most special moments of my career."

The pair met for the first time in 2004 at the Miami Open, shortly after Federer had become world number one and Nadal was just 17. "I thought I was on top of the world. And I was - until two months later, when you walked on the court in Miami in your red sleeveless shirt, showing off those biceps, and you beat me convincingly," said the 43-year-old. "All that buzz I'd been hearing about you — about this amazing young player from Mallorca, a generational talent, probably going to win a major someday - it wasn't just hype." — AFP



HONG KONG: (Left-right) England's Kip Popert, New Zealand's Ben Campbell, England's Justin Rose, South Korea's Tom Kim and Hong Kong's Tai Chi Koh pose during a press conference ahead of the Hong Kong Open golf tournament in Hong Kong on Nov 19, 2024. - AFP

our careers. "If you're doing it with that lens then that's as great motivation as anything," added the veteran, who won the US Open in 2013.

Rose will this week try to regain the Hong Kong Open title he won in 2015 against a field that includes US Ryder Cup player Patrick Reed and South Ko-

rea's rising PGA Tour star Tom Kim. Rose said he struggled to understand the sums reportedly being offered on the US side. "I didn't quite get it. It's not four million dollars each," said the former world number one. "It's a lot of money, but it's not changing any of those guys' lives." — AFP



India's batsman Virat Kohli

opening partner Yashasvi Jaiswal to set the tone. Despite his recent struggles Rohit would have opened in Perth so now Indian selectors are pondering their replacement options. KL Rahul looks most likely to open with Jaiswal, but he has also not been in great touch and was dropped from the final two Tests against New Zealand. Former coach Ravi Shastri had suggested Shubman Gill could be an option to start the innings, but he also looks set to miss the opening match after reportedly fracturing a thumb. The uncapped 29-year-old Abhimanyu Easwaran has emerged as a contender.

Too much on Bumrah?

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has lacked support at the other end with senior pacer Mohammed Shami injured and fellow quick Mohammed Siraj struggling to take wickets. Siraj claimed two wickets from three innings in the New Zealand series and lost his place to Akash Deep. According to media reports, Shami

could make a late entry into the Test squad after an impressive comeback from injury in a domestic match and form a new-ball combination with Bumrah. As vice-captain, Bumrah will find himself stepping up to lead the side if, as expected, Rohit misses the Perth Test. Former Australia all-rounder Brendon Julian has said, taking all that into account, it "could be a lot of pressure on your opening bowler".

Gambhir under the cosh

Gambhir, a former opening batsman and successful Indian Premier League coach, took over a triumphant national side which won the T20 World Cup in June. The honeymoon did not last long, with pundits in India questioning Gambhir's tactics in the series whitewash to New Zealand. "I don't think as if I am feeling the heat," the 43-year-old fired back. Former batsman Sanjay Manjrekar lambasted Gambhir's public defense of his side after the loss, suggesting that Rohit and chief selector Ajit Agarkar were "much better guys to front up for the media". Former Australia captain Tim Paine was also scathing of Gambhir, saying that "the concern for India right now isn't Rohit Sharma's batting, isn't Virat Kohli's batting - it's their coach and his ability to stay calm under pressure".

In a spin

Veteran spinners Ravichandran Ashwin, 38, and 35-year-old Ravindra Jadeja were outshone by their New Zealand counterparts on home soil. Spin duo Mitchell Santner and Ajaz Patel bamboozled India's batting lineup whereas Ashwin and Jadeja struggled by comparison on what should have been favorable home conditions. Only one of the Indian slow bowlers is expected to make the XI on bouncy Australian pitches where quicks will likely play a larger role. Off-spinner Washington Sundar, 25, is in the mix after taking 16 wickets in two matches against New Zealand. — AFP

Sports

Gvardiol steals in to ensure Croatia reach Nations League quarter-finals

Holders Spain strike late to beat Switzerland in Nations League



SPLIT: Portugal's goalkeeper #12 Jose Sa (left) dives for a shot from Croatia's forward #09 Andrej Kramaric (right) which went wide during the UEFA Nations League, League A - Group A1 football match between Croatia and Portugal. — AFP photos



TENERIFE: Switzerland's midfielder #14 Andi Zeqiri (right) scores his team's second goal in spite of Spain's goalkeeper #23 Robert Sanchez during the UEFA Nations League, League A Group A4, football match between Spain and Switzerland in on November 18 2024.

PARIS: Josko Gvardiol continued his scoring streak to earn Croatia a 1-1 home draw with Portugal on Monday that allowed them to squeak into the Nations League quarter-finals. Portugal had already sealed top spot in Group A1. The draw allowed Croatia to finish one point above Scotland who continued their late surge with a 2-1 win over Poland in Warsaw.

In Group A4, Spain, already assured of qualification, beat last-placed Switzerland 3-2 in a match of penalty kicks in Tenerife. Denmark secured second place in the group with a 0-0 draw in Serbia. In Split, Portugal took a 33rd-minute lead when Joao Felix neatly finished a sharp counterattack. Rafael Leao then missed the target when clean through. With Scotland winning in Warsaw after a third-minute goal from John

McGinn, set up by teenager Ben Doak, Croatia were heading out.

Gvardiol, ghosting at the far post, had a header on 62 minutes disallowed for offside. He repeated the move three minutes later, sneaking in unmarked and onside to squeeze a close-range shot through Jose Sa. Gvardiol, a defender, has three goals in his last six Premier League games for Manchester City. "It felt like two different games for us," said Gvardiol. "In the first half, we seemed a bit tired and needed to make changes. The second half was much better - we had more energy, better control of the ball, and created more chances and we managed to score a goal."

Almost simultaneously in Warsaw, Kamil Piatkowski rocketed a cross shot into the top far corner of the Scottish goal to level for Poland. In the 73rd

minute in Split, left-back Nuno Mendes nearly emulated Gvardiol for Portugal but goalie Dominik Livakovic blocked. In Warsaw, Andy Robertson headed home in added time to give Scotland a second win in four days, but Croatia comfortably saw out the draw they needed.

"I told the boys they earned this result through their hard work, though it seems we always have to struggle for it," said Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic. "While there might have been a results crisis, there was never a crisis in our play." Scotland go into a play-off to save their League A status. Poland are relegated. Scotland coach Steve Clarke said he was happy with his country's improvement. "We started with three defeats, three narrow defeats, with good performances. The players didn't lose belief, I didn't lose belief in the

players and they end up taking seven points from the last three games which gets us into the play-off," he said.

'I can't ask for more'

In Tenerife, Alvaro Morata's clever turn won a penalty just after the half-hour. Yvon Mvogo saved Pedri's low, hard spot kick but, after some pinball, Yeremi Pino, from the neighboring Canary island of Las Palmas, scored. Joel Monteiro dribbled through the Spanish defense for a spectacular 63rd-minute equalizer. Bryan Gil stole the ball in the Swiss area to put Spain ahead again five minutes later. Andi Zeqiri leveled again, with a penalty five minutes from time.

Deep into extra time, Bryan Zaragoza converted Spain's second spot kick. For both the Bryans it was a first international goal. "Here at home with a goal, the win,"

said Pino. "I can't ask for more." In Lviv, the hosts needed to win to overtake visiting Denmark and reach the quarter-finals. On a night when both goalkeepers, Dord Petrovic and Kasper Schmeichel, were in eye-catching form, the hosts had to settle for a 0-0 draw.

The goalkeeping was less spectacular in Luxembourg in League C, where Northern Ireland blew a two-goal lead in Luxembourg to draw 2-2 but topped Group 3 when Bulgaria threw away a lead and drew 1-1 in Sofia against Belarus. In Group 2, Romania beat Cyprus 4-1 in Bucharest to stay top of the group, two points ahead of Kosovo, who beat Lithuania 1-0 in Pristina despite playing the second half with 10 men. In League D, San Marino came from a goal down to beat Liechtenstein 3-1 in Vaduz and edge Gibraltar to first place in Group 1. — AFP

Tuchel's England have 'tools' to win World Cup, says Carsley

LONDON: Thomas Tuchel is taking over an England side with "all of the tools" to win the 2026 World Cup, says departing interim manager Lee Carsley. Former Chelsea and Bayern Munich boss Tuchel takes up his new role on January 1 after being given an 18-month contract by the Football Association. The German's primary mission is to win the tournament in the United States, Canada and Mexico in 2026 and end England's long and painful wait for a major trophy. Carsley, who took over on a temporary basis after Gareth Southgate resigned in July, secured promotion to the top tier of the Nations League with five wins from his six games.

He believes England have the talent to win the World Cup for the first time since 1966 after several agonizing near misses under Southgate. "We have got all of the tools," he said. "We just need to play them in the (right) order." Carsley hands over to Tuchel after Sunday's 5-0 send-off against Ireland at Wembley, having given debuts to eight players during his temporary spell in charge.

"Thomas' pool of players has increased so we have left the squad in a fantastic position," he said. "We will collate our thoughts, along with the rest of the players in terms of handing over something he can read and look through that's valuable. And then we'll step back to support him." Carsley, who returns to his role as England Under-21s manager, said the challenge is achieving balance using the best talent, with fierce competition for places. "One thing you don't get with the international camps is time, so we just



Thomas Tuchel

have to find that balance," he said.

England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford is also upbeat about the future, believing Tuchel could be the man to get the team over the line. Pickford has been part of the England team that has lost the past two European Championship finals and reached the quarter-finals and semi-finals of the World Cup. "There's definitely new energy and there's going to be a lot of competition for places," he said. "But that's what it's about. You want the best players for England at the right moment and hopefully going forward next year we've got that squad ready to win." — AFP

Hendrikse brothers paired for S Africa against Wales

CARDIFF: Rassie Erasmus has made seven changes to the South Africa side that beat England to face under-pressure Wales in Cardiff on Saturday. Jaden and Jordan Hendrikse - the 36th set of Springbok brothers - have been paired at halfback for the season's final Test against a Wales team that has suffered 11 consecutive Test defeats. Jaden (scrum-half) and Jordan (fly-half) Hendrikse are the first set of brothers to appear together since Dan and Robert du Preez featured against Wales in Washington DC at the start of the 2018 season.

The last time a set of brothers were included in the starting team was in the World Cup pool match against Scotland in 2015, when front-rowers Jannie and Bismarck du Plessis ran out in tandem in Newcastle. The Hendrikses' inclusion are the only changes in the backline, while there are five changes in the starting pack: Johan Grobelaar starts at hooker while Thomas du Toit returns at tighthead prop, with Ox Nche retaining his place at loosehead.

The team boasting 17 Rugby World Cup winners also features a new lock combination of the fit-again Jean Kleyn and Franco Mostert, while the only change in the loose trio is at flanker, where El-righ Louw replaces Pieter-Steph du Toit (shoulder) and will start alongside captain Siya Kolisi and No 8 Jasper Wiese. Flanker Cameron Hanekom is set to become the 12th Springbok to make his Test debut this season after being named on the replacements' bench. Should he take the field, he will become the 52nd player to feature for the team this season.

"This is our last match of the season, and we are determined to finish the year on a positive note,"

said Erasmus, who has overseen victories over Scotland (32-15) and England (29-20). "We selected a squad that shows a good mix of experience and youth, which is crucial as we look to maintain some consistency in selection, while at the same time giving guys like Jordan and Cameron, who have been exceptional at training on tour, a chance to show us what they can do," said Erasmus. "Cameron also offers us a few options at loose forward as he can play No 6, No 7 and No 8, and that will be valuable with two locks on the bench."

'Nothing to lose'

Erasmus opted for six forwards and two backs on the bench, with the same replacement front row of Malcolm Marx (hooker), Gerhard Steenekamp, and Vincent Koch (both props), while Eben Etzebeth and RG Snyman, who started in the second row in the victory over England, are rotated to the bench. The two backline players among the replacements are the double World Cup-winning duo of Cobus Reinach (scrum-half) and Handre Pollard (fly-half).

Erasmus said he expected a tough challenge from Wales despite the host nation's recent woeful form. "Wales are a proud nation with a world-renowned coach in Warren Gatland and they'll do everything to finish their campaign on a high note," said Erasmus. "We've experienced first-hand how a run of defeats can galvanize a team and the fact that they'll be playing at home with a passionate crowd behind them will inspire them even more - just as our supporters inspire us when we play at home."

"Obviously we'd love to finish the tour unbeaten but we are well aware of the fact that we've have a few close results against them over the years at the Principality Stadium. "We'll show Wales the same respect we showed England and Scotland, and we know we have to be at our best to come out with the result we want. "They are a team with everything to gain and nothing to lose, so it would be careless of us to think that we just need to pitch up and the result will go in our favor." — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

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

Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Hospitals

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

Change of Name

I, Juned Ahmed, holder of Indian Passport No. X8047449, 2/88, Main Bazar, Kalikiri, Annamayya, Pin 517234 (Andhra Pradesh), residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that I have changed my name from Juned Ahmed to Juned Ahmed (given name) and Kamuluri (surname).
#6197 20/11/2024

District, Kerala - 676123, residing in Kuwait at present hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given name) Askar Ali K and (surname) Keloth.
#6195, 19/11/2024

I, Mohammed Askar Nellikanam, holder of Indian Passport No. M6103774 having permanent address, Nellikanam House, Cherani, Karuvambram PO, Malappuram

I, Murtaza Nahliwala, holder of Passport No. S2345600, do hereby change my name to Murtaza Nazarali (as given name) Nahali (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Murtaza Nazarali Nahali and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.
#6193, 19/11/2024

Japan on cusp of World Cup as Son scores in Palestine draw

Ruthless Japan stun China • Indonesia beat Saudi • Iran eke out win



XIAMEN: Japan's Ayumu Seko (right) fights for the ball with China's Lin Liangming (center) during the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualification football match between China and Japan in Xiamen, in southeastern China's Fujian province on November 19, 2024. — AFP photos

HONG KONG: Japan are on the brink of qualifying for the World Cup after a 3-1 win at China on Tuesday while Son Heung-min scored again as South Korea were held by Palestine. Indonesia meanwhile stunned Saudi Arabia 2-0 in Jakarta to boost their unlikely hopes of reaching the tournament in North America in 2026. Headers from Koki Ogawa and Ko Itakura put runaway group leaders Japan two goals up at half time before Lin Liangming pulled one back for China early in the second half.

Ogawa snuffed out China's hopes of a comeback with his second to silence a crowd of 45,000 in Xiamen, where fans without tickets gathered outside the ground to watch the action on their phones. Loud booing greeted the Japanese national anthem before kick-off and the game was briefly stopped in the first half when a fan invaded the pitch.

"It was tough at times and we knew that the opening goal was going to be key," said Dutch-based striker Ogawa. Japan were playing their first senior international in China in nine years and there is a long

history of rivalry between the two countries. There was a heavy police presence outside the Xiamen Egret Stadium, where about 750 Japan fans were expected to be in attendance. "All the players got us this win today," said Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu. "The players on the pitch, the players on the bench and those that weren't on the bench today—it was down to their energy that we won."

The convincing victory gave Japan five wins and a draw in Asian qualifying Group C and took them to within touching distance of a place at the World Cup. The top two teams in each of the three groups will reach the showpiece in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Second place in Group C is wide open after Indonesia beat Saudi Arabia with Marselino Ferdinan scoring either side of half time. It left Australia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and China all on six points ahead of the Soccerroos' visit later Tuesday to Bahrain, who have five.

Son denied

In Group B, Palestine — nominally hosts

for a game taking place in Jordan—grabbed a surprise 12th-minute lead over South Korea thanks to Zaid Qunbar. The advantage lasted just four minutes, talisman and skipper Son firing in from close range to bring the Koreans level with his 51st goal for his country. It was all South Korea after that and Son had a goal chalked off for offside late on, but Palestine held on for a valuable point that helps keep them alive. Despite the 1-1 stalemate the Koreans are firmly on course for the World Cup at the top of the group with four games to go.

In Group A, talented 21-year-old Ab-bosbek Fayzullaev scored the only goal to give Uzbekistan a 1-0 win over North Korea in Vientiane, the capital of Laos. It cemented the Uzbeks' place in the top two in the group, along with table-top-pers Iran, who were 3-2 winners at Kyrgyzstan. Teams finishing third and fourth in the three Asian groups will go through to a further round of qualifying. North Korea are rooted to the bottom of Group A and yet to win in six games in this phase of qualifying. — AFP



JAKARTA: Indonesia's Sandy Walsh (right) fights for the ball during the 2026 World Cup Asian qualification football match between Saudi Arabia and Indonesia at Bung Karno Stadium in Jakarta on November 19, 2024.

Clippers upset Warriors as Lillard saves Bucks

LOS ANGELES: The Los Angeles Clippers held off a furious late rally to upset the pace-setting Golden State Warriors 102-99 in the NBA on Monday. Norman Powell led the Clippers scoring with 23 points including five three-pointers as the Los Angeles club improved to 8-7 for the season after downing the Western Conference leaders. The Clippers led by 15 points late in the second quarter only to see the Warriors chip away at the lead to narrow the margin to three points at the end of the third quarter.

The Clippers dug deep to hold off Golden State in the fourth quarter, and the Warriors missed a three-point attempt from Gary Payton II on the buzzer that would have tied it to force overtime. Stephen Curry led the Warriors scorers with 26 points, with Andrew Wiggins adding 22. Clippers coach Tyrone Lue said he had rallied his team at the end of the third quarter. "I told them 'they're the number one team in the West for a reason' - but we're still up by three points, at home," Lue said.

"But I'm proud of the team. They made a big run like they always do, and we were able to keep our composure and come away with the win." Elsewhere on Monday, Damian Lillard returned from a three-game concussion layoff to score a driving layup with 3.9 seconds remaining and give the Milwaukee Bucks a much-needed 101-100 victory over the in-form Houston Rockets.

Houston had gone into the game on the back of a five-game winning streak and looked ready to extend that run after racing into an early 13-point



INGLEWOOD: Terance Mann #14 of the LA Clippers scores between Lindy Waters III #43, Stephen Curry #30 and Trayce Jackson-Davis #32 of the Golden State Warriors during the first half at Intuit Dome on November 18, 2024. — AFP

lead in the first quarter. But Milwaukee, who are four places off the bottom of the Eastern Conference with a 5-9 record after Monday's win, responded superbly to lead by 12 points at half-time. Houston regained the initiative in the fourth quarter to grab the lead, but a late run by Milwaukee culminating in Lillard's winner settled an enthralling battle. Lillard, who finished with 18 points and 10 assists, admitted that his enforced layoff due to concussion had been a challenge.

'A little frustrating'

"Normally when something is wrong with me I feel like I can will myself through it - but this was probably one of the first times in my life and definitely in my NBA career where I was like 'something is off,'" Lillard said Monday's win. "It was a little

frustrating. I just didn't like not being with the team." Brook Lopez led the Bucks scoring with 27 points while Giannis Antetokounmpo added 20.

In Phoenix, Franz Wagner poured in 32 points to help the Orlando Magic claim a 109-99 win over the depleted Suns. Wagner was boosted by 20 points off the bench from Anthony Black while Goga Bitadze added 17. Phoenix, missing the injured Kevin Durant, Bradley Beal and Jusuf Nurkic, slumped to their fourth straight loss. Phoenix, who made a blistering 8-1 start to the season, fell to 9-6 after the defeat. Phoenix coach Mike Budenholzer called on his team to rally around each other as they weathered the injury-driven dip in form. "Just stay together," Budenholzer said. "You've got to keep going, keep doing the work and keep your head up. This group will do that. They're very resilient." — AFP

Struggling Genoa sack Gilardino as coach

PARIS: Genoa have sacked their coach Alberto Gilardino, the relegation-threatened Serie A side announced on Tuesday. "Genoa CFC announces that Alberto Gilardino has been relieved of his duties," the club wrote on social media. Genoa sit 17th in the table, just one point above the relegation zone, with only two wins from 12 matches this season. The 42-year-old Gilardino took over at Genoa in December 2022, after coaching the club's Under-19 team. Last term, he guided them to an 11th-placed finish in the table.

Gilardino, a World Cup winner in 2006 with Italy, made over 500 appearances in Serie A as a player and also claimed a Champions League title in 2007 with AC Milan. The former striker spent a brief period at Genoa between 2012-2014, scoring 21 goals in 52 outings. Several media outlets have reported that ex-Arsenal and France midfielder Patrick Vieira could replace the Italian on the bench at Genoa. Vieira, 48, previously managed Crystal Palace in the Premier League. He has been without a club since leaving Ligue 1 side Strasbourg in July. — AFP