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Kuwait vows UN, Palestine support

Crown Prince meets UN chief, Palestinian leader • UN adopts 'Pact for the Future'



NEW YORK: Representative of HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, reaffirmed keenness to participate in the Summit of the Future and all meetings during the UN General Assembly's 79th Session. HH the Crown Prince, during a meeting with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on the sidelines of the 79th UNGA Session, called on member countries to join hands, develop the UN and promote its role to boost international security and stability as well as achieve the sustainable development goals.

He conveyed greetings of HH the Amir and his support of the UN's "important and vital" role, as well as his recognition of the endeavors of Guterres. Guterres commended Kuwait's "active and historic" support of the UN's activities and affirmed the importance of backing international peace and security. The two leaders discussed regional and international developments, the UN's role in promoting international peace and security and achieving sustainable development. Meanwhile, the UN said in a statement

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Diwan warns Amir and Crown Prince have no social media accounts

KUWAIT: The Amiri Diwan announced on Sunday that HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah have no accounts on social media. The Diwan vowed in a statement that legal procedures will be taken against owners of fake accounts in the names of HH the Amir and HH the Crown Prince. The fake accounts have been making statements and attributing them to HH the Amir and HH the Crown Prince, mostly on the X platform.

Separately, the government on Sunday denied rumors that the end-of-service indemnity for government jobs will be reduced or changed. "The end-of-service indemnity (for government employees) will not be touched," government spokesman Amer Al-Ajmi said in a statement. Ajmi also denied that the age requirement for retirement will be changed, adding that the end-of-service law has not been altered.

AI cams to record traffic violations

KUWAIT: The traffic department has started installing artificial intelligence-aided highly advanced cameras that will automatically record violations, especially not fastening seatbelts and using of mobile phones while driving, the interior ministry announced on Sunday. So far, traffic officials have been recording such violations through policemen only.

The new technology aims at enhancing the safety of commuters by detecting traffic offences precisely and effectively to ensure drivers respect and abide by traffic rules, the ministry said in a statement. The interior ministry called on drivers to abide by the traffic laws, advising them to strictly use seatbelts and avoid using mobiles while driving for their safety.

The ministry said the installation of the cameras is a part of a comprehensive strategy to consolidate safety on roads and reduce accidents and the number of deaths. More than 300 people are killed every year because of traffic accidents.

Calls to step back from brink as Hezb, Zionists trade fire

HAIFA/BEIRUT/GAZA: The Zionist entity and Hezbollah threatened on Sunday to escalate their cross-border attacks despite a chorus of international calls for both sides to step back from the brink of all-out war. Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said after a night of intense rocket fire from Lebanon that the Zionist entity has dealt "a series of blows on Hezbollah that it could have never imagined".

Hezbollah was equally defiant, with the group's deputy chief Naim Qassem saying it was in a "new phase" in its battle against the Zionist entity. They spoke nearly a year after the outbreak of the Gaza war and after attacks on the Zionist entity sent hundreds of thousands of people to bomb shelters and caused damage in the area of Haifa city. The Zionist entity's key ally the United States said

Continued on Page 6

Zionists raid, shut down Al Jazeera West Bank bureau

RAMALLAH: Armed and masked Zionist forces raided the office of global news channel Al Jazeera in the occupied West Bank on Sunday and issued a 45-day closure order. It was the latest salvo in a long-running feud between the Arab broadcaster and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government which has worsened during the war in Gaza.

Iran blast kills more than 50 mine workers

TEHRAN: A blast caused by a gas leak at an Iranian coal mine has killed at least 51 people, state media said Sunday, in one of the country's deadliest work accidents in years. "The number of dead workers increased to 51" in the explosion at the Tabas mine in eastern Iran, the official IRNA news agency reported, revising an earlier death toll of 30. It added that 20 other people were injured.

The explosion occurred at around

9:00 pm (1730 GMT) on Saturday, when around 70 workers were present at the site in South Khorasan province, IRNA said. According to the report, a leak of methane gas led to the blast in two blocks of the mine, which is owned by private Iranian firm Madanjoo. State TV broadcast footage of ambulances and helicopters arriving at Tabas to transport the injured to hospital.

Online footage carried by IRNA showed bodies of some of the victims, wearing their work uniform, carried out of the site on mining carts. South Khorasan governor Javad Ghenaat told state TV that rescue teams were working to recover the remaining bodies. An apparent "gas condensation" in the mine is believed to be the cause

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HAIFA: First responders and Zionist security forces gather amid debris and charred vehicles in Kiryat Bialik following a strike by Hezbollah on Sept 22, 2024. — AFP



RAMALLAH: An image grab shows a Zionist soldier speaking with Al Jazeera bureau chief Walid Al-Omari upon entering Al Jazeera's offices on Sept 22, 2024. — AFP



TABAS, Iran: A handout picture shows security forces gathered at the scene of a blast at a coalmine in Khorasan province on Sept 22, 2024. — AFP



GCC supports UN resolutions, efforts to protect Palestinians

Civilian deaths, humanitarian crisis in Gaza 'unacceptable'

In my view

Crisis in middle management



Abdulaziz Al-Smairi

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The full potential of Kuwait cannot be unlocked through middle managers chosen strictly for their seniority. It is a near impossibility to expect the creation of a qualified and cohesive management team through promotions driven by seniority instead of merit. Middle management is responsible for translating the leadership's broad strategies and directions into actionable items for the operational staff to implement.

It is imperative for them to be able to understand their role as a cog in a much larger machine and to exercise their authority in the most productive way possible. A middle manager's responsibility classically lies in facilitating the communication of the leadership's goals from the top to the bottom of the pyramid. However, it is equally important for the middle manager to communicate in the opposite direction the realities faced by the operational staff in the form of business cases. These business cases act as a reality check for the leadership's directions.

The practice of drafting a business case requires an analytical mindset that can identify a problem, collect the relevant data and come up with a feasible conclusion. As such, seniority is not a prerequisite to analysis. The most senior person may be the most familiar with the procedure but may not be the best to develop and streamline it.

The government's reality is a middle management that is notorious for being procedure- rather than productivity-driven. This managerial mindset has created rigid organizations that focus on bureaucracy, resistance to change, ineffective communication and a gross lack of accountability. The leadership is significantly challenged by middle managers who act as independent entities separate from their organizational goals and purposes. A middle manager's inability to look beyond the daily procedure results in a lack of innovation and business development, poor planning for future growth and counterproductive engagement with operational staff.

The symptoms of the crisis in middle management are well documented and were most recently showcased by Kuwait's inability to host a football match without resulting in a PR and geopolitical nightmare. The middle management responsible for the event blatantly failed in the planning phase and could not account for all the necessary stakeholders and related factors to succeed.

Moreover, on a broader scale, the Kuwaiti government has been unable to perform the most ordinary of managerial tasks which is to set a budget in time, to accurately forecast project timelines and to prepare a line of qualified successors for organizations that have been in operation for over five decades. The leadership has been overwhelmed by a growing and overstuffed organizational structure with significant overlaps in responsibilities and no clear path forward. The leadership's delegations to middle management to map the issues and escalate them accordingly with sound business acumen and data supported evidence have been less than productive.

Given that Kuwait has no niche problems, the solutions are abundant and readily available. The crisis can be averted by selecting middle managers who are bold enough to exercise their given authority, to evaluate them based on measurable metrics and to set up a framework for data driven decisions. The fundamental role of a middle manager is to exercise judgment and be held accountable for it. Without a sophisticated infrastructure of systems to support data-driven decision-making, the role of middle management is exaggerated, as it is the channel of communication between the employees and the leadership.

The disconnect between the goals set by the leadership and the realities faced by the operational staff can only be attributed to the middle management's failure as the sole means and channel for planning, business development and establishment of accountability. The way towards genuine reform starts with the development of a clear and measurable strategy and the selection of a qualified team able to implement it. Only then can we observe thoroughly assessed decisions by the leadership instead of across-the-board solutions.

RIYADH: The Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Al-Budaiwi emphasized the importance of the international community's role in supporting the UN to implement its resolutions, particularly concerning the Palestinian issue. This came during Al-Budaiwi's meeting with the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres on the sidelines of his participation in the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

During the meeting, they discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the GCC and the UN in various fields, support sustainable development efforts, and address the latest regional and international developments of mutual interest, particularly the crisis in Gaza and the rest of the Palestinian territories. Al-Budaiwi praised the efforts made by the UN General Assembly in preparing for the 79th session, also appreciating the significant role it plays in addressing current regional and international issues, supporting peace and development efforts, and enhancing international cooperation to tackle crises.

For his part, Guterres commended the role played by GCC countries regionally and internationally, as well as the national achievements attained by GCC countries at all levels, stating that this has positioned them among the advanced countries in many international indicators, such as sustainability, infrastructure, and development.

Quad summit

Meanwhile, leaders of the Quad group stated that the massive loss of civilian lives and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza are unacceptable, urging the release of hostages, which they believe could lead to an immediate and long-term ceasefire. In a joint statement issued Saturday following their summit, held at US President Joe Biden's home in Delaware, the Quad members—representing the US, Australia, India, and



RIYADH: Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi discussed on Sunday with Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Abbas Araghchi ways of strengthening cooperation.

Japan—expressed deep concern over the deteriorating situation.

The summit saw the participation of Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. At the heart of their message was an urgent call for a significant increase in humanitarian aid to Gaza. The leaders stressed that preventing the conflict from spiraling further across the region is critical, calling on all sides to respect international law, including humanitarian guidelines, and welcomed UN Security Council Resolution 2735, which calls for a ceasefire in Gaza.

The Quad leaders urged all parties to take swift action to protect civilians, including humanitarian



GCC Chief Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. — KUNA photos

workers, and ensure safe and rapid aid delivery. They underlined that the future reconstruction of Gaza must have robust international backing while warning against the risk of regional escalation. The leaders reiterated their commitment to a sovereign Palestinian state within a two-state solution framework, calling for an end to unilateral actions like settlement expansions and acts of violent extremism that threaten peace efforts on both sides. The Quad, originally established in 2007 as a security dialogue between the US, India, Japan, and Australia, resumed its activities in 2017 after a long hiatus amid rising tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, with China and the Korean Peninsula frequently in the spotlight. — KUNA

Al-Assima launches clean-up campaign

KUWAIT: Al-Assima Governorate organized on Saturday a cleaning campaign for Kuwait Towers beach - marking the National and World Cleanup Day.

The Assima Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, who sponsored and participated in the activity, said in a press statement that he encourages all such voluntary initiatives and promotion of public environmental awareness. Personnel from several public departments, a number of volunteers, citizens and expatriates participated in the cleaning campaign. "We were keen on coinciding the cleaning campaign with the National and World Cleanup Day which is one of the international days celebrated annually by civil communities," Sheikh Abdullah said.

The governorate will launch campaigns intended to inspire the citizens and residents of the country to preserve the land and marine environments. — KUNA



Al-Assima Governorate organizes a cleaning campaign to mark the National and World Cleanup Day. — KUNA

Women emphasize the importance of dialogue in preserving cultures

MOSCOW: The Kuwaiti Union of Women's Associations has underlined the importance of dialogue in preserving cultural commonalities among different peoples. Speaking at the 4th Eurasian Women's Forum in the Russian city of St. Petersburg, Board Member of the Kuwait Union of Women's Associations Dr Hayla Al-Mekaimi said culture is an important gateway for industry, trade, economic, and social cooperation between countries and serves people's interests.

She called for preserving the commonalities between Arab and Russian cultures. Al-Mekaimi, also Professor of Eurasian Studies at Kuwait University, expressed admiration of the Russian women's pivotal role in developing their national economy. There is a need for exchanging experience between Russian women and their Kuwaiti and Arabian Gulf peers in this regard, she said. In statements to KUNA on Saturday, Al-Mekaimi said that women worldwide have contributed greatly to promoting the concept of sustainability and boosting environment-friendly industries.

As Kuwait moves towards diversifying its national economy, Kuwaiti women have to be aware of the role played by their peers in other countries to achieve this goal, she clarified. Held every three years since 2015, the Eurasian Women's Forum aims to promote the role of women in all fields with the target of building a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. This year's edition, themed "Women for Strengthening Trust and Global Cooperation",

Emergency Department, Farwaniya Municipality, Khaiteh Cooperative Society, and everyone who contributed to the campaign.

For her part, Dr Fatima Al-Moussawi thanked the governor for his support and efforts in making the event a success, stressing that protecting the environment is a shared responsibility that requires everyone's cooperation. Al-Moussawi added that they will continue to support activities that enhance environmental awareness and secure a better future for future generations.

In Ahmadi Governorate, another cleaning campaign was organized in cooperation in the Abu Halifa area square with the participation of volunteer teams and a number of residents and governmental and civil entities. Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah praised the efforts of the campaign participants, noting that it reflects environmental awareness and national spirit.

Sheikh Hamoud Al-Sabah expressed gratitude to Dr Fatima Al-Moussawi, the Board of Directors of Abu Halifa Cooperative Society, the Ahmadi Municipality Branch, the Governorate Security Directorate, and everyone who contributed to the campaign. During the two campaigns, large quantities of waste were removed — a clear message to enhance awareness of the importance of preserving the environment and achieving environmental and health sustainability. — KUNA



Board Member of the Kuwait Union of Women's Associations Dr Hayla Al-Mekaimi

drew the participation of 1,500 delegates from 126 countries and international organizations, including many female leaders. Al-Mekaimi represented the Kuwait Union of Women's Associations at the event. — KUNA

Farwaniya, Ahmadi governorates mark World Cleanup Day

KUWAIT: Farwaniya and Ahmadi governorates organized two environmental cleaning campaigns on Sunday, coinciding with the celebration of World Cleanup Day 2024, under the patronage and attendance of Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah and Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. In a press statement, Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Sabah praised the efforts of the participants and volunteers in making the campaign a success, protecting the environment, and achieving sustainability of its resources, stressing the ongoing commitment to support environmental initiatives.

The aim is to preserve the environment and improve the quality of life in the governorate. Sheikh Athbi Al-Sabah expressed his thanks and appreciation to the director of the project, Dr Fatima Al-Moussawi, the organizers and volunteers in the project, in addition to the Farwaniya Governorate Security Directorate, the Medical

Travel ticket sales hit KD 244 million

KUWAIT: Kuwait Travel and Tourism Agencies Association reported on Sunday that ticket sales in the country, through the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) bank reconciliation system, reached KD 244 million (approximately \$797.6 million) in the first eight months of 2024. The association's chief of board of directors, Mohammad Al-Mutairi, told KUNA that the sales represent more than 2.3 million issued travel tickets, not including seasonal trips and low-cost flights. The number of travel agencies reached 590 spread across all six governorates due to climbing numbers of travelers preferring travel agency services and offers, he commented.

The association is keen on cooperating with local airlines, especially as Kuwait Airways is adamant on diversifying destinations and increasing the number of high-demand flights. Al-Mutairi stated. Al-Mutairi hailed Kuwait Airways' adherence to takeoff and landing schedules and their efforts in decreasing wait time and diminishing crowds through permitting travelers to deposit baggage 12 hours prior to flight. The association was established back in 1971 with the aim of improving tourism services and demands. — KUNA

Local

LPG Train: Ambitious, strategic project bolstering Kuwaiti hydrocarbon assets

Project promotes clean energy, provides job opportunities

KUWAIT: The Fifth Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Train, an ambitious project by the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), will aim at bolstering Kuwait's hydrocarbon assets as well as boosting natural gas production. The project is working on gathering outputs of fields affiliated with the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) and Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) in addition to petroleum gas produced by KNPC's own refineries, which in turn boost hydrocarbon wealth, meet demands for clean energy resources, and provide job opportunities for national cadres.

The Fifth LPG Train project is of great importance due to it being within the KNPC 2040 Strategy aimed at discovering and producing associated and unassociated petroleum gas in addition to other petroleum derivatives highly demanded by the global market and are environmentally friendly. The LPG factory in Mina Al-Ahmadi Refinery produces high-quality hydrocarbon gas byproducts used locally to fill gas canisters for homes and production of vehicle fuel. The factory also exports products abroad.

The factory, with its five lines, covers the local need for liquefied petroleum gas, providing the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy with its fuel needs, which in turn produces electricity. The production of gases plays a crucial role in several industries, including petrochemicals; thus, the production of liquefied petroleum gas would boost profits at KNPC. According to the KNPC, the Fifth Gas Train includes an additional sub-unit for the production of clean fuel gases to meet KEPA regulations.

This unit serves the fourth and fifth gas trains by treating the fuel gas to reduce H2S levels from 2,400 ppm to a maximum of 50 ppm. Speaking to KUNA in this regard, Shujaa Al-Ajmi — Deputy CEO of KNPC Mina Al-Ahmadi Refinery — said that the daily production capacity of the Fifth Gas

Train has a production capacity of 805 mmscfd and 106,000 bpd of condensate, pushing the total production capacity of the five Gas Trains into a record 3,125 mmscfd of gas and 332,000 bpd of condensate. He noted that the construction of the Fifth Gas Train required 6,900 workers at peak times.

The full total number of working hours from the beginning of the project until the initial commissioning date reached close to 58 million hours without lost time incidents. This was a result of the concerted efforts of the team supervising the project from KNPC together with the contractor's labor. More than 100 Kuwaiti engineers from various departments and divisions took over 60 training courses that took place in two phases, one at the headquarters of manufacturers and the other at the work site, he added.

Al-Ajmi revealed that the project cost around KD 428 million (\$1.39 billion), indicating that the private sector contributed around 29.7 percent to the sum, a matter considered an addition to the local economy. He affirmed that the project faced some difficulties in execution and elements outside of control, such as the heavy rainfall in 2018 that delayed construction and led to rescheduling. The COVID-19 pandemic also presented a challenge due to a slowdown in most of the global activities, he noted, adding that the KNPC had in mind the safety of construction staff physically and mentally assisting workers to overcome this daunting task.

The Fifth LPG Train saw the use of 14,000 tons of steel in construction, he revealed, pointing out that the projects saw the installation of huge towers weighing over 1,400 tons. The length of pipes used amounted to 3.67 million meters. The project saw the installation of 589 pieces of machinery weighing around 19,000 tons, and around 37 cubic meters of concrete were poured to create a foundation for machinery and pipe holders. — KUNA

Amir's representative meets UNGA president



NEW YORK: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, met with President of the United Nations General Assembly Philemon Yang on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Yang.

He also congratulated Yang on assuming the Presidency of the 79th UN General Assembly, wishing him further success and affirming Kuwait's support for his efforts in coordinating with member states in finding solutions to cases dis-

cussed in the General Assembly. For his part, Yang thanked Kuwait's leadership and people for their continuous support of the United Nations and its bodies.

During the meeting, both sides discussed the latest regional and international developments and the role of the UN in maintaining peace and stability in the Middle East and internationally and implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The meeting was attended by Kuwait Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, Foreign Affairs Undersecretary at the Crown Prince Divan Mazen Al-Essa, and Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah. — KUNA

WCR to focus on ways to empower the disabled

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Chairwoman of the Kuwait Society of the Guardians of the Disabled (KSGD), member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rihab Bouresli will participate in the 2024 World Congress on Rehabilitation (WCR). The program is organized by Zayed

Higher Organization for People of Determination in cooperation with Rehabilitation International and International Social Security Association under the patronage of Sheikh Khalid Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

Bouresli said WCR is one of the most important world activities for the disabled. Participants share ideas and experiences and discuss how to empower the disabled in our societies. This year's congress is held under the theme "Embracing Inclusion" in an affirmation of the commitment to strengthen opportunities and support the abilities of the disabled. The congress will feature an elite group of experts, academics, and specialized researchers in the fields of rehabilitation, health care, and education in order to exchange knowledge.

Work and employment, as well as challenges the disabled face in the marketplace in addition to raising awareness of available jobs for them, will be among the most notable topics to be discussed. Bouresli said the congress will also discuss education as a basic right for the disabled and the importance of a comprehensive education system.



Rihab Bouresli



FM partakes in digital cooperation function on UNGA's sideline

NEW YORK: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya took part in the High-level Thematic Debate on Digital Cooperation and Connectivity held on the sidelines of the 79th UNGA



in New York. The participation came upon an invitation by Secretary General, Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO) Deemah Al-Yahya and Governor of Digital Government Authority in Saudi Arabia Ahmad Al-Suwaiyan. A Ministry statement said that the function focused on issues pertaining to digital transformation, as well as partnership amongst member states of the DCO. The event also exchanged expertise in the field of digital economy and the use of technology in building a future of sustainable development. — KUNA

EducationUSA and US Embassy launch student campaign

KUWAIT: US Embassy and EducationUSA launched "Take a Step" campaign for Kuwaiti students. US Ambassador Karen Hideko Sasahara and the entire US Embassy team congratulated all the students in Kuwait on the start of the 2024-2025 academic year. "Your dedication to your studies and hard work in the classroom are the beginning of a journey from high school to college and into a professional career. We believe that higher education is key for unlocking future success, and we are thrilled to unveil the 'Take a Step' campaign, a program dedicated to supporting Kuwaiti students who are applying to colleges and universities," she said.

US offers an unparalleled quality of education, renowned for its innovation, diversity and excellence. Whether you plan to become an engineer, a doctor, a lawyer, a scientist, a writer, an entrepreneur, an artist or even a diplomat, US colleges and universities are world-class institutions, with cutting-edge research facilities, that are designed to equip you with critical thinking skills for the world of tomorrow. With access to distinguished faculty, extensive resources, and a vibrant campus life, students are prepared for professional success and encouraged to make a significant impact as well-rounded, global citizens.

"You are the future leaders and visionaries who will shape our world for the better. As we launch this campaign, which will run until the end of October, we envision a future where Kuwaiti students are not just participants in their own success but active architects of their country's progress. The road ahead is filled with opportunities, and with 'Take a Step', we are excited to be part of your journey towards making a significant impact", the US Ambassador stated.



US Ambassador Karen Hideko Sasahara

Kuwait, Iran FMs discuss relations, regional issues



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya met with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in New York. The Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that the two sides discussed bilateral relations between the two countries in various sectors. The discussions also touched on developments on the regional and international arenas and issues of joint concern. — KUNA



Charity opens integrated Islamic center in Poland

KUWAIT: The International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) inaugurated an integrated Islamic center in the Polish city of Lodz in the center of the university campus to enhance cultural communication between Islamic culture and other cultures. Deputy Director General of the Projects Sector at the organization Abdulrahman Al-Mutawa said in a press statement that the center covers an area of 1,722 square meters and serves more than 10,000 members of the Muslim community.

It includes eight classrooms, a mosque, a modern library, a meeting and lecture hall, a computer hall, an integrated administrative office, and other services. He said that the project enhances the educational process, stressing that this center will not be limited to performing the five daily prayers, Friday prayers and Tarawih prayers only, but will organize cultural events and educational courses to teach Islamic law and the Arabic language.

The organization looks forward to the Islamic Cultural Center being a beacon of moderate guidance, science, and knowledge in the city of Lodz and a bridge of communication with all cultural components in Polish society. He praised the fruitful cooperation with the International Mercy Association, which in turn contributed to the center's project with funding.

Humanitarian role
Meanwhile, Qatar's Ambassador to Kuwait, Ali bin



Qatar's Ambassador to Kuwait Ali bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud is pictured during his meeting with the Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society Anwar Al-Hasawi and other officials. — KUNA

Abdullah Al-Mahmoud, said on Sunday that the aid provided by Kuwait to affected peoples comes as a continuation of its role and humanitarian duty in helping countries and peoples affected by disasters or humanitarian crises. In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) after meeting with Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Anwar Al-Hasawi, Ambassador Al-Mahmoud praised Kuwait's efforts in the international humanitarian arena, especially its humanitarian programs and development projects across the globe.

He added that the society plays a pivotal role in enhancing international efforts to mitigate the effects of crises and disasters through its humanitarian and development initiatives, noting that he was briefed on the distinguished humanitarian and relief activities provided by the society with the aim of supporting relief work around the world. — KUNA

Local

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P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
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Observatory to
tackle rumors

KUWAIT: Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Sunday launched KUNA's 'Observatory' for Verifying News and Responding to Rumors, in an initial and preliminary step for its official launch on October 6. In a press release, KUNA's Director-General, Dr Fatima Al-Salem, said that this step comes as a continuation of the steps taken by KUNA towards enhancing transparency, credibility, and media responsibility. The importance of the Observatory is to tackle rumors and misleading news as well as confronting misinformation campaigns that affect the reputation of government work, achievements, and contributions, she added. Dr Al-Salem stressed that the idea of launching the observatory comes in light of the importance of the digital economy, receiving information from its official sources, limiting the spread of misleading information, and combating rumors that could negatively affect public opinion. — KUNA



Dr Fatima Al-Salem

Al-Najat Charity
launches relief
projects in Yemen

ADEN: Kuwait's Al-Najat Charitable Society on Sunday launched urgent relief projects for those affected by floods and rains in the Tihama region in western Yemen, benefiting about 19,000 people as part of the "Kuwait by Your Side" campaign. The head of the "Roh Al-Ataa Foundation for Development," which implemented the project, Abdulraouf Al-Yousfi, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the project is supervised by the Kuwaiti Al-Najat Society in partnership with the Kuwaiti "Hands of Goodness for Development" Foundation. The charity implemented an integrated package for the benefit of thousands of families affected by floods in the governorates of Taiz and Al-Hodeidah.

He added that the projects went beyond relief to development and included providing relief materials to 2,100 beneficiaries. Thousands of families benefited from the food basket project, solar electricity system projects, and mobile medical clinic. Al-Yousfi explained that these projects have contributed to alleviating the suffering of thousands of families affected by the floods and rains that swept through many Yemeni regions in recent weeks. He expressed his thanks and gratitude to Kuwait, its Amir, government, and people, and its charitable, relief, and development institutions for their continuous support of the Yemeni people. — KUNA



KRCS assists flood victims

Kuwaiti-Turkish humanitarian aid ship heads to Sudan



ANKARA: A ship loaded with 2,500 tons of Kuwaiti and Turkish humanitarian aid for affected Sudanese people sails from Turkish Mersin Port.



Kuwait Red Crescent Society distributes humanitarian aid to flood victims in the Al-Ubaidiya area.

PORT SUDAN: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) said Sunday it has distributed humanitarian aid to flood victims in the Al-Ubaidiya area of River Nile State, northern Sudan. Head of the KRCS team Abdulrahman Al-Saleh told KUNA that the team directly distributed relief and food aid to dozens of affected families in the Al-Ubaidiya area, which witnessed a natural disaster due to heavy rains and floods that hit River Nile State, about 600 kilometers from Port Sudan.

He explained that the aid was transported via the Kuwaiti Air Bridge for humanitarian aid to the people of Sudan. He also pointed out that the team is currently assessing the situation to determine basic

needs in the next stage. Al-Saleh praised the efforts of all officials and international organizations that enabled the field team to reach the affected areas, expressing his thanks for the cooperation of the Sudanese Red Crescent Society and the extensive follow-up by the Ambassador of Kuwait to Sudan, Dr. Fahad Al-Dhafiri. He stressed that the Kuwait Red Crescent Society will continue to provide support and assistance to the Sudanese people.

Humanitarian aid ship

Meanwhile, a ship loaded with 2,500 tons of Kuwaiti and Turkish humanitarian aid for affected Sudanese people has set sail from Turkish

Mersin Port, the Kuwait Society for Relief (KSR) said. Speaking to KUNA in a statement, Director General of KSR Abdulaziz Al-Obaid said this comes within the framework of Kuwait's government support to the Sudanese people who are affected by the current conflict that has been engulfing the country for more than 18 months. The shipment includes 150 containers of varied relief items like food and sheltering stuff, among others. Meanwhile, KSR deputy director general Omar Al-Thuwaini said the freight, which will reach Port Sudan within a week, would be unloaded by the KSR and delivered to the Sudan Humanitarian Aid Commission. — KUNA

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Workshop sheds
light on Alzheimer's

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health, represented by the Department of Health Services for the Elderly, held a two-day awareness workshop on Saturday on the occasion of World Alzheimer's Day. Head of the Department of Health Services for the Elderly, Dr Ibrahim Al-Hammadi, said in a speech during the workshop that global care centers allocate September of each year to raise awareness about Alzheimer's disease, which is considered one of the types of dementia, with the aim of shedding light on ways to alleviate its symptoms and methods of prevention and care.

Dr Al-Hammadi pointed to the increasing prevalence of Alzheimer's disease in the world today in light of the increas-

ing number of elderly people and the longevity of people. He explained that the Department of Health Services for the Elderly at the Ministry of Health, which was launched in 2014, seeks to create an integrated system to deal with people with dementia and their caregivers, indicating that the department is working to train doctors and healthcare providers who constituted the majority of the workshop attendees.

The workshop began with a speech by the Head of the Geriatric Diseases Unit at the Ministry of Health, Dr Ali Al-Qattan, who discussed the latest medical and scientific developments on Alzheimer's disease, from initial symptoms and the different types of medications, in addition to models for dealing with patients on a daily basis. Dr. Al-Qattan said that vascular dementia is the most widespread in Kuwait due to the prevalence of diabetes, heart disease, and blood pressure in general. The workshop was attended by many departments and administrations of the Ministry of Health. — KUNA



Participants attend the Alzheimer's disease awareness workshop. — KUNA photos





Dozens killed in Mexico as cartel rivals fight for power

China 'testing us', Biden tells Quad allies in hot mic moment

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GALLE: People leave after casting their ballots at a polling station during voting in Sri Lanka's presidential election in Galle on September 21, 2024. — AFP photos

Sri Lanka's new leader vows to 'rewrite history'

Marxist-leaning Dissanayake to reduce income taxes but commit to IMF deal

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka's leftist president-elect on Sunday invited his compatriots to help him "rewrite" history in the cash-strapped island nation after winning a vote colored by discontent over an unprecedented financial crisis. Anura Kumara Dis-sanayaka, the 55-year-old leader of the People's Liberation Front, was declared the winner of the weekend's poll with nearly 1.3 million more votes than his nearest rival.

The once-fringe leader, whose party won less than four percent of the vote in parliamentary elections four years ago, saw a surge of support as the economic meltdown forced widespread hardships upon Sri Lankans. Dissanayaka, who does not possess political lineage like some of his rivals in the presidential election, led from start to finish during the counting of votes, knocking out incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe and opposition leader Sajith Premadasa.

"The dream we have nurtured for centuries is finally coming true," he said in a statement shortly after the announcement. "This victory belongs to all of us," he added. "Millions of eyes filled with hope and expectation push us forward, and together, we stand ready to rewrite Sri Lankan history."

Outgoing President Wickremesinghe — who took office at the peak of the 2022 economic collapse and imposed tough austerity policies per the terms of an IMF bailout — was a distant third in the contest with 17 percent of the vote. "History will judge my efforts,

but I can confidently say that I did my best to stabilize the country during one of its darkest periods," he said in a statement.

He congratulated Dissanayaka on the win and said he was "confident" the politician would "steer Sri Lanka on a path of continued growth and stability". "Mr President, here I handover to you with much love, the dear child called Sri Lanka, whom we both love very dearly," Wickremesinghe, 75, said in a statement. Dissanayaka will be sworn in on Monday morning at the colonial-era President Secretariat in Colombo, election commission officials said.

IMF deal

Economic issues dominated the eight-week campaign, with widespread public anger over the belt-tightening measures imposed by Wickremesinghe since the peak of the island nation's bruising financial crisis. Dissanayaka would "not tear up" the IMF deal but would seek to modify it, a party politburo member told AFP. "It is a binding document, but there is a provision to renegotiate," said Bimal Ratnayake. He said Dissanayaka had vowed to reduce income taxes that were doubled by Wickremesinghe and slash sales taxes on food and medicines. "We think we can get those reductions into the program and continue with the four-year bailout program," he said.

Dissanayaka's once-marginal Marxist party led two failed uprisings in the 1970s and 1980s that left



Sri Lanka's president-elect Anura Kumara Dis-sanayaka.

more than 80,000 people dead. But Sri Lanka's crisis has proven an opportunity for Dissanayaka, whose popularity rocketed on his pledge to change the island's "corrupt" political culture. Around 76 percent of Sri Lanka's 17.1 million eligible voters cast ballots in Saturday's poll.

Dissanayaka's party sought to reassure India that any administration he led would not be caught up in geopolitical rivalry between its northern neighbor and China, the country's largest lender. New Delhi has expressed concerns over what it sees as Beijing's

growing influence in Sri Lanka, which sits on vital shipping lanes criss-crossing the Indian Ocean. "Sri Lankan territory will not be used against any other nation," Ratnayake told AFP. "We are fully aware of the geopolitical situation in our region, but we will not participate."

Austerity rejected

Wickremesinghe sought re-election to continue the austerity policies that stabilized the economy and ended months of food, fuel and medicine shortages during Sri Lanka's economic meltdown. His two years in office restored calm to the streets after civil unrest spurred by the downturn saw thousands storm the compound of his predecessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who then fled the country. But Wickremesinghe's tax hikes and other measures imposed under the \$2.9 billion IMF rescue package he secured last year left millions struggling to make ends meet. Official data showed that Sri Lanka's poverty rate doubled to 25 percent between 2021 and 2022, adding more than 2.5 million people to those already living on less than \$3.65 a day. Thousands of police were deployed to keep watch over voting on Saturday. A temporary curfew was imposed after polls closed, despite police reporting that there had been no violence during or after balloting. No victory rallies or celebrations are permitted until a week after the final results are declared. — Agencies

UN adopts pact to tackle volatile future for mankind

UNITED NATIONS: UN members adopted a blueprint for the future Sunday to tackle the myriad wars, environmental threats and technological challenges facing humanity that was hailed by the organization as "groundbreaking" but panned by critics as unambitious. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who championed the "Pact for The Future" and its components, billed them as "landmark agreements — a step-change towards more effective, inclusive, networked multilateralism."

As an opener for the annual high-level week of the UN General Assembly, which begins Tuesday, dozens of heads of state and government gathered for the adoption, which faced last-minute opposition from Russia and its allies. Leaders pledged to bolster the multilateral system to "keep pace with a changing world" and to "protect the needs and interests of current and future generations" facing "persistent crisis." "We believe there is a path to a brighter future for all of humanity," the document says. The pact outlines 56 "actions," including commitments to multilateralism, upholding the UN Charter and peacekeeping.



NEW YORK: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres speaks during "Summit of the Future" on September 22, 2024. — AFP

Russian objections

It also calls for reforms to international financial institutions and the UN Security Council, along with renewed efforts to combat climate change, promote disarmament, and guide the development of artificial intelligence. The adoption of the text faced a brief delay when Russia's deputy minister of foreign affairs, Sergey Vershinin, introduced an amendment emphasizing the "principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states" and urging the UN to avoid duplicating efforts.

Russia's objections were backed by allies Belarus, North Korea, Iran, Nicaragua and Syria, but its amendment was overwhelmingly dismissed in a motion to take no action. "It

was somewhat irritating that, in the end, Russia once again tried to stop the whole process and did not want to go down the path that the whole world had taken," said German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, co-sponsor of the text, after the adoption.

Passage of the text was never a guarantee, and sources said Guterres had prepared three separate versions of his speech for the potential outcomes of the vote. During the negotiations phase, the UN Secretary-General had urged nations to show "vision" and "courage," calling for "maximum ambition" to strengthen international institutions that struggle to respond effectively to today's threats. But while there are some "good ideas," the text "is not the sort of revolutionary document reforming the whole of multilateralism that Antonio Guterres had originally called for," Richard Gowan of the International Crisis Group told AFP. "Ideally, you would hope for new ideas," said one diplomat.

The fight against global warming was one of the sticking points in the negotiations, with references to the "transition" away from fossil fuels having disappeared from the draft text weeks ago, before being re-inserted. "The real test will be the delivery of these" goals, said environmental campaign group 350.org. Despite criticism of the pact, it is still "an opportunity to affirm our collective commitment to multilateralism, even in the difficult current geopolitical context," one diplomat said, emphasizing the need to rebuild trust between the Global North and South. — AFP

An Invitation To The Creditors of Aman Takaful Insurance Co.

K.S.C. (Closed)

To Attend The Creditors Committee Formation Meeting

We invite all creditors whose debts are include in the final debt list to attend the creditors meeting on Thursday corresponding 26/09/2024, to discuss the following agenda.

- Ratification of the formation of the creditors committee.
- Selection of the chairman of the creditors committee.
- Setting an appointment to invite creditors to vote on the restructuring plan at the following address :

City Tower Hotel-Sharq Block 4- Street 142 - Building 20 First Floor.

Note:

- The hall will be open for attendance registration from 10:00 am to 11:00 am

For inquiries :

Phone 69994837 - WhatsApp 69994837

International

China 'testing us', Biden tells Quad allies in hot mic moment

Modi pledges Quad 'here to stay' as questions swarm over alliance's future after US election

WILMINGTON, US: US President Joe Biden was caught on a hot mic Saturday telling the leaders of Australia, India and Japan that an aggressive China is "testing us," in remarks that risked undercutting a summit declaration that carefully avoided mentioning Beijing by name. The comments came as Biden opened a farewell summit in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. "China continues to behave aggressively, testing us all across the region," Biden was heard in what were supposed to be behind-closed-doors remarks to the so-called "Quad."

Biden said that while Chinese President Xi Jinping was focusing on "domestic economic challenges" he was also "looking to buy himself some diplomatic space, in my view, to aggressively pursue China's interest." But he insisted that recent "intense efforts" by Washington to reduce tensions, including a call with Xi in April, were helping to prevent conflict. The hot mic blunder risked undermining careful diplomatic efforts by all four countries during the summit to insist that their grouping is about more than just providing a counterweight to China.

'Seriously concerned'

In their joint statement after the summit, the four leaders made no direct mention of China, even as they expressed concern over tensions on its borders. "We are seriously concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas," their declaration said. The leaders condemned "coercive and intimidating maneuvers" in the South China Sea — where China has been at odds with the Philippines and other nations over its maritime claims — but without saying whose maneuvers.

Disputed islands in the East China Sea have

meanwhile long been a source of tensions between Japan and China. Instead, the leaders used veiled statements, as they have on previous occasions, about keeping the region "free and open" and talking about geopolitical "challenges." The other shadow hanging over the summit was November's US presidential election, with the isolationist former president Donald Trump in a tight race against Biden's political heir Kamala Harris.

Biden insisted that the group would survive whatever the political situation. "While challenges will come, the world will change because the Quad is here to stay," Biden told the leaders in his public remarks before journalists were ushered out. Asked by reporters if the Quad would make it past the November 5 election, Biden replied: "Way beyond November. Way beyond November."

'Here to stay'

India's Modi made a similar pledge — in a commitment that will be welcomed by Washington, Canberra and Tokyo as they court the historically non-aligned New Delhi. "Our message is, the Quad is here to stay," said Modi, who is due to host next year's Quad summit in India. Biden, who bowed out of the US presidential election in July after concerns about his age, filled his farewell summit with personal touches.

The four-way summit took place at his former high school in Wilmington and he earlier opened up his home in the city for private, one-on-one talks with each of the leaders. "I am really pleased that you were able to be in my home and see where I grew up," he said. The leaders also announced investment into fighting cervical cancer for Biden's "Cancer Moonshot" initiative — again a deeply personal project as his eldest son Beau died of brain cancer.



WILMINGTON: (From left) Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida pose for a Quadrilateral Summit family photo on September 21, 2024. — AFP

The media were given no access to the private meetings at Biden's home. Biden posted pictures on social media of him with Albanese and then with Kishida in a wood-paneled drawing room in his house and showing them the view of a lake from a veranda. The White House said the summit

reflected the way Biden prioritized international alliances. There are growing questions about what would happen if Trump — who has threatened to pull the United States out of groups like NATO while praising the leaders of Russia and North Korea — returns to the Oval Office. — AFP

Americans head to polls after some states open early voting

ARLINGTON, US: With more than a month to go before the November 5 presidential election, some Americans are already lining up to cast their ballots in this tightly contested race. Early in-person voting kicked in the US states of Virginia, South Dakota and Minnesota as voters pick between Vice President Kamala Harris and former president Donald Trump. "You just feel that we're part of the process," said 56-year-old Tom Kilkenny, who came to a polling station in Arlington, Virginia, where people were lining up before it even opened early in the morning.

His wife Michelle, 55, said she was happy to set a good example for her friends and neighbors by voting early. "When you ... speak with them, I can myself say 'I voted already' and then start spreading the word," said Michelle Kilkenny, whose blue T-shirt was covered in Democratic Party pins.

Each of the country's 50 states has its own voting procedures: early voting by mail or in person, election day voting or a combination of the three. For some Americans casting their ballot as soon as it becomes possible is a family tradition. Nick Vucic and his wife Becca brought their three daughters to the polling station in Arlington. "We want them to be engaged as soon as possible," said Vucic, 38.

In Arlington, just across the Potomac River from the US capital, the city center was dotted with Harris and Trump signs and posters. Activists set up information booths, while voters, mostly Democrats, chatted with one another. Be-



ARLINGTON: Nick Vucic gets an "I Voted" sticker from his daughter Abigail, 7, after he casts his early vote at a polling station in the Elena Bozeman Government Center in Arlington, Virginia, on September 20, 2024. — AFP

sides electing their next president, voters are also casting ballots in local and state-wide elections.

Following a rollercoaster election campaign — which saw President Joe Biden drop out of the race to pass the torch to Harris, two apparent attempts on Trump's life, and explosive televised debates — the stakes could not be higher. "I can't believe we can pick Donald Trump, when I think about it, I become very worried," said Ann Spiker, 71. "That's why we're out and doing what we can." But an hour west of Washington in the Virginia city of Fairfax, some voters have a different worldview.

Arthur Stewart, a 58-year-old heating and air conditioning technician, said he cast his ballot to return Trump to the White House. "He already has a record with the economy when he was here before, and I believe he's going to continue that," said Stewart, who has a shaved head and a soft smile. "One of the other issues is the border, security of the border. — AFP

Kuwait vows UN, Palestine support...

Continued from Page 1

The two leaders discussed the strong Kuwait-UN partnership and exchanged views over the Middle East, Sudan, peace and security in the Gulf region.

HH Sheikh Sabah also met Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at his residence in New York. HH the Crown Prince relayed the greetings of HH the Amir to President Abbas. He asserted Kuwait's unwavering solidarity and support to the Palestinian people in their quest to attain their legitimate rights, including the establishment of an independent state.

HH the Crown Prince recalled the United Nations General Assembly's resolution in its emergency 10th special session, which had garnered a sweeping majority and had relied on the International Court of Justice's ruling regarding the Zionist occupation's practices in occupied Palestinian lands and their illegal settlements. The two leaders deliberated the sturdy Kuwaiti-Pales-

tinian relations and modes of developing them to serve both nations and boost joint Arab work.

UN members adopted a blueprint for the future Sunday to tackle the myriad wars, environmental threats and technological challenges facing humanity that was hailed by the organization as "groundbreaking". Guterres, who championed the "Pact for the Future" and its components, billed them as "landmark agreements — a step-change towards more effective, inclusive, networked multilateralism". HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah also addressed the summit.

Leaders pledged to bolster the multilateral system to "keep pace with a changing world" and to "protect the needs and interests of current and future generations" facing "persistent crisis". "We believe there is a path to a brighter future for all of humanity," the document says. The pact outlines 56 "actions," including commitments to multilateralism, upholding the UN Charter and peacekeeping.

It also calls for reforms to international financial institutions and the UN Security Council, along with renewed efforts to combat climate change, promote disarmament, and guide the development of artificial intelligence. — Agencies

Kiryat Bialik on the edge of the Zionist entity's largest city in the north, Haifa, leaving a building in flames, another pockmarked with shrapnel and vehicles incinerated. "This is not pleasant. This is war," said one resident, Sharon Hacmishvili.

Hamas in a statement on Sunday hailed Hezbollah for its "resilience and bravery" in attacking the Zionist entity. The Zionist entity has signaled its intention to shift focus to Iran-backed Hezbollah after nearly a year of cross-border fire that began in October in what Hezbollah calls support for Hamas fighting the Zionist entity.

Friday's Zionist air strike in a densely populated Hezbollah stronghold in southern Beirut killed the head of Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force, Ibrahim Aqil. The Lebanese health ministry said the strike killed 45 people. It came after a series of coordinated communication device blasts on Tuesday and Wednesday that killed 39 people and wounded almost 3,000, and which have been blamed on the Zionist entity. — Agencies

Trump refuses Harris call for October debate

WILMINGTON: Donald Trump on Saturday rejected a second debate against Kamala Harris before the November 5 election, saying it was "too late" with early voting already underway in some states. Earlier in the day, Harris's campaign said she had accepted an invitation from broadcaster CNN to participate in a debate on October 23. It would have been the candidates' second debate, after a September 10 encounter that most pundits said she had won. "The American people deserve another opportunity to see Vice President Kamala Harris and Donald Trump debate before they cast their ballots," her campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon said in a statement. "I hope (Trump) will join me," Harris posted on X.

Trump claimed during a campaign rally in the battleground state of North Carolina that he would like to debate — calling it "good entertainment value"—but the start of early voting in some states had taken the air out of the idea.

Iran blast kills more than 50...

Continued from Page 1

of the explosion, said Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni, who was headed to Tabas.

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian, in remarks carried state TV before departing for the UN General Assembly in New York, offered his condolences to the families of the victims and ordered a probe into the deadly incident. "Unfortunately, we learned that an accident occurred in one of the coal mines in Tabas and a number of our compatriots lost their lives. I offer my condolences to their respected families," Pezeshkian said. His first vice president, Mohammad Reza Aref, spoke with cabinet members to ensure "emergency follow-up" and support for the victims and their families, IRNA said.

The authorities have announced three days of public mourning in the eastern province after the deadly blast, according to local media. Iran's Red Crescent said search and rescue operations were

underway in the mine, where some workers remained trapped. According to IRNA, they were about 250 m below the surface, cut off from rescuers by chambers that had filled up with concentrated methane gas.

"Gas accumulation in the mine" has made the search operations difficult, local prosecutor Ali Nesaei was quoted by IRNA as saying. "Currently, the priority is to provide aid to the injured and pull people from under the rubble," Nesaei said. He added that "the negligence and fault of the relevant agents will be dealt with" later on.

Last year, an explosion at a coal mine in the northern city of Damghan killed six people, also likely the result of methane leak according to local media. In May 2021, two miners died in a collapse at the same site, local media reported at the time. A blast in 2017 killed 43 miners in Azad Shahr city in northern Iran, triggering anger toward Iranian authorities.

Mineral-rich Iran has around 1.5 billion tons of proven coal reserves, according to state media. The Tabas mine covers an area of more than 30,000 sq km and holds mass reserves of coking and thermal coal, according to IRNA. It is "considered the richest and largest coal area in Iran," IRNA said. — AFP

Zionists raid, shut down Al Jazeera...

Continued from Page 1

"The channel's offices have been sealed and its equipment has been confiscated," a military statement said. Al Jazeera called the Zionist raid "a criminal act" and an attack on press freedom.

In a conversation during the raid broadcast live on the network, a Zionist soldier told Al Jazeera's West Bank bureau chief Walid Al-Omari there was a court ruling to close down the office for 45 days. "I ask you to take all the cameras and leave the office at this moment," the soldier is seen as saying in the footage. "Targeting journalists this way always aims to erase the truth and prevent people from hearing the truth," Omari said.

The Ramallah-based Palestinian foreign ministry condemned the Zionist operation as "a flagrant violation" of press freedom. Shuttering the Al Jazeera office "confirms the (Zionist) occupation's efforts to disrupt the work of the media in conveying the occupation's violations against the Palestinian people," said Mohammed Abu al-Rub, director of the government media office for the Palestinian Authority which has partial administrative control in the West Bank.

The Foreign Press Association in the Zionist entity and the Palestinian Territories said it was "deeply troubled by this escalation" and called on the Zionist entity to "reconsider" the move. "Restricting for-

eign reporters and closing news channels signals a shift away from democratic values," the association's board said in a statement. In April, the Zionist parliament passed a law allowing the banning of foreign media broadcasts deemed harmful to state security.

Based on this law, the Zionist government on May 5 approved the decision to ban Al Jazeera from broadcasting from the Zionist entity and close its offices for an initial 45-day period, which was extended for a fourth time by a Tel Aviv court last week. The network condemned that decision as "criminal", saying it "violates the human right to access information".

The Zionist government last week announced it was revoking the press credentials of Al Jazeera journalists in the country. The shutdown had not affected broadcasts from the network's West Bank office, from which Al Jazeera was still covering the Gaza war. Al Jazeera correspondent Nida Ibrahim said the closure of the network's West Bank office "comes as no surprise" after the earlier ban on reporting from inside the Zionist entity. "We've heard (Zionist) officials threatening to close down the bureau," she said on the network.

The media office of the Hamas-run government in Gaza condemned Sunday's raid, saying in a statement it was a "resounding scandal and a blatant violation of press freedom". Qatar, which partly funds Al Jazeera, also served as a base for Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh. He was killed in July during a strike in Tehran which Iran and Hamas blamed on the Zionist entity. — Agencies

Calls to step back from brink as...

Continued from Page 1

Sunday military escalation is not in the Zionist entity's "best interest". White House National Security spokesman John Kirby said "we still believe that there can be time and space for a diplomatic solution". UN chief Antonio Guterres warned of the risk of Lebanon becoming "another Gaza". Speaking ahead of the annual UN General Assembly in New York, he nonetheless added it was "clear that both sides are not interested in a ceasefire" in the Gaza war.

British Foreign Secretary David Lammy called for an "immediate ceasefire" after a "worrying escalation", and EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell echoed the ceasefire call, saying Europe was "extremely concerned". Hezbollah rocket fire reached

International

Dozens killed in Mexico as cartel rivals fight for power

Government deploys 600 soldiers to quell violence which killed 70 people in 2 weeks

CULIACÁN, Mexico: Mexican media reported 10 new deaths on Saturday in the northwestern state of Sinaloa, where rival cartel factions have been in open conflict with each other and authorities in recent days. This brings the total number of people dead or missing to more than 100, with gruesome violence showing no signs of abating.

The conflict between the two most powerful factions of the Sinaloa Cartel, a drug gang, was triggered in July, when legendary trafficker and leader of one of those groupings, Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, was arrested in the United States. Zambada, 74, alleges that a senior member of the Los Chapitos, another faction of the cartel, kidnapped him and then flew him to the United States against his will.

Since fighting broke out on Sept 9, shootouts have disrupted daily life in the capital, Culiacán, where schools have had to close on some days while restaurants and shops shuttered early. Sinaloa governor Rubén Rocha Moya on Friday said more than 40 people have been arrested in recent days, while more than 5,000 food packages have been handed out across Sinaloa.

Around 70 people have been killed in the state since September 9, mostly in the capital city Culiacán, AFP reports based on official and press tallies. According to Reuters, 51 others are missing. The federal government sent 600 soldiers on Saturday to reinforce security in Sinaloa.

Three incidents occurred on Saturday in the central Tres Rios area of Culiacán. The first was a shootout between police and alleged hitmen, after

which unknown individuals blockaded a road with cars and motorcycles about 200 meters (650 feet) from the prosecutor's office.

Separately, security agents were attacked by gunmen who then fled into an apartment building. An ensuing shootout left three alleged criminals dead, one arrested and two soldiers injured, Governor Ruben Rocha Moya wrote on X. "The security forces managed to evacuate six adults and a minor from the property where the aggressors were taking refuge," said Rocha, who traveled on Saturday to Mexico City to meet with president-elect Claudia Sheinbaum.

Local media also reported seven other deaths. The bodies of five people were left in the street, half-naked and wearing hats, in what is presumed to be a message of intimidation between the warring factions. Authorities have yet to comment on the deaths.

The wave of violence is believed to pit gang members loyal to El Chapo and his sons against others aligned with Zambada. He pleaded not guilty to a raft of charges during a recent court appearance in New York.

President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who leaves office at the end of the month, has placed partial blame on the United States, saying it unilaterally planned Zambada's capture. US officials have privately confirmed that they held talks with Guzman but US Ambassador to Mexico, Ken Salazar, last month said that American officials were surprised to discover Zambada on US soil. Salazar added that no U.S. resources or personnel were involved in the July 25 kidnapping of Zambada. — Agencies



CULIACÁN: Police officers enter on a property during an operation in Culiacán, Sinaloa State, Mexico, on September 21, 2024. — AFP

UK's Starmer vows no more austerity but hints at further cuts

LIVERPOOL: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer promised to protect public services and ruled out austerity measures as his Labour party's annual conference kicked off on Sunday, its first in 15 years as a governing party. The four-day gathering in Liverpool, northwest England, comes almost three months after Labour secured a runaway general election victory over the Conservatives. Under pressure on several fronts, the party will have to find a balance between celebrating Labour's long-awaited victory, defending its record, and not letting up on reminders of "difficult decisions" to come.

After months of gloom about Britain's economy, Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner struck a more optimistic note in an opening speech on Sunday, standing in front of a red background emblazoned with the slogan "change begins". Rayner, who is also in charge of housing and communities, promised to "fix the foundations and put Britain back on the path to growth", while Foreign Secretary David Lammy made a rousing speech with chants of "Britain is back".

Ahead of the conference, Starmer told the Observer newspaper that his government had in 11 weeks done "far more than the last government did probably in the last 11 years". He cited ambitious homebuilding targets, the setting up of a publicly owned green energy investment body and the recruitment of police officers and teachers. However, an Opinion poll for the Observer ahead of the conference showed that Starmer's approval rating had suffered a huge drop since July, with only 24 percent approving of the job he was doing.

'Changed Britain'

Despite laying the groundwork for likely funding cuts and tax rises in the budget due at the end of October, Starmer told the Sunday Mirror he would not go "down the road of austerity". He repeated his warning that he will do the "tough things first", but also told the Observer he would "make sure that our public services are functioning properly", and would shield working people from tax rises.

Rayner meanwhile in her speech announced a "historic" overhaul of workers' rights that will be put to parliament next month, including a ban on zero-hour contracts and a minimum wage raise. She also announced housing measures, weeks after a damning report on the deadly 2017 Grenfell tower blaze in London. They include bringing forward a plan to tackle unsafe cladding and ensuring affordable housing improvements.

Focusing on his mission to return Britain to the global stage in his speech, Lammy spoke about moves to "reset" London's relationship with Europe and repeated claims of the need to "stand up for international law". He also vowed to take action against the threats to Western democracy posed by Iran and Russia.

Spending a chunk of his speech speaking about conflict in the Middle East including the latest escalation of tensions between the Zionist entity and Lebanon, Lammy said that alongside his belief in the entity's right to be "safe and secure", he also believed in the "justness of the Palestinian cause".

Union pressure

The conference brings a much-needed morale boost after a week dominated by negative headlines for Starmer. He was reported to have received more than £100,000 (\$132,000) in declared gifts and hospitality since December 2019 — the most of any MP. While the gifts did not



LIVERPOOL: Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer smiles on stage on the first full day of the annual Labour Party conference. — AFP

breach parliamentary rules, the row broke as his government was pushing Britons to accept short-term "pain for long-term good" to help fill the £22-billion "black hole" in public finances that he says the Tories left behind.

Criticism by the media and opposition also followed an unpopular move by the government to means-test winter fuel payments that slashed benefits for 10 million pensioners. The fallout from the cuts has also increased pressure on Labour from unions. Unite trade union secretary general Sharon Graham said bringing about a turnaround on the policy was a "priority". "It's a cruel policy. I'd like him to say that he's made a misstep and to reverse that policy," Graham told Sky News on Sunday. Starmer hinted at further possible cuts, however. "It's going to be tough," he told the Observer, referring to the budget due at the end of October. The Conservatives will hold their conference next week amid divisive battles over leadership and the direction of the party. — AFP

'Barely anyone left': Sudan's El-Fasher ravaged by fighting

PORT SUDAN: Civilians combed through the wreckage of their homes Sunday in the Sudanese city of El-Fasher, besieged for months by paramilitaries who have now launched a "full-scale assault", according to the United Nations. As the world body's high-level General Assembly meeting prepares this week to spotlight Sudan's 17-month war — which has claimed tens of thousands of lives and caused the world's largest displacement crisis — world leaders have warned against cataclysmic violence in the city of two million.

US President Joe Biden has called on Sudan's rival generals to "pull back their forces, facilitate unhindered humanitarian access, and re-engage in negotiations to end this war". But on the ground, shells have once again torn through civilian homes, in the latest flare-up of the war between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces and the regular army which has raged since April 2023. "Most of our homes in the city's south have been completely destroyed," local resident Al-Tijani Othman told AFP by phone from his bombed-out neighborhood. "There's barely anyone left here," he said, after months of bombardment and starvation. On Saturday alone, health authorities managed to confirm 14 civilian deaths and 40 injuries, a medical source told AFP. "But that's nowhere near the real number of victims," the source warned, requesting anonymity for his protection. "People often have to bury their loved ones right then and there rather than brave the fighting on the road to the hospital," he continued.

Fleeing en masse

UN chief Antonio Guterres' spokesperson said Saturday the Secretary-General was "gravely alarmed by reports of a full-scale assault" by the RSF and called on its commander, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, "to act responsibly and immediately order a halt to the RSF attack". Since May, the RSF has laid siege to the North Darfur state capital of El-Fasher — the only major city in Sudan's vast western region of Darfur not under their control.

Even before their long-threatened multi-directional attack on the city, the violence had killed hundreds, according to medical charity Doctors Without Borders. It had also displaced hundreds of thousands and forced the nearby Zamzam displacement camp into all-out famine, the UN said.

El-Fasher has long been surrounded by multiple displacement camps — including Zamzam and Abu Shouk — which have swelled by hundreds of thousands since the war began. The Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab, which tracks the violence in Sudan using satellite imagery, reported on Friday civilians had been fleeing "en masse by foot on the road from El-Fasher to Zamzam," where famine was declared last month.

'Maelstrom of violence'

On Sunday, those unwilling or unable to leave the city — such as resident Mohamed Safieldin — were compelled to take advantage of what they feared would be a brief respite in the fighting, venturing out to feed their families. "But the food situation is difficult. We have to rely on community kitchens," he told AFP while waiting for a meal from one of hundreds of volunteer initiatives that have popped up across Sudan — considered in places like El-Fasher the last defense against mass starvation.

The UN's special adviser on the prevention of genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, said the "RSF's multi-pronged assault, launched from at least four directions", had "unleashed a maelstrom of violence that threatens to consume everything in its path". Eyewitnesses have reported bombardment by both the RSF and the army, both of whom have consistently been accused of war crimes including targeting civilians and the indiscriminate bombing of residential areas. — AFP

WWII failed parachute drop operation marked in solemn ceremony

OOSTERBEEK, Netherlands: Britain's Princess Anne and hundreds of children laid flowers Sunday in memory of those who died 80 years ago during one of World War II's most audacious airborne operations: a plan to seize Dutch bridges and forge a path into Nazi Germany. Several thousand spectators, military dignitaries and soldiers attended the solemn service to commemorate Operation Market Garden, the ill-fated effort to enter Germany through the Netherlands in a surprise advance to end the war in 1944.

A handful of WWII veterans also attended, their number rapidly dwindling as the last sentinels of the battle that was fought in and around the eastern Dutch city of Arnhem in mid to late September 1944. Among those looking on was 99-year-old Geoff Roberts, the only survivor of the Battle of Arnhem able to attend Sunday's ceremony, proudly wearing his medals and sitting in a wheelchair. John Dennett, 100, a D-Day navy veteran told AFP that Sunday's remembrance "is unique." "I've been coming here for the last 10 years to represent friends and family of people who are buried here and it gives them some satisfaction that somebody else is thinking about them (the fallen)." "This is the most unique ceremony in the world. I don't think there is anything else in the world like this," the wheel-chair bound Dennett said.

'Sacrifice'

Many wore maroon berets, the mark of parachute forces around the world, listening to the service held at the Oosterbeek war cemetery near Arnhem. "We are here to commemorate those who fought against evil and tyranny," British military chaplain Gavin Smith said. "We remember with gratitude the sacrifice that went on 80 years ago," he told onlookers, while Princess Anne conducted a reading from the Bible.

The British royal then laid the first wreath at a stone monument called the "Cross of Sacrifice" at



OOSTERBEEK, Netherlands: Britain's Princess Anne lays a wreath during the Airborne Memorial Service to mark the 80th anniversary of Operation Market Garden at the War Cemetery in Oosterbeek, on September 22, 2024. — AFP

the graveyard, where some 1,700 Allied soldiers who died in Market Garden were buried. Veteran Roberts was the last to lay a wreath to standing applause. A bugler played the Last Post and shortly afterwards a flight of three aircraft including a WWII Spitfire and Harvards passed overhead.

'Bridge too far'

Sunday's solemn service marked the final event in a week of commemorations. This included the re-burial on Wednesday of the remains of two Allied soldiers who died during the battle but whose remains were only recently identified. On Saturday, hundreds of paratroopers conducted jumps over the nearby Ginkelse Heath, the spot where some 2,000 paratroopers were dropped from planes as the operation started on September 17, 1944.

Thousands of British, US and Polish paratroopers were dropped above the Netherlands in the

largest airborne and glider operation in history, to occupy bridges and waterways from Belgium to the Dutch city of Arnhem and open the way for Allied tanks. But the operation instead turned into one of World War II's greatest Allied debacles.

The mostly British tank advance, driving up a single road towards the final bridge across the lower Rhine at Arnhem, failed to link up with the airborne assault troops attacking the bridge, who were forced to surrender. In total, the Allies suffered some 15,000 losses and around 6,600 other soldiers were captured. The Nazis then exacted cruel punishment on Dutch civilians, cutting off food supplies which sparked thousands of deaths by starvation. The battle was immortalized by the 1977 Hollywood war epic "A Bridge Too Far" directed by Richard Attenborough and starring Sean Connery, James Caan, Gene Hackman and Robert Redford. — AFP

Zain's efforts in data architecture recognized at Cloudera's annual Data Impact Award

Recognition reflects Zain's Data Office excellence in collaboration with ZainTECH

DUBAI/KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, has been named a Cloudera Data Impact Award winner in the category of "Modern Architectures" at the recent annual ceremony held in Dubai. The recognition reflects Zain's Data Office, in collaboration with ZainTECH, excellence in designing and implementing innovative data architectures that effectively support the full data lifecycle – from ingestion to analytics, empowering innovation and digital transformation.

The Cloudera Data Impact Award recognizes organizations that have harnessed data to drive remarkable innovation, impact, and transformation in their industries and in how they solve their most pressing data issues. Zain was selected by a panel of expert judges and scored highly on its achievements in leveraging data to drive significant business outcomes across its footprint.

A statement from Zain Group said, "This prestigious award validates Zain's data strategy focus on becoming a leader in the ICT industry by embracing a data-driven approach. This involves recognizing data as a key asset, adopting data management best practices to maximize its value, and fostering a culture of data literacy and analytical capability throughout our operations."

The statement added, "Data is the ultimate enabler for AI, turning potential into reality by empowering AI systems to learn, adapt, and drive innovation. Our data practices are helping business users within Zain access the right information at the right time, to make the right decisions."

Ahmad Shakora, Group Vice-President, Dubai at Cloudera said, "Zain's commitment to data-driven innovation demonstrates leadership and has had a transformative impact in the ICT arena. Through their visionary use of Cloudera's platform, Zain has achieved outstanding business outcomes that are shaping the future of the company." Through the partnership with Cloudera, Zain's Data Office in collaboration with ZainTECH, has been able to eliminate data silos and is taking a holistic approach to analysis across the organization. By standardizing a Data Management framework, facilitating data literacy initiatives, and enforcing data stewardship, Zain's Data Office team fosters a data culture throughout the company that effectively drives innovation, business efficiency and utilization of customer-centric services across Zain.

Key benefits of the Zain Data Office

1. Improved data governance and compliance: Data is managed in line with regulatory requirements and internal policies, thus reducing risks associated with data privacy, security breaches, and legal penalties.



Nadia Saif, Head of Data at Zain Group, receives the award from Cloudera senior executives.

- Data is the ultimate enabler for AI, turning potential into reality
- Zain's Data Office firmly establishing itself as an ICT leader by embedding world-class data governance practices and analytics to the heart of the business
- Driving innovation and helping business users make the right decisions

2. Enhanced data quality: Setting standards for data accuracy, consistency, and completeness to make more informed and strategic data-driven decisions to optimize network performance, understand customer behavior, and marketing strategies.

3. Efficient data utilization: A centralized data office enables cross-functional teams to access the right data efficiently, eliminates data silos and promotes collaboration between marketing, customer

service, and network operations departments.

4. Cost optimization: By analyzing usage patterns, this helps optimizing network investments and operational costs as well as identifying revenue leakage points and opportunities for cost reduction.

5. Innovation and competitive edge: Leveraging advanced analytics, AI, and machine learning, the data office can identify new business opportunities,

such as offering personalized customer services or predictive maintenance for network equipment.

6. Better customer experience: By analyzing customer data and feedback, helps tailor services to individual needs thus improving customer satisfaction and retention.

7. Scalability and future readiness: As telecoms increasingly move into areas like IoT, 5G, and digital services, having a data office ensures that data management practices are scalable and ready for the future.

8. Risk management: Identifying and mitigating risks through better data insights, whether it's financial risks, operational risks, or security threats.

9. Support for business agility: With centralized data governance and streamlined data pipelines, the data office enables faster access to real-time data supporting quick decision-making, to respond to market trends and customer demands more efficiently and stay ahead of competitors.

NBK Wealth Thought Leadership

Investing in real assets

KUWAIT: Real assets are physical/tangible assets with intrinsic value, independent of market conditions. They include properties, land, agriculture, natural resources, and infrastructure. Investors are drawn to real assets for diversification, protection against inflation, and income generation through sources like rental payments and capital appreciation. For example, real estate can provide rental income while appreciating in value. Additionally, commodities like gold can hedge against inflation. Overall, real assets are essential for a stable and diversified investment strategy, especially in uncertain economic conditions.

Types of real asset investments

Real assets investments can be classified into four main categories, each with its own unique sectors.

Investors can participate in both public and private markets to gain exposure to real assets. However, it is important first to understand the main factors influencing risk and expected returns for each type of investment and how they relate to an investor's time horizon, risk tolerance, availability of capital, and liquidity constraints. Depending on these factors, exposure to public markets, private markets, or a combination of both may then be suitable.

Public markets

Typically, investors with short-term horizons and needing immediate liquidity can take advantage of publicly traded equity in companies related to real estate, infrastructure or natural resources. This exposure can be accessed through sector-specific mutual funds, real estate investment trusts (REITs), or exchange-traded funds (ETFs) using active or passive approaches, respectively. While these strategies offer liquidity, they are also subject to volatility, similar to the overall equity market.

Private markets

For investors with substantial capital and a



long-term horizon, allocating capital to private investments in real assets can offer benefits. These investments often exhibit lower volatility and more accurately represent desired characteristics compared to public market counterparts. However, building and managing a private market portfolio requires significant research resources for due diligence and monitoring, and the elevated minimum commitment size may restrict the flexibility to create a diversified portfolio.

Income generation in real assets

Real assets like real estate and infrastructure are great options for investors looking for both income and capital appreciation. These assets generate income through rent payments and offer predictable and resilient cash flows. Real estate investors have earned a long-term yield premium of 3.7 percent compared to US government bonds, while infrastructure investors have earned a premium of 3.6

Table 1: Description of Real Asset Categories and Investments

Major Category	Real Asset Investments
Real Estate	Residential properties, Commercial properties, Industrial properties, Retail properties, Hotel properties, [...]
Infrastructure	Toll roads, Airports, Ports, Power plants, Telecommunication towers, [...]
Natural Resources	Agriculture land, Timberland, Water rights, Mineral rights, Oil and Gas fields, [...]
Commodities	Gold, Copper, Oil, Natural Gas, Agriculture products (e.g., cacao, wheat, corn), [...]

Source: NBKW MSR-CIO Office

percent over the past 15 years (measured against listed real estate and infrastructure).

• Infrastructure and real estate investments typically offer higher yields compared to US government bonds.

• As of mid-2022, the yield spreads for these investments narrowed or turned negative, indicating reduced attractiveness in a low-risk context.

• Despite this, other factors such as capital appreciation, diversification, and inflation protection make a strong case for investing in real assets.

• The historically high yield premiums of real assets suggest potential for strong income generation.

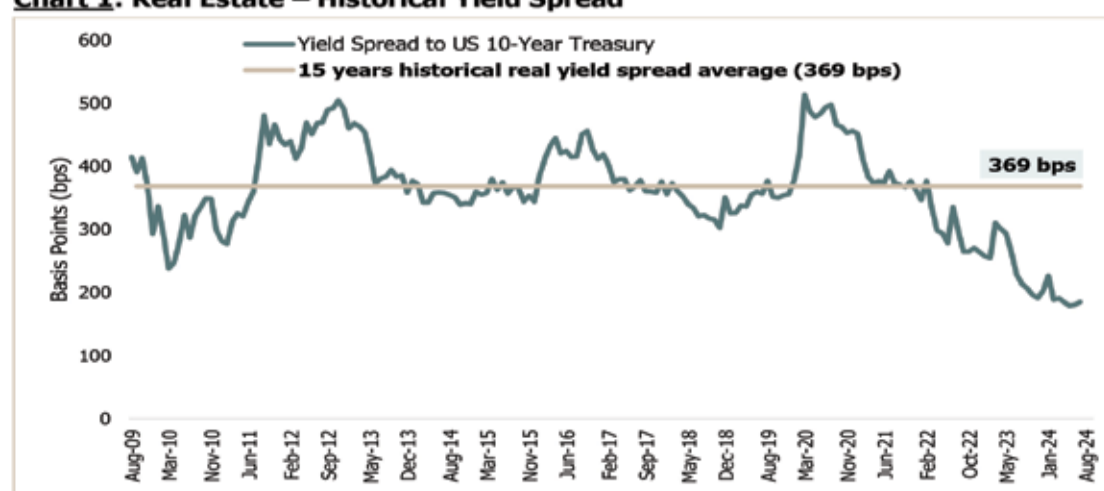
Performance of real assets in varying economic conditions

Real assets play a crucial role in investment strategies, especially during economic downturns and inflationary periods. They act as a strong defense against rising prices and can help retain or increase their value when equities and bonds are vulnerable to inflation. Real assets, such as real estate and commodities, derive their value from physical assets and serve as effective inflation hedges. They also provide further diversification in an investor's portfolio due to their lower correlation with traditional asset classes.

The benefits of real assets in a diversified portfolio

Introducing real assets to a traditional 60/40 portfolio (consisting of equities and bonds) can enhance portfolio diversification by providing both income generation and capital growth, eventually contributing to a more stable return expectation. The benefits of real assets in a mixed portfolio, inter alia, are derived in part from their historically low correlation to bonds. For example, natural resources exhibited over the past 20 years, a nearly uncorrelated relationship with bonds at 0.02, while infrastructure and real estate investments also demonstrated a low correlation of 0.30. However, all real assets displayed stronger correlations with equities over the same period. Despite their high correlations with equities, it is important to highlight that, real assets in general, enhance diversification in a traditional 60/40 portfolio and provide unique advantages not found in equities, which could offset their positive correlation with equities.

Chart 1: Real Estate – Historical Yield Spread



Source: Bloomberg data and NBKW MSR-CIO Office Analysis (DJ US Real Estate TR USD Index, US government 10-year bond real yields)

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

US Fed starts its rate cutting cycle

Steady inflation prompts BoE, BoJ to keep interest rates steady

KUWAIT: The Federal Reserve enacted its first interest rate cut since the early COVID-19 pandemic, reducing benchmark rates by 0.5 percentage points to a range of 4.75 percent- 5 percent. This decision, driven by softening inflation and labor market concerns, aligns with recent market expectations. The move is seen as a response to prevent a labor market slowdown and signals potential additional rate cuts through the end of 2025. The cut was the largest since 2008 (outside of COVID-related reductions), and Chair Jerome Powell emphasized the Fed's commitment to stabilizing inflation without significantly raising unemployment. Although the rate cut follows steady GDP growth and inflation above the Fed's 2 percent target, the central bank remains cautious, noting job gains have slowed, and unemployment has edged higher to 4.2 percent.

The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) vote was 11-1, with dissent from Governor Michelle Bowman, who favored a smaller 0.25 percentage point cut. Market reactions were volatile, with stocks initially rising before leveling off. Powell made it clear that the cut is not part of a series of large reductions.

Retail sales

US retail sales exceeded expectations in August, indicating that consumers are still spending despite the labor market slowdown, driven by rapid wealth gains and falling energy prices. Retail sales rose 0.1 percent in August compared to economists' forecast of a 0.2 percent decrease, while July sales were revised upward to a 1.1 percent increase from a previous reading of 1 percent. Excluding auto and gas, sales rose 0.2 percent in August, slightly below estimates, but the control group increased 0.3 percent, aligning with expectations.

The NY Empire State Manufacturing Index surged to 11.5 in September 2024, the highest since April 2022, up

Rates - 22nd Sep, 2024

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1161	1.1135	1.1181	1.1162	1.1080	1.1330	1.1200
GBP	1.3284	1.3265	1.3340	1.3321	1.3210	1.3530	1.3320
JPY	142.62	141.72	144.49	143.91	141.75	145.50	142.23
CHF	0.8476	0.8449	0.8517	0.8501	0.8400	0.8475	0.8418

from -4.7 in August and beating forecasts of -4.1. This marks the first growth in business activity in New York state in nearly a year, driven by higher new orders (9.4 vs -7.9) and shipments (17.9 vs 0.3). Delivery times and supply availability were stable, while inventories leveled off. However, the labor market remained weak, with employment contracting slightly and the workweek steady. Input and selling prices saw little change. Despite a dip in capital spending, firms were more optimistic about future conditions.

Canada inflation

The inflation rate in Canada slowed down to 2 percent on an annual basis, hitting the Bank of Canada's target, and bolstering expectations for aggressive rate cuts. The reading marked the slowest increase since February 2021. The deceleration was driven by a drop in energy and gas prices, while the main contributor to inflation remains housing costs. The print comes amid a time of slowing growth and a weakening labor market, with the unemployment rate rising to 6.6 percent in August. Bank of Canada govern-

ment Tiff Macklem stated that the central bank is open to steeper cuts if "growth does not materialize as expected."

Markets are pricing in 50 bps worth of cuts by year-end. The US dollar Index closed the week at 100.723.

The Bank of England (BoE) has kept interest rates at 5 percent following steady inflation in August but hinted at a potential rate cut in November. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted eight-to-one to maintain rates after a quarter-point cut last month. The BoE indicated it would adopt a gradual approach to easing monetary policy if economic conditions remain stable, though it remains cautious about reducing rates too quickly. Sterling briefly rose to its highest against the dollar since March 2022. BoE Governor Andrew Bailey noted that inflationary pressures were easing, and the economy was progressing as expected. The BoE's decision comes after the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank also cut rates. UK inflation held steady at 2.2 percent in August, down from a peak of over 11 percent in 2022 but slightly above the BoE's 2

percent target. Inflation is expected to rise to 2.5 percent by year-end. Despite the easing of underlying inflation, services price inflation remains a concern. The GBP/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.3321.

BoJ policy rate

The Bank of Japan (BOJ) kept its benchmark interest rate steady at around 0.25 percent, the highest since 2008, following a two-day meeting. This decision aligns with expectations, and economists anticipate another rate hike by year-end as the BOJ moves to normalize its monetary policy after years of ultra-low rates. While Japan's economy has recovered moderately, some weaknesses remain. The BOJ expects the economy to grow above its potential growth rate, driven by a cycle of income and spending, with core inflation forecasted to rise through fiscal year 2025. Despite global central banks easing policies, the BOJ remains focused on tightening, having raised rates to 0.25 percent in July after abandoning negative rates in March. Inflation continues to climb, providing room for further rate hikes. Japan's core consumer price index increased by 2.8 percent year-on-year, with inflation excluding fresh food and energy rising to 2.0 percent. The BOJ's next rate decision is expected in October. Analysts caution that rate hikes could slow growth or trigger a downturn. Japan's GDP growth for Q2 was revised down to an annualized 2.9 percent, below forecasts, indicating a weaker recovery than expected. The USD/JPY currency pair closed the week at 143.91.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30500.

Milei has plans to make Argentina an AI giant

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina's President Javier Milei has plans to turn his country, which has one of the lowest rates of artificial intelligence (AI) use on the continent, into a world leader in the field.

The South American country is uniquely placed to become a global AI hub, he argues, with abundant electricity capacity and a highly skilled workforce. "We have everything, everything, to become an AI powerhouse," Milei said recently. "We have the human resources. You have no idea

how many kids are coding here." The country also has the reliable energy required by data centers, the president argues. To turn his vision into reality, the self-described "anarcho-capitalist" is counting on deregulation to attract foreign capital. The country needs such investment; it has been battling bleak poverty levels and chronic inflation.

Milei, who has met with tech bosses like Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk during US visits, portrays Argentina to potential investors as "practically the last truly liberal country in the world," said Alexander Ditzend, president of Argentina's AI Society. In Milei's bid to attract foreign money, he managed to pass a law through parliament in June dubbed RIGL, or Promotional Regime for Large Investment—his first major legislative win since taking power.

The law offers tax, customs and exchange-control benefits over 30 years for investments exceeding \$200 million. But since taking office last December, Milei has also cut public funding for everything from soup kitchens to the arts as he seeks to slash Argentina's budget deficit.

"Argentina needs it (AI) if it wants to be more competitive and not be left behind," said Tomas Porchetto, an Argentine living in the US and founder of Constana, an AI-based platform for information technology teaching. The country has a long way to go. A study in July by Randsstad, a Netherlands-based human resources firm, found that barely 13 percent of Argentines use AI regularly in their work, half the Latin American average and lower than North America and Asia.

And a report by The Conference Board, a non-profit business think tank based in New York,

found last year that just over one in ten Argentine companies used AI in their operations—half the global average. While some fear it may be too late for Argentina to catch up, others worry it may go overboard in its embrace of AI technology.

Last month, the government in Buenos Aires announced it would develop an AI-based system intended to prevent crimes using predictions based on analysis of historical data. Rights group Amnesty International has warned of the risk of "algorithmic bias" leading to discrimination against certain groups of people or neighborhoods. Such a system could "increase inequality" in an already fractured society, and cause "self-censorship... by people who know, or have a well-founded suspicion of being under surveillance," the NGO's Argentina director Mariela Belski said. — AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2024

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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	35,609	7,790.34	0.5%	-0.4%	4.2%	552,163,263	176,809,648	31,886	17.3	1.4	82.0%
Main Market	7,796	6,148.29	-1.4%	1.3%	10.4%	906,334,637	127,855,235	41,813	11.9	0.9	18.0%
All Share	43,405	7,172.47	0.2%	-0.1%	5.2%	1,458,497,900	304,664,884	73,699	14.4	1.0	100%

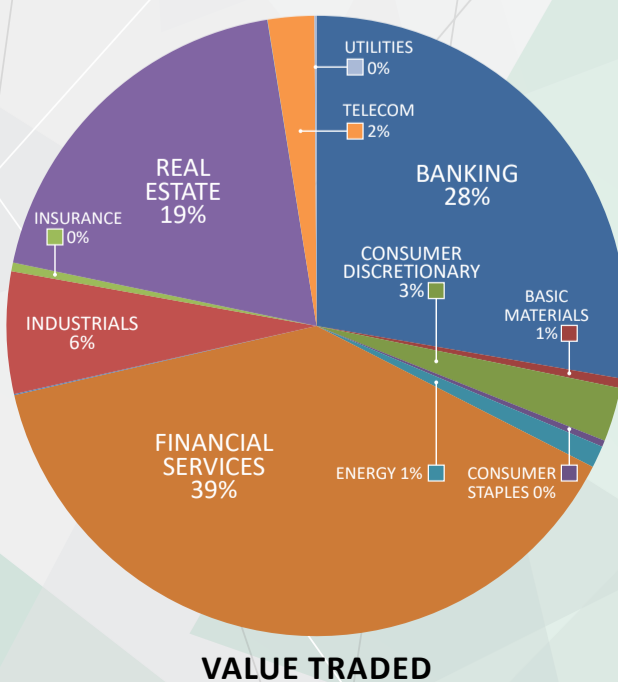
Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	26,523	1,771.63	0.8%	-0.4%	7.5%	174,048,496	84,459,108	11,167	18.4	1.4	61.11%
Basic Materials	459	813.39	0.8%	-0.4%	9.0%	2,450,430	1,512,122	676	9.1	1.9	1.06%
Consumer Discretionary	1,233	1,796.00	-0.8%	1.3%	12.0%	61,956,713	8,570,022	3,688	14.0	1.4	2.84%
Consumer Staples	301	991.51	0.1%	0.0%	50.6%	1,483,973	1,017,248	167	27.0	1.6	0.69%
Energy	226	1,111.75	-0.8%	1.2%	17.1%	37,213,262	3,487,475	2,258	10.4	0.8	0.52%
Financial Services	4,958	1,415.65	-2.0%	1.2%	16.8%	663,562,282	118,534,925	26,914	11.8	1.0	11.42%
Health Care	218	468.00	0.0%	0.0%	-2.9%	226,105	176,475,805	23	47.7	1.5	0.50%
Industrials	2,524	746.09	-1.1%	-1.9%	-17.8%	70,968,182	19,356,557	7,160	14.5	1.0	5.82%
Insurance	808	1,973.09	-5.9%	0.6%	-13.9%	11,879,331	1,375,972	1,219	8.7	1.1	1.86%
Real Estate	2,851	1,346.65	0.6%	0.2%	11.0%	417,128,852	58,424,689	18,078	15.2	0.8	6.57%
Technology	21	1,549.57	2.9%	-18.7%	167.9%	213,339	44,889.84	42	645.5	1.8	0.05%
Telecommunications	3,116	1,019.72	1.8%	0.6%	-7.7%	15,183,452	7,377,048	2,053	15.4	1.4	7.18%
Utilities	165	394.74	-0.7%	-2.0%	-13.3%	2,183,483	328,353	254	15.4	1.2	0.38%

Stock	Last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
MENA	200	35.14%	72,079,565	11,624,814,530	4,551
URC	53.8	13.26%	21,441,186	1,097,263	471
WARBACAP	205	10.22%	8,894,123	1,887,566	977
FTI	195	8.33%	4,108,228	815,860	727
KBT	72.1	7.13%	91,517,017	6,356,216	2,732

Stock	Last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
UNICAP	175	-28.57%	26,070,889	5,002,657	2,197
INOVEST	156	-13.81%	206,857,330	29,249,464	6,608
NCCI	110	-12.70%	36,747,759	4,161,562	931
JIYAD	19.6	-11.71%	37,800,811	747,436	1,091
KUWAITRE	361	-9.75%	4,231	1,546	9

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
INOVEST	156	-13.81%	206,857,330	29,249,464	6,608
KBT	72.1	7.13%	91,517,017	6,356,216	2,732
IFA	390	-3.47%	84,464,693	33,887,926	4,421
KRE	232	-2.52%	72,763,077	17,185,040	2,181
MENA	200	35.14%	72,079,565	11,624,815	4,551

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KFH	724	0.56%	61,955,266	44,737,945	4,655
IFA	390	-3.47%	84,464,693	33,887,926	4,421
INOVEST	156	-13.81%	206,857,330	29,249,464	6,608
KRE	232	-2.52%	72,763,077	17,185,040	2,181
ARZAN	196	-4.39%	68,817,067	14,097,532	1,466



Market Summary:

- The Main Market's liquidity has increased in the last couple of weeks, while the Premier Index is dropping.
- The Main Market is dominated by high intraday trading, while selling pressure in the Premier Market has exceeded buying pressure.
- Technically, the All Share Index closed at 7,172, with support levels at 7,162, 7,141, and 7,105, and resistance at 7,178. The Premier Index closed at 7,790, with support levels at 7,767, 7,737, and 7,716, and resistance at 7,811. The Main Index closed at 6,148, with support levels at 6,112, 6,083, and 6,058, and resistance at 6,153.

Business

Sri Lanka tea workers face low wages, broken promises and discrimination

Ceylon tea accounts for 11% of exports, earns \$1bn a year in foreign currency

RAGALA, Sri Lanka: It was an economic crisis that felled Sri Lanka's last elected president - contenders running for his job promise to turn the economy around and raise the standard of living on the South Asian island. That cannot come too soon for the more than 300,000 people who pick Ceylon tea, a crucial sector that accounts for 11 percent of Sri Lanka's exports and earns more than \$1 billion a year in vital foreign currency.

Yet tea pickers say they have long faced discrimination, low wages, poor conditions and repeated broken promises of a better future, despite being the backbone of the island's economy. "Every election, they make grand promises, but nothing ever changes. No matter who wins, the reality for us remains the same," said tea worker Irangani, who uses only one name. Her feelings reflect a wider sense of disillusionment among tea workers, who have seen little change in their conditions, despite frequent promises from politicians.

On Saturday, some 17 million Sri Lankans went to the polls in the nation's first electoral test since a debilitating financial crisis in 2022 unleashed mass protest and forced the then-president, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, to flee the country. Two years on, the economy remains the top issue for voters. Higher taxes, prolonged inflation and a stagnant job market have plunged a quarter of the population into poverty and pushed thousands to migrate. For those left behind struggling, candidates have promised economic recovery plans and pledged to curb inflation, show zero tolerance for corruption and stimulate job creation.

Huddled in a tiny house - little more than a shack - with cracked walls and a leaking roof, 49-year-old Irangani said she could barely provide for her three children by picking tea.

"Despite working from dawn to dusk, our salaries do not cover even our basic needs," she said, pointing to her dilapidated home in Ragala, a remote mountain village in central Sri Lanka. Like many tea

estate workers, Irangani's family lacks any domestic privacy, sanitation, and access to proper healthcare and education.

In May, the president promised of a significant wage hike for tea workers - a rise in daily wages from 1,000 Sri Lankan Rupees (\$3.29) to 1,700. But industry leaders pushed back. The Planters' Association of Ceylon (PA), which represents the interests of plantation companies and tea estate owners, said the increase could jeopardize Sri Lanka's competitive edge in the global tea market and threaten its dollar earnings. "A state-mandated 70 percent fixed wage increase could lead to financial ruin for many companies," said PA spokesperson Roshan Rajadurai.

The proposed hike was duly cancelled, leaving many workers feeling betrayed and anxious about their future. "For years, we have been promised a better future, but every time, we are let down," said Irangani.

Other tea workers are paid even less. Seventy-five-year-old K Mahalingam said the plantation where he works urged him to be paid by the weight of leaves he picked rather than hours worked. He said he earns around 12,000 rupees (\$39), much lower than the minimum wage of around 20,000, and is allowed to tend a parcel of land to grow food. "This way, we are turned into farmers, that too without any land ownership," Mahalingam said. "We are receiving about 40 percent less than the market price for the tea we produce." Estate workers, who are mostly of Tamil descent, say they have faced hardship since their ancestors were brought from India by British colonialists in the 19th century.

"The system has become a vicious cycle, not allowing these people to take the next step to start a better life," said Sugumaran Vijayakumar, an attorney advocating for plantation workers. "This is modern slavery." Yet the sector's own figures suggest it is thriving.

According to the latest statistics on the Sri Lanka



Two women pick tea leaves in a plantation in Sri Lanka.

Tea Board website, at the end of April 2023, tea auction sale income increased by 43 percent, reaching 104 billion rupees compared to 73 billion in 2022. Similarly, export revenue also saw a substantial rise, increasing by 58 percent to 140 billion rupees from 89 billion in the same period.

Samurdhi - the key state program set up to ease poverty - has faced criticism when it comes to the estate sector. A study from LIRNEasia - a regional think tank based in the capital Colombo - highlighted low awareness of the social safety net among tea estate communities, in part, it said, due to racial bi-

ases. The study found that many Tamil communities could not access the benefits as application forms were often only available in Sinhala, the language spoken by the majority population.

Helani Galpaya, CEO of LIRNEasia, emphasized the need for a comprehensive package of support for plantation workers. "Increased guaranteed wages that meet the condition of a living wage, additional incentives for productivity-based earnings, effective social safety nets and social insurance, and upskilling so workers can move to other forms of higher-paid employment are essential," she said. — Reuters

UK consumers take fright as new govt warns of pain: Survey

LONDON: Prime Minister Keir Starmer's warnings about the state of the British economy and the likely need for tax increases in next month's budget have caused consumer confidence to plunge this month, according to a survey published on Friday. The GfK Consumer Confidence Index dropped to a six-month low of -20 in September from August's -13, which was the joint-highest in nearly three years.

A Reuters poll of economists had pointed to another reading of -13. Instead the reading marked the biggest September drop since 1976. Starmer and finance minister Rachel Reeves were elected in July, vowing to rebuild the economy after inheriting what they said was the worst economic circumstances since the Second World War, prompting some business leaders to complain that the message of doom and gloom could hurt confidence and growth. Reeves has said she will strip a 200-pound (\$265) annual fuel subsidy from 10 million pensioners and warned taxes were likely to rise by more than she had judged necessary just weeks earlier, before the election.

Neil Bellamy, Consumer Insights Director at GfK, said households appeared to be responding to the messages by Starmer about the need for a "painful" budget due at the end of next month and the announcement of some early cost-cutting measures. Official data published on Friday also showed Britain's public debt had hit 100 percent of economic output last month, a level not hit on a sustained basis since the 1960s. "Following the withdrawal of the winter fuel payments, and clear warnings of further difficult decisions to come on tax, spending and welfare, consumers are nervously awaiting the Budget decisions on Oct 30," GfK's Bellamy said.

All five measures of confidence in the GfK survey - the longest-running measure of British consumer sentiment - fell this month with views on the economy over the coming year down by 12 points, GfK said. "Despite stable inflation and the prospect of further cuts in the base interest rate, this is not encouraging news for the UK's new government," Bellamy said.

The Bank of England kept interest rates on hold on Thursday after a rate cut in August, but Governor Andrew Bailey said he was optimistic that the central bank would lower rates further.

The GfK survey of 2,003 people took place between Aug 30 and Sept 13. Separately, official data published on Friday showed shoppers were in buoyant mood in August. Sales volumes jumped by 1.0 percent compared with July, more than double the 0.4 percent increase expected by most analysts in a Reuters poll. Sales in July rose by 0.7 percent, up from a previous estimate. — Reuters

Wall Street Week Ahead

Investor focus turns to data, election, earnings after Fed

NEW YORK: A roaring rally in US stocks will face a gauntlet of economic data, looming political uncertainty and a corporate earnings test in coming weeks as investors navigate one of the most volatile periods of the year for equity markets. The benchmark S&P 500 this week hit its first closing all-time high in two months after the Federal Reserve unveiled a hefty 50-basis point rate cut, kicking off the first US monetary easing cycle since 2020. The index is up 0.8 percent so far in September, historically the weakest month

KIB boosts banking culture at PIFSS

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the setup of a special booth at the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) with the aim of raising banking awareness and financial literacy among the institution's employees and visitors alike. This effort aligns with KIB's ongoing and dedicated initiatives to support the directives and recommendations of the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) financial awareness campaign, launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) in cooperation with local banks.

It also comes as part of KIB's commitment to its leading role in guiding customers, helping them make sound financial decisions, and protecting the security of their banking data. In this regard, Mariam Al-Nasser



Mariam Al-Nasser

er, Area Manager of Retail Banking at KIB said: "We at KIB are always keen on actively contributing to initiatives that promote financial awareness in the community. Being present at the Public Institution for Social Security is an extension of our ongoing efforts to educate the public on sound banking practices. We aim to create a community that is well-informed and capable of making secure and smart financial decisions." Al-Nasser added: "Setting up this special booth is part of our broader mission to ensure that our customers, and the public at large, are aware of how to protect their banking data, understand the importance of saving, and have the knowledge to utilize banking services effectively. The booth featured KIB representatives who were on-site to engage with the institution's visitors, answer their queries, and provide useful information on a variety of banking topics. The discussions focused on crucial subjects such as managing personal finances and protecting personal banking information against fraud and cyber threats. Additionally, they highlighted the role of banking institutions in financing, particularly Islamic financing.

Moreover, visitors were introduced to our diverse and innovative range of products and services, designed to enhance their experience amid the rapid advancements in the financial and banking sector." It is worth noting that KIB is committed to its leading and effective role in raising community awareness, which is considered an essential part of its comprehensive



KIB's Diraya booth at Public Institution for Social Security.

social responsibility strategy. The Bank constantly strives to launch initiatives that broadly enhance financial literacy and to participate in events that support the goals of the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, embodying its main slogan, "Bank for Life".

Boeing CEO says ending strike 'a top priority'

WASHINGTON: Ending a strike involving more than 30,000 of Boeing's Seattle-area workers is "a top priority" for the aviation giant, chief executive Kelly Ortberg said in a message to staff Friday.

His note comes as the strike - which has shuttered assembly plants for the 737 MAX and 777 - enters its second week. "Ending the strike is a top priority," said Ortberg. "During mediation with the union this week, we continued our good faith efforts to engage the union's bargaining committee in meaningful negotiations," he added.

"We remain very committed to reaching an agreement as soon as possible that recognizes the hard work of our employees and ends the work stoppage in the Pacific Northwest," Ortberg said.

But he noted the company was "disappointed the discussions didn't lead to more progress." Members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) District 751 had overwhelmingly voted on September 12 to reject a new contract, walking out hours later.

Their key demands include a wage hike of 40 percent. This is significantly higher than the 25 percent increase touted by Boeing, but workers see the figure as

misleading because the deal would also eliminate an annual bonus. Union members complain of near-stagnant pay for more than a decade, a problem worsened by consumer inflation in recent years and by higher costs of living in the Seattle area, which is a growing tech hub. On Wednesday, Boeing said it would start furloughs of professional and white-collar staff as it seeks to conserve cash amid the labor strike.

While both sides resumed talks on Tuesday with the help of mediators, the IAM said late Wednesday that discussions ended without result.

In a separate message to employees, Ortberg announced the departure of the head of Boeing's defense, space and security subdivision, Ted Colbert. It's the first major change of top personnel since Ortberg's arrival. "At this critical juncture, our priority is to restore the trust of our customers and meet the high standards they expect of us to enable their critical missions around the world," Ortberg said.

"Working together we can and will improve our performance and ensure we deliver on our commitments." Boeing's commercial aviation business has been under renewed scrutiny since a January incident in which a fuselage panel blew out of an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 MAX plane mid-flight, necessitating an emergency landing. But its defense, space and security unit posted heavy losses in the most recent quarter, and is losing money on its contract with NASA over continued problems with its beleaguered spacecraft Starliner.

Members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers District 751 voted overwhelmingly on September 12 to reject a new con-



PORTLAND, US: Striking Boeing workers hold rally at the Boeing Portland Facility on Sept 19, 2024, in Portland, Oregon. — AFP

tract, walking out hours later in a stoppage that has shuttered assembly plants for the 737 MAX and 777. Chief among the workers demands is a wage hike of 40 percent, much above the 25 percent increase touted by Boeing, a figure workers view as misleading because the deal would also eliminate an annual bonus.

Union members complain of more than a decade of near stagnant pay, a problem exacerbated by the consumer inflation of recent years and by the elevated living costs in the Seattle region, a growing tech hub. The union also wants Boeing to reinstate a pension and strengthen a pledge to build the next new plane in the Puget Sound region beyond the four-year life of the contract. — AFP

election years. The VIX was recently at 16.4.

The market could be particularly sensitive to this year's close election between Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Kamala Harris. Recent polls show a virtually tied race. "Unless the data deteriorates considerably, we think US elections will start to be more at the forefront," UBS equity derivative strategists said in a note. Investors are also looking for data to support expectations that the economy is navigating a "soft landing," during which inflation moderates without badly hurting growth. Stocks fare much better after the start of rate cuts in such a scenario, as opposed to when the Fed cuts during recessions.

The coming week includes reports on manufacturing, consumer confidence and durable goods, as well as the personal consumption expenditures price index, a key inflation measure. Attention will be squarely on employment after Fed Chair Jerome Powell said the central bank wanted to stay

ahead of any weakening in the job market as the Fed announced its cut this week. The closely-watched monthly US jobs report is due on Oct 4.

"We're going to have hyper-focus on anything that speaks to the strength of the labor force," said Art Hogan, chief market strategist at B Riley Wealth. Meanwhile, the rally in stocks has pushed up valuations. The S&P 500 has a price-to-earnings ratio of 21.4 times expected 12-month earnings, well above its long-term average of 15.7, according to LSEG Datastream.

With the scope for valuations to go higher now more limited, investors said that puts a greater burden on corporate earnings to be strong in order to support stock gains. Third-quarter reporting season kicks off next month. S&P 500 earnings for the period are expected to have climbed 5.4 percent from the prior year, and then jump nearly 13 percent in the fourth quarter, according to LSEG IBES. — Reuters

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2024



Paintings are seen on display.



Visitors look at a work on display by Banksy.



A waiter looks at works on display.

CHRISTIE'S EXPANDS HONG KONG FOOTPRINT IN HOPE OF ART MARKET 'PICKUP'

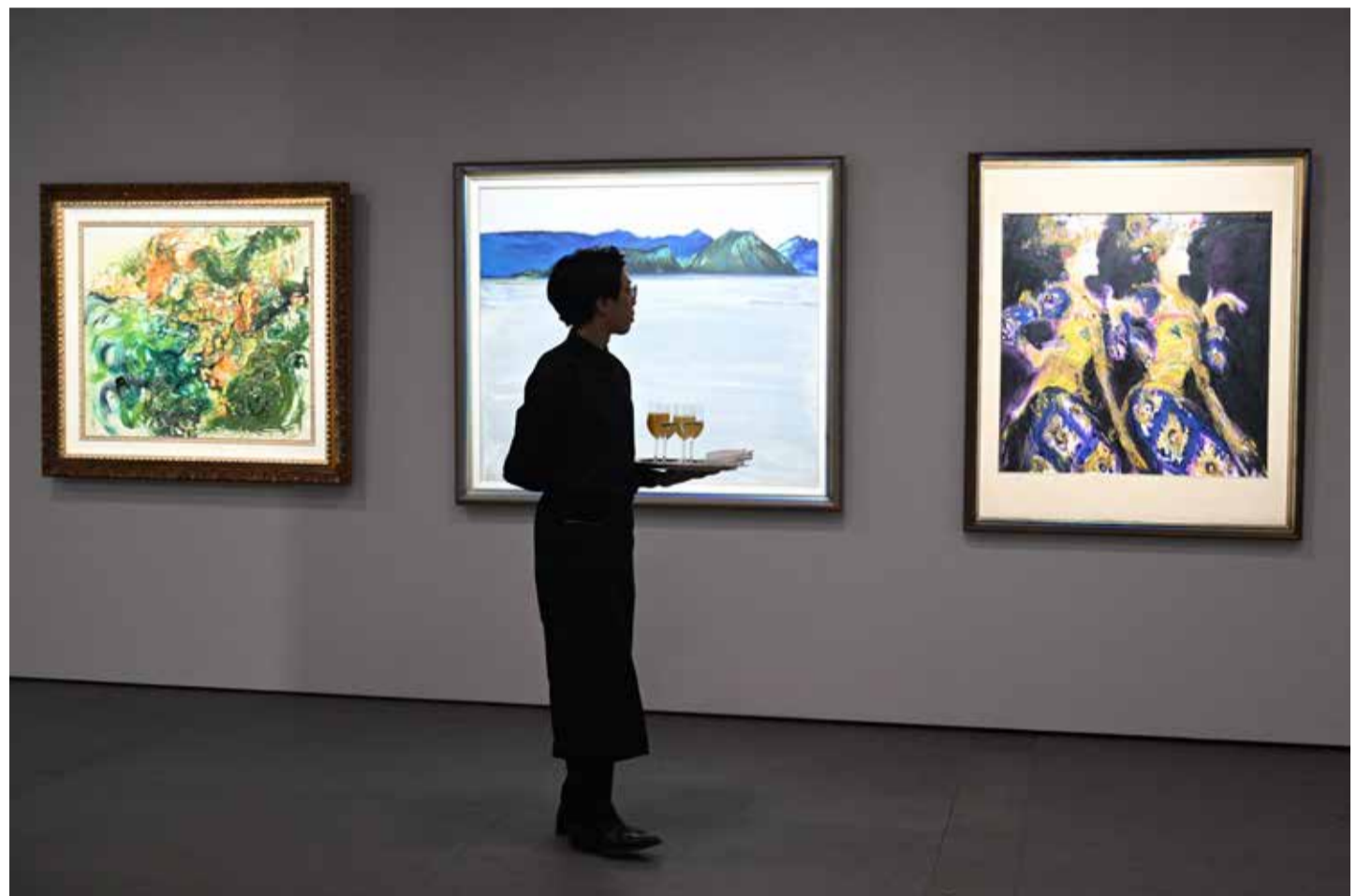
Auction house Christie's opened its regional headquarters in Hong Kong on Friday as its Asia Pacific chief predicted a sales "pickup" despite a global art market weighed down by wary sellers. Christie's is the third major auction house in recent years to expand their footprint in the Chinese finance hub in a bid to woo younger Asian buyers, following rivals Phillips and Sotheby's. President of Christie's Asia Pacific Francis Belin said the current dip in the market was due to "hesitant" consignors and "sellers being a little bit cautious".

"We are quite confident... in the second half of this year that we see a very nice pickup in our numbers," Belin told AFP. Christie's earlier reported \$2.1 billion in sales in the first six months of 2024 -- the second consecutive year of decline -- down from its 2022 peak of \$4.1 billion. China's economic slump has been cited as a key reason the art market has pulled back from its pandemic-era peaks. But Belin said the new venue reflected the "very strong demand" from Asia with the emergence of younger collectors. "The market is not short of buyers... Asia continues to recruit new clients, younger clients (and) Asian collectors embrace new categories," he said, adding that Hong Kong remained the "best place to transact art".

"It's a free flow of capital, free flow of merchandise, free flow of people," Belin said. The auction house took over four floors at a new skyscraper designed by Zaha Hadid Architects located in the heart of Hong Kong's financial district, with 50,000 square feet (4,600 square meters) of exhibition and office space. The new space will allow Christie's to bring their events in-house instead of vying for room at Hong Kong's conven-

tion and exhibition center. Its first series of auctions set for next week includes artwork by Vincent van Gogh, Claude Monet and Chinese-French painter Zao Wou-Ki.

Analysts say major auction houses are unfazed by Hong Kong's political environment even as Beijing tightens its grip on artistic freedoms. Christie's expansion also came at a time when the city's commercial property market was at a low ebb. The building housing Christie's, called The Henderson -- reportedly built on the world's most expensive plot of land -- was 40 percent vacant as of May, according to Bloomberg News. Belin earlier told AFP that Christie's signed a 10-year lease at The Henderson and that the relocation would cut operating costs. —AFP



A waiter looks at works on display whilst waiting for guests at the official unveiling of Christie's new Asia Pacific headquarters at the Henderson Centre in Hong Kong. — AFP photos



Lion dancers perform in front of guests at the official unveiling of Christie's new Asia Pacific headquarters.



Ballet dancers perform in front of guests at the official unveiling of Christie's new Asia Pacific headquarters.

Sally Rooney returns with 30-something questions

Irish author Sally Rooney, hailed as the "voice of a generation" after the runaway success of "Normal People", examines modern love in all its glory and friction in her fourth novel "Intermezzo" released next week. The book, out on Tuesday, includes all the elements of Rooney's hugely popular oeuvre: keen observations on relationships, spiky, realistic dialogues played out in Dublin houses, erotic scenes and existential conversations on the patriarchy and capitalism. Having already created a number of striking female characters, the story focuses on two estranged brothers, Peter and Ivan, who come together in the weeks after their father's death, and the romantic relationships they forge in a delicate period of mourning.

Six years after her debut novel "Conversations with Friends" (2017), the characters are now thirty-somethings like the author, and agonize over questions of motherhood and the climate crisis. Rooney's pared-back and realistic style has also evolved, with precise dialogues dipping into vivid, internal monologues. "I feel like the older I get the more freedom I have to write about a greater range of life experiences," the 33-year-old author told The Guardian in an interview.

'Private person'

The publicity-shy Irish author, who grew up in the small town of Castlebar in County Mayo, was not prepared for the success of her second novel "Normal People" (2018), with its 2020 BBC television adaptation exploding in popularity during the lockdown. Rooney has enjoyed a rare literary breakthrough into the mainstream, speaking to the angst of the times and capturing the ways in which "millennials" and internet-generations navigate friendships, romantic connections and family relations.



Sally Rooney

Her books have been cast by social media spaces like "BookTok" into a genre termed "sad girl lit" -- a term Rooney says she is unfamiliar with -- centering young women with few material problems but who are fraught with internal turmoil. She has won praise from the likes of Barack Obama and Taylor Swift.

In 2022, Rooney was included in Time magazine's 100 most influential people list, described as a "voice of a generation" and the "Snapchat Salinger" -- a tag that she is eager to distance herself from. The success of "Normal People" felt "too much", she told the Guardian. "I don't want to be the center of attention like that ever again," she added. Rooney still struggles with her notoriety, watched closely by millions of fans but also detractors, who deem her writing "simple" and "overrated".

With her unostentatious style and brunette bangs, she gives few interviews, has stopped doing book tours, and says she is awkward when asked to pose for photos. "I feel a lot of anxiety about my privacy and the privacy of my family and loved ones... I'm a very private person and I like to go unnoticed," Rooney told the Irish Times,

adding that she sometimes regretted not writing under a pseudonym like Italian writer Elena Ferrante.

Marxist

With five literary prizes and millions of copies of the label of the "young novelist". After 10 years in Dublin and a stint in New York, she now lives with her husband -- a maths professor whom she met during university at Trinity College, Dublin -- in the peaceful Irish countryside, near where she grew up. Rooney is open about being a Marxist, her politics seeping into the wry commentary by her fictional characters on topics ranging from global wars to Dublin's housing crisis.

In 2021, she refused to allow her third book, "Beautiful World, Where Are You?" to be translated into Hebrew by the Zionist publishing house due to her stance on the Zionist-Palestinian conflict and in support of the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement. Three years on, she says she will not "stay silent in the face of genocide". "The horrors unfolding in Gaza feel to me like a turning point in history. How are we allowing this to happen?", Rooney told the Irish Times.

Rooney has always denied writing autobiographical works but many have seen her alter ego in the character of Alice, the young novelist in her third book who struggles to come to terms with her fame and takes refuge in a small coastal town in Ireland. "There is a sense of having lived a lot of life very quickly, in quite a compressed sort of time frame", Rooney told Vogue when "Beautiful World" was published. "I think the book dramatizes some of those challenges." — AFP

Academy to host first overseas ceremony to honor young filmmakers

The Oscars Academy will hold its first award ceremony outside the United States next month, handing out prestigious annual student awards in London. The gala on October 14 in the British capital's Leicester Square will be an international first for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, whose membership has grown sharply more global in recent years.

Winners, pre-announced this week, will include "Au Revoir Mon Monde," a French animation about a man trapped in a giant fish costume attempting to race across a city as the world ends in a mysterious meteor shower. Others include an experimental movie about teenage sexual awakening from Taiwan, a short film set during China's 1910 plague outbreak, and a documentary from a Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh. Gold, silver and bronze placements for the winners will be announced at the ceremony, with all winning films eligible to compete at the main Oscars next March.

While the 51st Student Academy Awards will be the first full, live award show taking place overseas, segments of Oscars telecasts have previously been presented from overseas. Diana Ross performed a song from Amsterdam in 1976, Michael Caine introduced the 1991 Oscars from a historic Paris cafe, and the following year's ceremony even featured a live presentation honoring "Star Wars"

creator George Lucas from aboard the Space Shuttle Atlantis.

One-fifth of Academy members are now from outside the US, and more than half of the new members invited to join this year were also from overseas, including "Anatomy of a Fall" director Justine Triet and the film's star Sandra Hueller. Past winners at the Academy's student awards include a young Spike Lee, "Back To The Future" filmmaker Robert Zemeckis and 007 director Cary Fukunaga. The invite-only Academy -- whose members have achieved excellence in their respective fields, from acting and directing to costume design and makeup -- votes for each year's Oscar prizewinners. —AFP



(File photo) Screens display the Oscar logo on the red carpet area for this year's Oscars Awards ceremony in Hollywood, California on February 23, 2019. — AFP



Models walk the runway during the Bottega Veneta collection show at Milan's Fashion Week Womenswear Spring / Summer 2025, on September 21, 2024 in Milan. — AFP photos



Model Mariacarla Boscono walks the runway during the Bottega Veneta collection show.

Bottega Veneta goes for 'E.T.' chic as Madonna pops into D&G

Milan Fashion Week came to a close on Saturday with its share of surprises, not least an unlikely source of inspiration for Bottega Veneta's much-anticipated evening show. "For this show, I took as my starting point the scene from Spielberg's film 'E.T.', when the mother opens the closet to reveal a world of stuffed animals..." Bottega Veneta's artistic director Matthieu Blazy explained backstage. "The surprise of an imaginary world, the world of childhood, where everything is possible, where everything is a game, a joy, an adventure," he said.

Blazy sought to recreate children trying on their parents' clothing, or even the first day of school, "when parents have prepared the perfect outfit for their child, who comes back with everything upside down." That resulted in dresses just a bit too big, outfits with one leg in pants, the other in a skirt, superimpositions or creases. As for the dress embroidered with matches? "It's the object of childhood's forbidden game, intrepid and dangerous," he said. Earlier Saturday, no less a superstar than Madonna sat in the front row of the Dolce & Gabbana show—her face barely visible under a black lace veil.

The catwalk became a tribute to the "Material Girl", with all models in blond wigs, some in corsets, others in black men's tuxedos embellished with trouser braces. But at Bottega Veneta, not only fashion fans were watching, but investors too. Founded in 1966 in Vicenza in the northeastern Italian region of Veneto, the label renowned for its woven leather goods and expert craftsmanship became a part of France's Kering group in 2001.

And with Kering's flagship brand Gucci currently in a sales dive—down 20 percent in the first half of this year—the company is hoping to make the most of its smaller and less showy Italian brand. In the first half of 2024, Bottega Veneta posted revenue growth of three percent to 836 million euros (\$933 million), whereas Gucci's revenue, while down significantly, was 4.1 billion euros—nearly half of Kering's entire revenue of nine billion euros.

So while Bottega Veneta may be a drop in the luxury group's ocean, it is a promising one—and one that goes hand in hand with its distinctive approach to fashion. A coveted brand that is notably absent from social networks, Bottega Veneta thrives on discreet hyper-exclusivity, led by the Franco-Belgian Blazy, who took over as creative director at the end of 2021.

Tell-tale 'intrecciato'
With sumptuous materials that flirt with

trompe-l'oeil and cult pieces such as jeans-like pants in buttery calf leather selling for 5,200 euros, Bottega Veneta has built up considerable cult status in recent years under Blazy. The brand eschews logos on its products, instead letting its famous "intrecciato", or signature woven leather, speak for itself, or incorporating a brass "nodo" or knot as an essential design element into shoes and other accessories.

The brand has also strategically snubbed social networks. In 2021, it deleted its Instagram account only for fans to take over an unofficial "newbottega" account so as not to miss any of the latest news. Passionate about contemporary art and design, Blazy fuels the brand's projects through collaborations with photographers and creatives. Some are even revealed during fashion shows themselves, such as last year's 400 chairs designed by furniture and art designer Gaetano Pesce, who died in April, or the February homage to architect Le Corbusier with a reinterpretation of his Tabouret Cabanon.

The recent opening of Palazzo Van Axel in Venice will now welcome Bottega Veneta's exclusive clients to discover the world of the brand in a fully restored palace in the heart of the watery city. There, personalized services include the opportu-



nity to choose from luxurious leathers or unique pieces not available in stores. The palace will also host exhibitions, special projects and the presentation of Bottega Veneta's high-end jewelry collection in November. —AFP

Milan Fashion Week



Model Natasha Poly walks the runway during the Bottega Veneta collection show.



Madonna arrives at Dolce & Gabbana's 2024 Milan Fashion Week show in a black veil.

No pain, no gain: Chinese pro wrestlers fight for recognition



Wrestler Andrew Tang fighting with his opponent "Sky" during a Middle Kingdom Wrestling (MKW) championship event in Shanghai. — AFP photos



Wang Tao (right) training with his teammate Chen Wenbin in the mud in the mountain forest in Xingning, in China's southern Guangdong province.



Wang Tao training with his teammate Chen Wenbin in a mud puddle in the mountain forest in Xingning.



Wrestler Andrew Tang fighting with his opponent "Sky" during a Middle Kingdom Wrestling (MKW) championship event.

When Wang Tao ran away from home aged 17 to become a professional wrestler he knew it would be a hard slog to succeed in China's passionate but underdeveloped scene. Years later, he has endured family disapproval, countless side gigs and thousands of hours of brutal training to become China's "Belt and Road Champion"—but the struggle is far from over. Despite a promising potential domestic market the Chinese pro wrestling community has been battling for recognition and financial stability for decades.

"I have done all kinds of jobs (on the side)... because in the end, it is very difficult to earn enough money to live on just through wrestling," the 23-year-old Wang told AFP. "I have never given up my dream, which is to make more and more people know China has wrestling." Part sport and part entertainment, it is best known globally as a stereotypically American spectacle, embodied by the juggernaut World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE).

It is a marriage of intense athletic feat and melodramatic, lycra-clad performance. Hooked from a young age after watching Hollywood film "The Wrestler", Wang quit high school and absconded north to train with other like-minded Chinese athletes. "I tried to explain to my family... but they all disagreed, and did not understand or support me," Wang said. These days they have come round—though he said they still hope he will find "a normal job".

Facebuster

In the southern Chinese wilderness earlier this month, Wang and fellow wrestler Chen Wenbin slammed each other violently against the struts of a makeshift bamboo cage, smashing each other into a mudpit as curious villagers watched. It's rudimentary, but far better than previous training conditions, said Wang. He typically earns about 1,000 yuan (\$140) for fight nights, and tries to boost that income with livestreaming.

In the nearby town, he and Chen have constructed a wrestling ring in an unfinished factory where they broadcast themselves practicing moves with names like Backbreaker and Facebuster. Though the fighting is a pretence—moves are loosely choreographed and outcomes are predetermined—Wang has been knocked out for real before. Wearing a "No pain, no



Wang Tao (second right) training with his teammates at an abandoned building in Xingning.



A wrestler waiting backstage before a Middle Kingdom Wrestling (MKW) championship event.

gain" vest, Chen recalled when his wages came from performing in places such as bars—"it was just hard ground... easy for us to get hurt". Self-described addiction continues to propel Wang and others. "I love this

industry so much that it doesn't matter if I get hurt, I will stick with it," Wang said.

'Huge market'

The root of the addiction became clear last weekend. At the Supercard From Shanghai—a fight night organized by Middle Kingdom Wrestling (MKW), a domestic promoter—Wang strode down a red carpet into the ring, transformed. Hair slicked back and wearing a snug black-scaled waistcoat, all trace of the mild-mannered, slightly shy Wang vanished as he leapt like a cat onto the top ropes and roared into the crowd. To howls of delight, Wang defended his "Belt and Road" title in a frenetic four-way fight with another Chinese fighter, a Hungarian and an Emirati.

Accompanied by booming music and a rolling light-show, the increasingly feral crowd of around 350 made up for in volume what they lacked in numbers. "Definitely I would say we have more followers, more people are paying attention to us than ever," said MKW founder Adri-

an Gomez. The problem is that audience is still miniscule for China, with momentum lost during pandemic years.

The Supercard had 125,000 livestream viewers, a far cry from the millions targeted. Nevertheless, many insist there is potential. WWE China has almost 36 million likes and four million followers on short video app Douyin, and analysts say it too has failed to maximize the country's possibility. "It's a huge market in China, but we haven't fully opened it yet," said Chen, whose night ended less victoriously than Wang's.

His shamanic alter ego ended up tossed onto a table, then a row of chairs, by China's first-ever pro wrestler, The Slam. American Knickle Sloane said the show's "grind of independent wrestling" had transported him back to his childhood. "I feel there's a market for (Chinese wrestling) and there's a lot of people who want to see this happen," he said. For now, the dream is that "more people can make a living," said Gomez. "I think they deserve to be able to make a living out of what they're good at."—AFP



Wrestler "Uncle Money" (right) fighting his opponent "Sky" during a Middle Kingdom Wrestling (MKW) championship event.



Wang Tao (center) celebrating after winning a Middle Kingdom Wrestling (MKW) championship event.



Wang Tao jumping on his opponent during a Middle Kingdom Wrestling (MKW) championship event.



Wang Tao (left) training with his teammate Chen Wenbin in the mud in the mountain forest in Xingning.

Sports

All-rounder Ashwin powers India to 280-run Test win over Bangladesh

Bangladesh have still never beaten India in Tests in 14 attempts

CHENNAI: Ravichandran Ashwin claimed six wickets after a first-innings century with the bat to inspire India to a 280-run thrashing of Bangladesh in the first Test on Sunday. The visitors arrived in Chennai in confident mood following a historic victory in Pakistan but they were no match for an Indian team for whom Rishabh Pant celebrated a triumphant return from a serious car crash.

Bangladesh have still never beaten India in Tests in 14 attempts, losing 12 and drawing two. Bangladesh were bowled out for 234 in the first session of an overcast day four while chasing a victory target of 515.

Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto top-scored with 82 after he and overnight partner Shakib Al Hasan resisted in a 48-run partnership, Bangladesh having resumed the day on 158-4. The hosts took an emphatic 1-0 lead in the two-match series as they look to extend their advantage at the top of the World Test Championship rankings.

"It was a great result looking at what lies ahead," skipper Rohit Sharma said after India made an ominous start to a fresh Test season of 10 matches. Hometown hero Ashwin struck first to end a stubborn overnight stand by getting Shakib caught at short-leg for 25.

The spinner, who took three wickets on day three, then dismissed Mehidy Hasan Miraz for eight to bag his 37th five-wicket haul, equalling the late Shane Warne. Muttiah Muralitharan remains well out in front with 67.

The feat added to Ashwin's heroics after his 113



CHENNAI: Bangladesh's Hasan Mahmud (R) is clean bowled by India's Ravindra Jadeja during the fourth day of the first Test cricket match between India and Bangladesh at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on September 22, 2024. — AFP

guided the hosts to 376 in the first innings. "He's always there for us over the years," Rohit said of the 38-year-old warhorse, who was named man of the match. "I don't know if I speak here (that) it'll be enough to cover what he does for the team. He looks

like he's never out of the game." Left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja removed Litton Das for one after the wicketkeeper-batsman edged the ball to Rohit at first slip. Jadeja also ended Najmul's valiant stand and took three wickets for the innings.

'Little bit emotional'

Spin twins Ashwin and Jadeja had played a key batting role in the first innings when their 199-run seventh-wicket stand lifted India from a precarious 144-6 to a challenging total on the first day. India declared their second innings at 287-4 on day three after centuries from Shubman Gill, who hit an unbeaten 119, and the returning Pant, who made 109, flattened the opposition.

Gill and the left-handed Pant, who was playing his first Test since a serious car crash in December 2022, put on 167 runs for the fourth wicket. "I just enjoyed batting and got a little bit emotional," Pant said of his celebration after his sixth Test ton.

"But at the end of the day, being in the field gives me more pleasure than anything else." The Test was Virat Kohli's first since the birth of his second child made him miss India's 4-1 victory over England at home this year. Kohli scored just six and 17.

The home bowlers led by Jasprit Bumrah handed India an early advantage after they bundled out Bangladesh for 149 in their first innings. Bangladesh have to work on their first innings batting ahead of the second Test, said skipper Najmul.

"Top of the order we have to be careful and put some runs, that is one learning from this match. Going forward all the batters think that they can come back." Bangladesh pace bowler Hasan Mahmud claimed five wickets in the first innings and reduced India to 34-3 in the first hour of play. The two teams now head to the northern Indian city of Kanpur for the second Test starting on Friday. — AFP

Australia thrash England in second ODI

LEEDS: Australia were indebted to Alex Carey as they beat England by 68 runs in the second one-day international at Headingley on Saturday to go 2-0 up in a five-match series. The world champions were in trouble at 221-9 after losing the toss.

But Carey made a dashing 74, with the wicketkeeper dominating a last-wicket stand of 49 with Josh Hazlewood that took Australia to 270 all out. That proved more than enough as a new-look England, who collapsed to 65-5, were dismissed for 202 with nearly 10 overs remaining. None of their batsmen made a fifty, with Jamie Smith's 49 merely delaying a defeat that had long looked inevitable.

This was Australia's 14th consecutive ODI win, with only the Australia 2003 World Cup-winning side led by Ricky Ponting, enjoying a longer unbeaten run at this level of 21 straight victories. Mitchell Starc (3-50) and Hazlewood (2-54) struck early in England's reply after the veteran fast bowlers missed Australia's seven-wicket success at Trent Bridge on Thursday with illness. "They (England) bowled really well up front and got us in a bit of trouble. Josh Hazlewood did a fantastic job," player-of-the-match Carey told Sky Sports.

'Bit short'

Australia captain Mitchell Marsh, who made a valuable 60, added: "I think these days 270 always feels a little bit short. But we knew it was a new wicket and if we got early wickets we had a chance. "It really goes to show those little tail-ender partnerships are really important." England skipper Harry Brook said: "We lost our way in the powerplay and it didn't quite come off." England's reply was derailed when Hazlewood had opener Phil Salt edging behind, while initially wayward left-armed Starc removed Will Jacks for a golden duck thanks to a fine diving catch at second slip by Matthew Short.

Starc's brilliant inswinging yorker then had local hero Brook lbw for just four. England were in an even worse position at 65-5 after paceman Aaron Hardie took two wickets in two balls. Ben Duckett, who made 95 at Trent Bridge, was deceived on 32 by Hardie's slower ball as the bowler held a fine return catch.

Next ball, Liam Livingstone became the second golden duck of the innings when he was brilliantly caught down the legside by the diving Carey, only recalled this series after Josh Inglis was injured. Earlier, Marsh was the only member of Australia's top order to make more than 29. But Carey's superb 67-ball innings, including eight fours and three well-struck sixes, kept Australia in the game. England might have feared the worst when Travis Head, fresh from his career-best 154 not out on Thursday, hit sixes off both Matthew Potts and Brydon Carse.

But Head, fell for 29 when the left-hander flicked Carse straight to deep backward square leg, with Australia 89-3 when Steve Smith was bowled for just four by a superb Potts late inswinger. Marnus Labuschagne, 77 not out at Trent Bridge, only managed 19 before mistiming a pull off Jacob Bethell to mid-on. Australia lost three wickets for five runs in 10 balls to be 221-9. But Carey went to fifty in style by driving off-spinner Jacks for six before he was last man out. The series continues at Chester-le-Street on Tuesday. — AFP

Haddad roars back to beat Kasatkina in Korea Open final

SEOUL: Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia won the fourth title of her career with a furious fightback to beat Russian top seed Daria Kasatkina 1-6, 6-4, 6-1 in Sunday's Korea Open final. Number three seed Haddad Maia lost the opening set in just 26 minutes but turned the tide in the second, before going on to close out the match in a gutsy performance in Seoul.

It was the world number 17's first title since June 2022. "I know that tennis changes everything very fast," said Haddad Maia. "I was competing better at the end of the second set and then my tennis appeared. I finished in the way that I wanted and I think I deserved this win."

Kasatkina, ranked 13, has now lost four of her five finals this year. She said "losing in the final can feel worse than losing in the first round". "It's tough, especially being up in the final, but she definitely raised the level after the first set," said Kasatkina. "The match was pretty good but then she was better in the third set."

Neither player had dropped a set on their way to the Seoul decider and both played two matches on Saturday, after heavy rain wiped out the previous day's play. Kasatkina won her quarter-final after opponent Emma Raducanu retired injured after the first set. Kasatkina broke Haddad Maia twice on the way to winning the first set.

She broke her opponent again in the first game of the second set and held serve, before Haddad Maia began to threaten for the first time in the match. The momentum shifted when the 28-year-old Haddad Maia broke back midway through the second set and then took the lead for the first time.

The Brazilian argued a call with the umpire but kept her cool to take the second set. "I was just trying to play every point," she said. "I was improving and I think that was the key, to be calm and just play tennis."

Haddad Maia went a break up in the third and stayed ahead as Kasatkina began to crumble. Haddad Maia broke again and closed out the final when Kasatkina hit a return long. "I feel stronger, I feel that I'm very competitive now," said Haddad Maia. "I'm in a good moment, ready for the next week. I feel that I'm doing very good things, working hard. "Let's see what the end of the season brings to me," she added. The Korea Open was being played as a WTA 500



SEOUL: Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia celebrates with the trophy after defeating Russia's Daria Kasatkina in their women's singles final match at the Korea Open tennis championships in Seoul on September 22, 2024. — AFP

tournament for the first time. It was hit by a string of last-minute withdrawals including world number one Iga Swiatek, US Open runner-up Jessica Pegula and former Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina. — AFP

Ravindra gives NZ fighting chance in S Lanka Test

GALLE: Rookie left-hander Rachin Ravindra's unbeaten 91 gave New Zealand a slender chance for victory against Sri Lanka, with the tourists needing another 68 runs with two wickets in hand after day four of the first Test on Sunday.

Set a target of 275, New Zealand were 207-8 at stumps with spinner Ajaz Patel, on nought, to resume with Ravindra on Monday. Ramesh Mendis and Prabath Jayasuriya picked up three wickets each on a sharply turning pitch in Galle, where the Black Caps have lost all four of their previous Test encounters.

Ravindra's knock was the highest score by a New Zealander at the ground, eclipsing Ross Taylor's 89 in 2019. The left-hander appeared solid on a spin-friendly wicket but lacked support from other batsmen, with Kane Williamson and Tom Blundell the next biggest scorers on 30 apiece.

The tourists lost four wickets by tea before Ravindra's 56-run stand with Blundell briefly revived hopes until the latter was bowled by Jayasuriya.

Jayasuriya also secured the key wicket of Williamson for 30, the former skipper lured out of his crease and stumped by wicketkeeper Kusal Mendis.

New Zealand opener Tom Latham was trapped lbw by Sri Lanka captain Dhananjaya de Silva for 28, while Ramesh bowled Daryl Mitchell for eight. Wil-



GALLE: Sri Lanka players appeal for leg before wicket (LBW) against New Zealand's Rachin Ravindra (L) during the fourth day of the first Test cricket match between Sri Lanka and New Zealand in Galle. — AFP

liamson, Latham and Mitchell had all made half-centuries in the first innings.

Ajaz Patel's six-wicket haul helped restrict Sri Lanka to 309 in the morning. His figures of 6-90 were the best by a New Zealand bowler in Sri Lanka since Daniel Vettori's 6-64 in Colombo in 1998. The match had a rest day on Saturday due to Sri Lanka's presidential elections and play resumed on Sunday morning without spectators.

Fans returned after lunch when the election curfew was lifted. The hosts were 237-4 at the start of the day and added another 72 runs, with veteran Angelo Matthews making 50 before offering a simple catch to first slip off Patel's bowling.

Dimuth Karunaratne top-scored for Sri Lanka with 83 before he was bowled by Patel on Friday. The second and final match of the series will be held at the same venue from Thursday. — AFP

Argentina edge S Africa to keep title hopes alive

SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO: Argentina ended South Africa's unbeaten run with a thrilling 29-28 win in their Rugby Championship match at Estadio Unico Madre de Ciudades on Saturday. Replacement fly-half Manie Libbok missed a penalty goal attempt from 35 metres in the last minute which would have secured the title for South Africa, who had won their four previous matches.

The Springboks remain favourites to win the championship but Argentina gave themselves an outside chance of lifting the crown for the first time. They will have to beat South Africa with a bonus point in a return match in Mbombela next Saturday and prevent



SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO: South Africa's Springboks scrum-half Cobus Reinach kicks the ball during the rugby union Championship match between Argentina's Pumas and South Africa's Springboks, at the Madre de Ciudades stadium in Santiago del Estero, Argentina. — AFP

the Springboks securing any points. "Credit to Argentina, they put us under a lot of pressure," said Salmaan Moerat, standing in for regular Spring-

bok captain Siya Kolisi, who was rested. "For large parts of the game we played good rugby but they pulled it through." An Argentine win seemed unlikely

when the Springboks made a blazing start in a match played in 36 degrees Celsius (97 Fahrenheit) heat, leading 17-0 inside 13 minutes. South Africa won a penalty when they pushed their opponents off the ball in the first scrum. Fly-half Handre Pollard kicked for touch to set up a line-out and full-back Apelehe Fassi was put into a gap to score a fourth-minute try.

Centre Jesse Kriel added another try and Pollard kicked the conversion and a penalty as South Africa seemed to take control. But Argentina hit back in spectacular fashion, with wing Mateo Carreras reducing the deficit two minutes later.

The match changed dramatically when Springbok wing Kurt-Lee Arendse was sent to the sin bin for a dangerous tackle. Flanker Pablo Matera and prop Joel Sclavi scored tries while Arendse was off the field and fly-half Tomas Albornoz added a fourth for Argentina to lead 26-17. — AFP

Sports

Martin extends MotoGP lead as Bastianini wins at Misano and Bagnaia crashes out

Bastianini's second GP win of the season and seventh of his career

MISANO ADRIATICO: Jorge Martin took advantage of Francesco Bagnaia crashing out of the Emilia-Romagna MotoGP to extend his championship lead despite being pipped to Sunday's race win by Enea Bastianini on the final lap.

Martin was initially angered by Bastianini's daring overtake which decided the race but is 24 points ahead of key title rival Bagnaia who slid out of his 100th MotoGP with seven laps remaining at Misano Adriatico.

Pramac rider Martin, who is hunting a first world crown, was forced off the "Marco Simoncelli" track by Bastianini's move which earned Ducati their 100th MotoGP victory, and gestured angrily as he crossed the line in second place.

But pole-sitter Bagnaia's fall gave him a much bigger buffer than he was expecting to have ahead of next week's Indonesia MotoGP even though he was denied a first Grand Prix win since the French back in June.

"I saw that Enea was arriving so I just tried to close the gap. The manner was maybe a bit too much because he pushed me off the track so I couldn't fight back and yeah maybe afterwards I did some gestures because I was a bit hot," said Martin. "I think I was the best and deserved the victory but it's OK, I will try for the next one."

Bastianini's second GP win of the season, and seventh of his career, allowed Bagnaia's Ducati teammate to move to within 59 points of Martin with six GP weekends left. "It's been an incredible race today. I tried with three laps to go but he closed the line from the exit at turn number six,"

said the Italian, who was born down the road from Misano in Rimini. "After I received a bit of space at turn number four I entered and I closed the line. It's incredible to win today here in Misano in front of my friends and all the team."

Marquez's podium 'present'

Marc Marquez took advantage of Bagnaia's mishap by completing the podium, but he still loses ground in his bid to claim a seventh MotoGP title. Gresini rider Marquez, who will ride alongside Bagnaia with Ducati's factory team next season, trails his fellow Spaniard Martin by 60 points and slipped behind Bastianini in the overall standings.

"Today I was speaking to the team and we said fourth place would have been good for us," said Marquez, who started seventh on the grid. "Today was a present, this podium, because three guys were clearly faster than us but I'm happy."

Starting second on the grid, Martin was fastest off the line but was quickly overtaken by Bagnaia on the first set of corners before the Variante del Parco turn. But Martin was on Bagnaia's tail from that moment and took charge of the race in the fourth lap with a brilliant overtake, after which began battles with Ducati's two Italians.

Meanwhile, Bagnaia, who was clearly struggling in the early part of the race and conceded second place to Bastianini, suddenly picked up pace and posted the two fastest laps one after the other. But his crash left Martin to continue uninterrupted his thrilling battle with Bastianini, who drew roars from the crowd when he took the



MISANO ADRIATICO: Second-placed Prima Pramac Racing's Spanish rider Jorge Martin (L), winner Ducati Lenovo Team's Italian rider Enea Bastianini (C) and third-placed Gresini Racing MotoGP's Spanish rider Marc Marquez (3R) celebrate on the podium as Ducati's team celebrates winning the Constructors' World Champion title. — AFP

lead with seconds remaining in the race.

It was a dreadful end to the weekend for Bagnaia, who had posted two track records and won Saturday's sprint, but a great one for Ducati who sealed the constructors' championship by moving 261 points ahead of KTM. — AFP

Despite loss, Guardians clinch AL Central title

ST LOUIS: Ivan Herrera hit a three-run homer and scored twice as the St. Louis Cardinals held off the visiting Cleveland Guardians for a 6-5 win on Saturday night. However, the Guardians still clinched the American League Central. Their magic number was one coming into Saturday's action, and the second-place Kansas City Royals' loss to the San Francisco Giants earlier in the day was enough to get the job done. Jordan Walker hit a two-run shot for the Cardinals, who won for the fourth time in their past six games. Jose Ramirez hit a three-run homer and Bo Naylor smacked a solo shot for the Guardians.

Reds 7, Pirates 1

Elly De La Cruz had three hits, four RBIs and two runs to help Cincinnati beat visiting Pittsburgh. The Reds, who won the opener of the three-game set on Friday, have won five of their past eight games. Cincinnati starting pitcher Rhett Lowder (2-2) held the Pirates scoreless on five hits through five innings.

Norris hails his 'mega' McLaren after dominant win at Singapore

SINGAPORE: Lando Norris hailed his "mega" McLaren after a dominant victory at the Singapore Grand Prix Sunday closed the Formula One championship gap on Max Verstappen, who came a distant second.

It was the McLaren driver's third career GP win and his first from pole position as he finished almost 30 seconds clear of his rival's Red Bull. Norris admitted to a couple of scary brushes with the walls on the notoriously tight Marina Bay Street Circuit as his tyres faded in the closing laps.

"It was an amazing race," said Norris. "A few too many close calls. I had a couple of close moments. You have a little bit less grip, a little bit less downforce," added the Englishman. "Tyres are going away a little bit. It just caught me out."

"So it wasn't like a lack of concentration or anything. It was just a bit of a surprise to me." But Norris avoided any damage and reduced the deficit to Verstappen to 52 points with six races and three sprints to go. "I think the car was all good and the car has been mega all weekend. So a big thanks to the team," he added.

Teammate Oscar Piastri was third to extend McLaren's lead over Red Bull in the constructors' championship to 41 points. It was a uniquely incident-free 62 laps around the Marina Bay Street Circuit under lights, the first in its 15-race history not to see a safety car deployed.

Norris got away brilliantly from pole and was

and De La Cruz's three-run shot to right field in the fourth inning provided the run support. Billy Cook had a home run among his two hits for the Pirates, who have lost seven of nine.

Nationals 5, Cubs 1

MacKenzie Gore came within eight outs of the eighth no-hitter in franchise history, lifting visiting Washington past Chicago. The Cubs didn't get to Gore (10-12) until Patrick Wisdom clubbed a solo shot with one out in the seventh. That was the only hit and run the lefty allowed in his seven innings. Meanwhile, Joey Gallo broke the game open with a three-run homer in the sixth for the Nationals, who had dropped five straight. Jose Tena went 3-for-4 with a run. Chicago is on the verge of being officially eliminated from postseason contention. Kyle Hendricks (4-12) got the start for the Cubs and yielded four runs on nine hits in 5 1/3 innings.

Tigers 6, Orioles 4 (10 innings)

Riley Greene singled in a run in the top of the 10th inning and Zach McKinstry added a sacrifice fly as Detroit pulled out the victory against host Baltimore. The Tigers have won five of their past six games in their quest to rise in the American League wild-card mix. They rebounded after squandering a two-run lead in the ninth and had to hang on to extend the

clear of Verstappen into the first bend as Lewis Hamilton, on softer tyres, failed to get past the Dutchman. Hamilton was the only front-runner to start on soft tyres and he paid a penalty when he had to pit early on lap 18 and then suffered on tyres much older than the cars around him in the final stint.

"It is hard to describe the range of emotions you feel when we have a difficult race like that," said Hamilton. "Every decision we take with the right intentions and sometimes it doesn't work out. It can be frustrating."

'Not happy with second'

Piastri started from fifth but a superior strategy enabled him to overhaul the struggling Hamilton and the second Mercedes of George Russell in the late stages. "It was a good race, a good recovery from qualifying — it wasn't my best afternoon yesterday," said Piastri.

Verstappen's only chance looked like a safety car or red flag that never came, which left him ploughing a lonely furrow for much of the race half a minute behind Norris. "I was by myself. I tried to do the best I could and manage my own pace to the end," said Verstappen, who has never won in eight starts in Singapore where Red Bull always seem to struggle.

"The first stint was a bit difficult for us, quite a bit of tyre degradation," said the 26-year-old, who matched his previous best of second, way back in 2018. "On a weekend we knew we were going to struggle, P2 is a good achievement. Of course we are not happy with second. Now we need to improve more and more and that's what we will try to do."

Hamilton lost another place on lap 50 to the Ferrari of Charles Leclerc, who had begun from ninth on the grid. Leclerc finished ahead of

game. Orioles All-Star Gunnar Henderson's two-run double with the bases loaded and no outs tied the score in the ninth. With runners on second and third after Henderson's double, Cedric Mullins grounded out, Anthony Santander popped out and Colton Cowser flied out against Beau Brieske (3-4), who was summoned from the bullpen after Jason Foley failed to record an out while facing four batters. The Orioles had a two-game winning streak snapped as they try to catch the New York Yankees atop the AL East. Starter Cade Povich was charged with two runs on two hits in five innings, striking out seven. The Orioles, who homered five times in Friday night's 7-1 series-opening victory, didn't have an extra-base hit Saturday until Henderson came through in the ninth.

Mets 6, Phillies 3

Francisco Alvarez homered in the second inning and laced a key two-run double in the seventh for host New York, which beat Philadelphia in the third game of a four-game series. The win by the Mets prevented the playoff-bound Phillies from clinching their first National League East title since 2011. Philadelphia's magic number stayed at one heading into the series finale Sunday. New York remained a game behind the Arizona Diamondbacks and two games ahead of the Atlanta Braves for the third NL wild-card spot. — Reuters

Kuwait Karate squad wins medals in China tourney

HANGZHOU: The Kuwaiti Karate team won an assortment of medals — one gold, one silver, and two bronze — at the 2024 Asian Karate Federation Senior Championship held in Hangzhou, China, from September 19-22, said the Karate Federation on Sunday.

Chairman of the Kuwait Karate Federation Fayed Al-Daihani told KUNA that Kuwaiti Karate Salman Al-Mosawi, Mohammad Bader, Mohammad Al-Mosawi, Saqer Al-Dabasi came in first in the group Kata competition.

He added that Salman Al-Mosawi came in second in the individual Kata competition, while Salem Al-Ajmi and Abdullah Sha'aban each won bronze medals in the under 55 kg and under 60 kg Kumite competitions. He affirmed that the Kuwaiti Karate team were always prepared to meet challenges and excel in their sport, thanking all who contributed to the recent success. — KUNA



SINGAPORE: McLaren's British driver Lando Norris celebrates winning on the podium after the Formula One Singapore Grand Prix night race at the Marina Bay Street Circuit in Singapore. — AFP

Hamilton, with the second Ferrari of Carlos Sainz in seventh. Fernando Alonso, Nico Hulkenberg and Perez rounded out the top 10.

Norris had the point for fastest lap snatched away from him at the end by the RB of Daniel Ricciardo in what is likely to be his last race in F1. The Aus-

tralian is rumored to be leaving the Red Bull junior outfit after this race, but still played a part for his old teammate Verstappen. "I have to be prepared for this maybe being it," admitted the Australian, who has won eight GPs in a 13-year career. "Let's say I'm at peace with it." — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

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

Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoum Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Hospitals

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

Change of Name

I, Murtuza S/o Asgar Ali, holder of Indian Passport No. T0703760 (issued at Kuwait on 19/11/2018) resident of House No. 26/30, Kotawala Bagh, Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh, 457001, India has changed my name from Murtuza to Murtuza Kangsawala in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of MuRtuza (given name) and Kangsawala (surname).
(# 6168 23/09/2024)

purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Sylvester Cyril Lobo and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.
(# 6167 19/09/2024)

I, Sylvester holder of Passport No. M7064690 do hereby change my name to Sylvester Cyril (as given name) Lobo (surname) for all

I, Elvira Thomas John Fernandes d/o Edward Fernandes & Clara Fernandes, holder of Passport No. S2393400, do hereby change my name to Elvira D'Costa for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Elvira D'Costa and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.
(19/09/2024)

Stones salvages point for Man City against 10-man Arsenal

Man City retake top spot, two points clear of Arsenal in fourth



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's English defender #05 John Stones scores the equalizing goal during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Arsenal at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester. — AFP

MANCHESTER: John Stones' 98th-minute equalizer salvaged a 2-2 draw for Manchester City against 10-man Arsenal in a bad-tempered clash between the two favorites for the Premier League title on Sunday. Arsenal played the entire second half a man down after Leandro Trossard was sent off but were seconds away from inflicting City's first home defeat since November 2022. A draw is enough for City to retake top spot, two points clear of Arsenal in fourth.

Erling Haaland's 100th City goal had given Pep Guardiola's men the perfect start. Arsenal turned the game around thanks to Riccardo Calafiori's wonder strike and another set-piece header from Gabriel Magalhaes. The Gunners lost Trossard for a second booking just before half-time. However, Mikel Arteta's men produced a stunning rearguard action to hold out until the final seconds when Stones bundled in after Arsenal failed to clear a corner.

The powder keg for an explosive encounter was lit within the first few seconds when Kai Havertz charged into Rodri to leave the Spaniard needing treatment. Guardiola said City had been handed an advantage by having an extra day's rest and not travelling for their Champions League draw with

Inter Milan on Wednesday.

Arsenal, by contrast, were in Italy on Thursday for their 0-0 stalemate against Atalanta. City burst out of the traps to try and make their fresher legs count and got an early reward. Haaland had not even managed a single shot on target in the two league meetings between the sides last season as Arsenal kept two clean sheets against the champions.

But the Norwegian is in unstoppable form and took just nine minutes to score his 10th goal of the season and bring up his century in 105 games for City. Savinho's through ball split the Arsenal defence and Haaland coolly prodded past the onrushing David Raya. Ilkay Gundogan then curled a free-kick off the post. But City's momentum was interrupted when Rodri was forced off in some distress with a knee injury. Just seconds after he was replaced by Mateo Kovacic, Arsenal levelled in stunning fashion. Calafiori was picked out by Gabriel Martinelli at the edge of the box and the Italian defender curled a brilliant effort beyond Ederson for his first Gunners goal. Gabriel scored the winner in Arsenal's 1-0 win at Tottenham in the north London derby last weekend.

And City were also unable to cope with the Bra-

zilian's power at set-pieces. Guardiola's men got away with a warning when Gabriel headed over his first big opportunity from a Bukayo Saka corner. The Arsenal centre-back was not so forgiving with his second chance as he shrugged off Kyle Walker to nod in another inviting delivery from Saka.

Yet there was another huge momentum swing just before half-time when Trossard saw red. The Belgian was shown a second yellow for kicking the ball away after committing a foul. Arsenal dropped two points in a 1-1 draw with Brighton after Declan Rice did likewise just three weeks ago and they suffered a similar fate in heartbreaking fashion.

Arteta responded by introducing an extra defender in Ben White for Saka as the visitors set up camp in their own box to repel wave upon wave of City attack. Raya was called upon to save a powerful downward header by Haaland. But Arsenal largely restricted City to potshots from distance by their centre-backs as Raya denied twice denied Josko Gvardiol. It was another City defender who finally got what could be a defining goal in the title race come May. Stones swept home the loose ball from Jack Grealish's cross to extend City's near two-year invincible streak on home soil. — AFP

Dubois destroys Joshua to retain IBF world crown

LONDON: Daniel Dubois retained his IBF world heavyweight title with a brutal fifth-round knockout of Anthony Joshua in an all-British spectacular at Wembley on Saturday. The 27-year-old dominated the bout from the start in front of 96,000 passionate fans, dropping the former two-time heavyweight champion multiple times.

Dubois had spoken of his determination to "legitimize" his reign as IBF champion after being handed the belt that Oleksandr Usyk vacated in June. He produced a destructive display that raises major questions over Joshua's future, though Joshua's promoter Eddie Hearn said he expected his fighter would pursue a rematch.

Underdog Dubois went after his celebrated rival from the start and was rewarded as his big shots wobbled the 2012 London Olympic champion time and again. In an action-packed fifth round of the breathless clash, Dubois landed the decisive blow, having come through worrying moments himself as Joshua finally found his range.

"Are you not entertained?" he said, speaking to DAZN after the biggest win of his 24-fight career. "It's been a journey and I'm grateful to be in this po-



LONDON: Britain's Daniel Dubois celebrates after defeating Britain's Anthony Joshua during their heavyweight boxing match for the IBF world title at Wembley Stadium in London. — AFP

sition. I'm a gladiator, I'm a warrior until the bitter end. "I want to get to the top of this sport and reach my full potential."

Oasis's Liam Gallagher fired up the expectant crowd with a live set of three songs before fireworks exploded over Wembley. The British rivals locked horns in a dramatic opening round that ended with Joshua being saved by the bell after he was floored by a savage overhand right.

Survival mode

Joshua, four pounds (1.8 kilograms) heavier than

his younger opponent, was in full survival mode in round two and in the following round Dubois had him down again, a left hook causing his legs to buckle. A standing eight count was followed by the bell and as the fourth round got under way Joshua was floored for the third time, although he protested that it was not a legitimate knockdown.

In a dramatic fifth round, Dubois was momentarily stunned by two right hands and just as Joshua looked to pile on the pressure, the 34-year-old was caught by successive right hands himself and he was down again, this time unable to beat the count.

Both fighters entered the ring intent on earning a shot at becoming undisputed world champion against Tyson Fury or Usyk. Usyk became boxing's first four-belt undisputed heavyweight champion in May when he beat Fury, simultaneously holding the IBF title along with the WBO, WBC and WBA belts.

The Ukrainian agreed to a rematch with Fury rather than facing mandatory IBF challenger Dubois. Dubois won the interim IBF title in June and was elevated to world champion status when Usyk vacated the belt. Joshua was hoping to join an elite group including Muhammad Ali, Lennox Lewis and Evander Holyfield as a three-time heavyweight champion.

Defeat to Andy Ruiz in 2019 and two losses at the hands of Usyk left his career on the brink. He then won four straight fights and was aiming to return to the division's top table. Joshua hinted he would stay in the sport but he will have to do some soul-searching after the devastating loss at Wembley—a fourth defeat in 32 fights. — AFP

Kuwait hammer North Mariana Islands in U-20 Asian qualifier

KUWAIT: Kuwait's youth football squad started their campaign in Group C qualifiers of the 2025 AFC U-20 Asian Cup with a spectacular 6-0 win over the Northern Mariana Islands on Saturday. The game was held at Abdullah Al-Khalifa Al-Sabah Stadium in Mishref, Kuwait.

The hosts took the lead in the first minute through Eid Al-Ruqabah five minutes before Turki Al-Yousef doubled their advantage. The youth Blue continued to dominate with Yusef Al-Shammari netting a brace in the 10th and 17th minutes to take a healthy advantage into the break.

Kuwait's Al-Yousef showed his class to score in the 49th minute before completing his hat-trick in the 53rd minute, thus dashing the guests' hopes for comeback. In another game, the UAE team defeated Lebanon's 3-2, netting their first three points in the qualifications.

On Monday, Kuwait - the frontrunner in Group C, will face South Korea while the UAE will face Northern Mariana Islands. On Wednesday, the Kuwaiti team will be pitted against Lebanon in a decisive match for both sides. Kuwait is hosting the Group C qualifiers of the U-20 Asian Cup to be held in China next year. — KUNA



Kuwait and Northern Mariana Islands match in progress. — KUNA