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3 Crown Prince returns home after attending UNGA session



10 Japan's speedy, spotless Shinkansen trains turn 60



13 'National treasure': UK actor Maggie Smith dies aged 89



16 Man City held without Rodri as Palmer's 4 goals fire Chelsea



NASRALLAH ASSASSINATED

Hezbollah chief martyred in Zionist strike • Group vows to fight on



BEIRUT: (left) People and rescuers gather near the smoldering rubble of a building destroyed in a Zionist air strike in the Haret Hreik neighborhood of Beirut's southern suburbs on Sept 27, 2024. (Right) A handout picture shows Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah posing for a picture during a meeting at an undisclosed location. — AFP photos

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwaitis urged to leave Lebanon

KUWAIT: Kuwait's foreign ministry urged on Saturday all Kuwaiti citizens in Lebanon to leave immediately. The ministry reiterated to its citizens to communicate through the following numbers: The emergency phone line of the embassy in Beirut (+961 171171441) or the foreign ministry's emergency phone lines (+965 159 and +965 22225504). — KUNA

Army chief inspects military sites

KUWAIT: Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Lt Gen Bandar Al-Muzain on Saturday made an inspection tour of a number of military camps and sites. Muzain listened to a detailed briefing by the commanders and guards on the nature of the assigned tasks and duties, the mechanism of work and readiness. Muzain called for maintaining the highest levels of vigilance and combat readiness, wishing them continued success in carrying out the tasks assigned to them to maintain the security and safety of the homeland. — KUNA

Storm Helene kills 47 in US

ATLANTA: Authorities across a wide swath of the southeastern United States faced the daunting task on Saturday of cleaning up from Hurricane Helene, one of the most powerful to hit the country, as the death toll continued to rise. At least 47 deaths were reported by early Saturday, and officials feared still more bodies would be discovered across several states. Downgraded late on Friday to a post-tropical cyclone, Helene continued to produce heavy rains across several states, sparking life-threatening flooding that threatened to create dam failures that could inundate entire towns. At least 3.25 million customers woke up early on Saturday without power across five states. The worst outages were in South Carolina with more than 1 million homes and businesses without power, and Georgia with 777,000 without power. — Reuters

JERUSALEM/BEIRUT: The Zionist entity killed Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in a powerful airstrike in Beirut, dealing a huge blow to the Iran-backed group as it reels from an escalating campaign of Zionist attacks. The Zionist military said on Saturday it had killed Nasrallah in the strike on the group's central command headquarters in Beirut's southern suburbs a day earlier. Hezbollah confirmed he had been killed, without saying how.

His death is not only a major blow to Hezbollah, but also to Iran, removing an influential ally who helped build Hezbollah into the linchpin of Tehran's constellation of allied groups in the Arab world. A senior member of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, deputy commander Abbas Nilforoushan, was also killed in Zionist attacks in Beirut, Iranian media reported on Saturday. Hezbollah said in a statement that it would continue

its battle against the Zionist entity "in support of Gaza and Palestine, and in defense of Lebanon and its steadfast and honorable people". Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV aired Quranic verses after his death was announced. Bursts of gunfire were heard in Beirut. The Zionist military said sirens rang out Saturday in

central areas of the country as a missile fired from Yemen was intercepted, with journalists reporting hearing explosions over Jerusalem.

Friday's airstrike — a succession of massively powerful blasts that left a crater at least 20 m deep — shook Beirut. The Zionist entity carried out further airstrikes on the area and more widely in Lebanon on

Saturday. The Zionist military said earlier that Nasrallah was eliminated in a "targeted strike" on the group's underground headquarters beneath a residential building in Dahiyeh — a Hezbollah-controlled southern suburb of Beirut.

It said he was killed along with another top Hezbollah leader, Ali Karaki, and other commanders. "The strike was conducted while Hezbollah's senior chain of command were operating from the headquarters and advancing terrorist activities against the citizens of (the Zionist entity)," it said. Middle East expert James Dorsey described Friday's attack as "very sophisticated", adding it "demonstrates not only significant technological capacity but just how deeply (the Zionist entity) has penetrated Hezbollah". Nasrallah's death is by far the most significant blow in a

Continued on Page 6

Khamenei slams massacre, Erdogan blasts genocide

DUBAI: Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called on Muslims on Saturday "to stand by the people of Lebanon and the proud Hezbollah with whatever means they have and assist them in confronting the ... wicked regime (of the Zionist entity)". Khamenei, in a statement after the Zionist army said it had killed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, said: "The fate of this region will be determined by the forces of resistance, with Hezbollah at the forefront", state media reported.

New fire safety rules for buildings

KUWAIT: Acting Chief of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Lt Gen Khaled Fahad announced new fire safety requirements for investment buildings for future incidents. All investment buildings, regardless of height, will now be required to have fire sprinkler systems, a measure previously only mandated for buildings over 10 floors. These changes follow the Mangaf fire incident, with intensified inspections focusing on doors of roofs, basements and storage areas.

For private housing, KFF advises owners to install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers, although such requirements remain optional. Collaboration with the Kuwait Municipality and Public Authority for Housing Welfare is planned to integrate these safety measures into housing plans. Since the start of 2024, there have been 4,056 fire incidents, with 918 in residential areas and 411 in non-residential areas. The total number of rescue operations reached 5,997 cases, while fire incidents involving juveniles and children totaled 396, including 184 deliberate acts. — KUNA (See Page 2)

Law changes to preserve local identity

KUWAIT: Director of the Citizenship Department at the Interior Ministry Col Abdulrahman Al-Othman explained that the recent amendments to the Kuwaiti nationality law is aimed at reinforcing national identity and principles. The changes include revising the first two paragraphs of Provision 7, specifying that a foreign wife of a man who acquires Kuwaiti citizenship will not be recognized as a Kuwaiti citizen, although his children will be considered

Kuwaitis with the option to retain their original nationality upon reaching adulthood. Article 8 states that a foreign woman married to a Kuwaiti man cannot obtain Kuwaiti citizenship.

Jurist Col Mohammad Al-Mazyad elaborated that citizenship can be revoked for individuals who obtained it through fraud, committed crimes against state security, breached trust or engaged in behavior damaging to Kuwait's social and economic systems. This revocation applies to naturalized relatives as well. Article 13 concerns naturalized citizens rather than those of Kuwaiti lineage, and the law no longer allows Kuwaiti women to automatically pass citizenship to their children. However, children of Kuwaiti mothers will be granted residency benefits until they reach adulthood. — KUNA (See Page 3)

SEE PAGE 5



TEHRAN: A demonstrator stands in the rain holding up a picture of late Lebanese Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah during an anti-Zionist protest in Tehran's Palestine Square on Sept 28, 2024. — AFP



Mol explains citizenship rules

Person stripped of citizenship categorized according to previous nationality

KUWAIT: The Director of the Citizenship Department at the Ministry of Interior, Colonel Abdulrahman Al-Othman, said the decree-in-law amending some provisions of the Amiri Decree (15/1959) regarding the Kuwaiti nationality came after it was studied from all legal aspects and that it aimed at bolstering "the citizenship principle in line with the state general order." Col Al-Othman, in a statement to KUNA on Friday, said the decree-in-law, approved by the Cabinet on Tuesday, had been drafted due to the keenness on the national identity and preserving it.

Accordingly, the first two paragraphs of Provision 7 were substituted. Articles 8 and 13 of the Amiri Decree (15/1959) state: The first paragraph of Provision 7 stipulates that the wife of a foreigner who acquires the Kuwaiti citizenship is not recognized as a Kuwaiti citizen. His juvenile children are

considered Kuwaitis and enjoy the option to uphold their original nationality in adulthood. The second paragraph of the same article says that children who maintain Kuwaiti citizenship are subject to the rules of the previous term.

Provision 8: A foreign woman who marries a Kuwaiti cannot become Kuwaiti. Meanwhile, Jurist Colonel at the Mol, Mohammad Al-Mazyad, told KUNA that any person who acquires Kuwaiti citizenship is subject to the national laws and values, regardless of the duration of holding it. Jurist Col Al-Mazyad said according to a decree and after examination by the minister of interior, a person can be stripped of Kuwaiti citizenship in the cases where he or she has acquired it through fraud, counterfeiting, or false claims. In such a case, a relative who has acquired the citizenship through the same illegal means will also be deprived of it.

This measure is also applicable to persons who commit a disgraceful crime, breach trust, commit state security crime locally or abroad, or offend the sanctity of His Almighty, the Prophets (PBUH), or the esteemed status of His Highness the Amir. The penalty is also applicable to an individual who has been dismissed from his job in the public sector due to dishonesty during the 10 years since being granted Kuwaiti citizenship, in the cases where the state's higher interest and external security are at stake. Moreover, a naturalized relative will be subject to the same punishment.

The Kuwaiti citizenship will also be withdrawn in the case where the involved person has promoted ideas detrimental to the country's economic and social systems and affiliated with a foreign entity. It is also applicable to a naturalized relative. Regarding article 13, Jurist Col Al-Mazyad

explained that it covers the naturalized Kuwaiti and not the Kuwaiti national according to the first article (pedigree). A Kuwaiti woman who has married to a non-Kuwaiti in the past is entitled to apply for citizenship for her children.

However, in the current law, the article on naturalizing Kuwaiti women's children has been repealed, and provision 7 (repeated A) says that the minister of interior is entitled to issue a decision stipulating that treating the juvenile of a Kuwaiti mother with residency can be on par with that given to the citizen until he (she) reaches adulthood. Jurist Col Al-Mazyad said that all citizenship applications in the census 65 had been scrapped. Any person who may be stripped of Kuwaiti citizenship will be categorized according to his or her previous nationality. In the case where it is known, he (or she) is referred to the Central Apparatus for Illegal Residents. — KUNA

KFF outlines new requirements to prevent fires

KUWAIT: Acting Chief of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Lieutenant General Khaled Fahad said that there would be new requirements on investment buildings as a step to further prevent fires. In an interview with KUNA, Lieutenant General Fahad said Saturday that KFF has been working on a project to link commercial buildings with the main KFF operations center, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

He explained that these new percussions came after Al-Mangaf fire, and that these include intensifying inspection operations on buildings, especially the doors of the facility's roof, basements and storage areas. He added that all investment buildings, regardless of the number of floors, would be required to install a fire sprinkler system, whereas before it was only applied to buildings with more than 10 floors.

In regards to private housing, Lieutenant General Fahad said that the Fire Force Law exempted private housing from the safety requirements of the force, pointing out that KFF advises the owners to have smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. He added that the simple requirements also include that the elevators used and gas extensions be approved by KFF, pointing out that these procedures don't require licenses.

He noted that some citizens have begun to apply all security and safety measures in their facilities, and as a result of their awareness, a decrease in the number of fires has recently been observed. Fahad also pointed out that there is no objection to work with Kuwait Municipality and

Public Authority for Housing Welfare to provide them with these requirements when approving the housing plans, adding that this would be implemented soon. He stressed that the Fire Department has been following up on the issue of licenses, which must be renewed, and that each company must prepare a monthly report to be submitted to KFF.

Regarding the statistics of weekly incidents of fires, rescue and other incidents, the Lieutenant General revealed that it amounted to 4,056 fires since the beginning of 2024 until mid-September. He explained that these cases were 720 in Kuwait City, 562 in Hawally, 457 in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, 713 in Farwaniya, 556 in Jahra, and 656 in Ahmadi, while the Marine Fire Department dealt with 24 cases, Special Tasks with 10 cases, (Northern) with 141 cases, (Southern) with 206 cases, and 11 cases regarding airports.

He said that the number of fires in residential areas reached 918 fires, distributed as follows: 140 in the Kuwait City, 169 in Hawally, 124 in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, 174 in Farwaniya, 132 in Jahra, and 169 in Ahmadi, and 5 cases in the north and 5 cases in the south. As for the number of fires in non-residential areas, there were 411 cases, distributed as follows: 77 in Kuwait City, 58 in Hawally, 45 in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, 58 in Farwaniya, 33 in Jahra, and 43 in Ahmadi, while Special Tasks dealt with two fire cases, the (Northern) with 29 fires, and the (Southern) with 62 fires. The number of transportation fires reached 739 cases, distributed as follows: 7 marine transportation cases, 731 land transportation cases, and one air transportation case.

The total number of rescue operations reached 5,997 cases, distributed as follows: 1,031 cases in Kuwait City, followed by Hawally with 886, Mubarak Al-Kabeer with 802, Farwaniya with 768, Ahmadi with 826, while the Marine Fire Department dealt with 871 cases, Special Tasks with 39, (Northern) 59 cases, (Southern) 160 cases, and 12 cases regarding airports. The number of preparedness cases reached 129 cases, distributed as follows: 15 cases in Kuwait City, 12 in Hawally, 4 in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, 8 in Farwaniya, 4 in Jahra, 5 in Ahmadi, while Marine Fire Department with 21 cases, Special Tasks with 13, and airports with 47 cases.

He pointed out that the incidents of fires caused by juveniles and children tampering with a heat source or flammable materials - deliberate act reached 396 fire incidents according to the incident reporting system, with 184 fire incidents caused by deliberate act and 212 fire incidents caused by juveniles and children. — KUNA



Falcon enthusiasts watch the birds during the Kuwait International Falcon Exhibition on Saturday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Bird enthusiasts flock to Kuwait falcon exhibition

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: Scores of falconers and bird lovers flocked to the five-day falcon exhibition at Sabhan as the 8th edition of the Kuwait International Falcon event came to a close on Saturday. Billed as a successful event, this year's falcon exhibition attracted more than 21 countries including first-timers such as Poland, Austria, Portugal and Russia. The exhibition has been an important annual event for both enthusiasts and people interested in hunting and falconry equipment in Kuwait.

"The falcons, which are of great importance to Arab tradition and culture should be given extra care as they are under serious threat of extinction", said Dr Zubair Medammal, a scholar who has studied falcons extensively and doing research on falcons and attended the exhibition as a key speaker. The love of Kuwaitis for falcons is well-known as they passionately keep the tradition alive by raising the fal-

cons and using them for hunting.

Speaking to Kuwait Times, Dr Zubair said the falcon is the national bird of Kuwait and the country spends millions of dollars every year to purchase falcons from different parts of the World. Katara organizes International Hunting and Falcons Exhibition (S'hail) every year based on its continuous desire to preserve falconry and this year's exhibition ran from Sept 24-28 at the Hunting Exhibition Center in Sabhan, Kuwait.

Arabs constitute one-third of the world's falconers. It is believed that Arabs have hunted with falcons for the past 2,000 years. "Being the national bird, falcons are revered in Kuwait as symbols of strength, grace, and nobility. Historically, falcons were used for hunting, contributing to the sustenance of the Kuwaiti people and fostering a sense of camaraderie between human and bird," he added.

However, Dr Zubair cautioned that extra care should be taken while feeding falcons as many birds have died as a result of feeding on pesticides affected food and preying on infected birds. "It is the only bird which requires a passport to cross the border of a country," Zubair said, referring to the measures taken by some Gulf countries. Kuwait has implemented passport system for



Dr Zubair Medammal at the Falcon Exhibition venue.



falcons by CITES in 2021.

"The falcon has always been regarded as a very uncommon and shy bird and it is very rarely observed by amateur birdwatchers. To observe the falcons, one has to travel in an airplane," he said claiming he has flown nearly hundred times around the world for the same purpose. For falcon research, Dr Zubair visited the US, Europe, Australia, Germany, Thailand, Singapore, China,

Kuwait, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Morocco, Pakistan, Iran, Oman, Malaysia, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh etc. He received special training in artificial falcon-breeding from Stuttgart. Dr Zubair is the first and only Indian to get a doctorate in the study of falcons. He is also the only one who has recorded and made sonogram of 15 different vocalizations of various species of falcons.

Kuwait's tourism initiatives contribute to peacemaking

MADRID: Secretary General of the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Zurab Pololikashvili hailed Kuwait's tourism initiatives that contribute to peacemaking in the Gulf region, pointing out that Kuwait has a great potential to be a destination for tourists from various corners of the world. Speaking to KUNA on the sidelines of World Tourism Day (WTD), commemorated each year on September 27, Pololikashvili said Kuwait's initiatives highlight cultural heritage, hospitality, and peacemaking in the Gulf region, inviting people of different cultures to learn about Kuwait's history and traditions.

Pololikashvili added that Kuwait has great capacities at the level of peacemaking through organizing cultural events and carnivals, thus facilitating interaction with foreign visitors and enhancing understanding of the Kuwaiti culture and heritage. He pointed out that Kuwait has rich culture and history with a developed infrastructure that facilitates tourist, social, and economic development. Pololikashvili hailed the "Kuwait Vision 2035" strategy that aims to diversify the economy and sources of income and applauded the country's efforts to become a regional financial and commercial hub.

He praised the country's development, indicating successful beautification projects, namely the construction of modern seaside areas and turning the spots into tourist destinations, lucrative for locals and citizens from neighboring countries. The Arabian Gulf is a focal point for its rich culture, unique geography, and mostly the efforts in achieving economic diversification through reducing its reliance on oil, Pololikashvili added.

He explained that the tourism sector in the area is vital for global tourism considering the last agreement between Saudi Arabia and UNWTO to support tourism education in its universities and develop courses online by the organization, which includes more than 30,000 students worldwide, as a clear example of the region's commitment to boost the sector. He praised Saudi Vision 2030, which aims to



Secretary General of the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Zurab Pololikashvili

turn the Kingdom into a global attraction by opening several historical sites for international tourism, one of the tangible steps to enhance cultural exchanges with the visiting foreigners.

Moreover, the UNWTO celebration 2023 in the capital Riyadh is evidence of the kingdom's adherence to sustainability and green investments in its tourism. Pololikashvili said the UAE, specifically Dubai and Abu Dhabi, succeeded internationally in promoting these emirates as international tourist destinations through their modern infrastructure, such as transportation. As for Doha, he considered it a cultural center that lures tourists from countries worldwide, noting the landmark move of establishing the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ).

He also hailed Oman for its tourism strategies through projects that help the environment and cultural traditions by building infrastructure, eco-friendly hotels, and renovating historical sites. He has affirmed that Jordan is a safe tourism destination due to the magnificent locations such as the Dead Sea and Petra. Moreover, the Arabian Gulf sustains its natural environment as a way to attract tourists, and these efforts reflect sustainable tourism and provide a good example of how it contributes to achieving economic and social goals, he said.

He hailed the Gulf as a major destination for travelers, clarifying that airlines like Kuwait Airways, Qatar Airways, Emirates, and Riyadh Air are expanding their network with big cities around the world.

Additionally, the region witnessed great tourism growth, increasing by 26 percent in 2019. Pololikashvili said. The data indicate that Qatar witnessed the strongest performance in 2019, with a growth rate of 147 percent, followed by Albania at 93 percent, then El Salvador at 81 percent, and Saudi Arabia at 73 percent. International tourism recovered in 2019 before COVID-19 with 790 million tourists around the world, an 11 percent growth, he added.

Pololikashvili stressed that the organization will continue to reinforce international peace and sustainable tourism and recover from the repercussions of the COVID-19 outbreak. Celebrations of WTD under the theme "Tourism and Peace" will be held in the Georgian capital Tbilisi, which will host a conference that explores the importance of traveling, cultural exchange, and sustainable tourism practices. Furthermore, the conference showcases ideas and strategies for tourism and its relevance to social justice, human rights, and economic equality.

International tourism earned \$3.4 billion—three percent of global GDP in 2023, compared to four percent in 2019. For his annual letter on WTD, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said international tourism leads to a major shift in local societies through work opportunities and boosting local economies. Tourism enhances economic interdependence between neighboring countries, preserves traditions, helps to de-escalate tension, and creates peace, Guterres added.

Meanwhile, Pololikashvili's annual letter on WTD stated that many countries have been afflicted with wars and insecurity, stressing that "we must advocate for peace urgently." He noted that international tourism unifies people worldwide through humanity, and it builds trust and respect, which minimize conflicts. Pololikashvili called for abiding by international law respecting UN values and working together as one sector to improve tourism and regain peace.

UNWTO has 160 member states and has a regional office in the Saudi capital Riyadh, covering the Middle East. UNWTO celebrates WTD on different continents every year. Last year, it was held in Riyadh under the theme "Tourism and Green Investments." The organization's priority is to promote tourism for sustainable development, and the aim of the WTD annual meeting is to raise awareness of the importance of tourism in social, cultural, economic, and political fields. — KUNA

Local



Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, leaves New York after participating in the meetings of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly. - KUNA photos



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince received the President of the World Economic Forum Borge Brende on the sidelines of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince receives the President of the 75th session of the General Assembly, Advisor to the Board of Directors of the Turkish Limak Group and the Chairwoman of the Board of Directors on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly meetings in New York.

Amir's Representative returns after UNGA

UN backs sustainable Mideast peace efforts



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince receives the President of the World Health Organization on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meetings in New York.



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince meets with the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meetings in New York.



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince meets with the British Prime Minister on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meetings.

KUWAIT: 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 and his accompanying delegation returned to Kuwait after leading the country's delegation partaking in the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), held in New York. The accompanying delegation of His Highness the Amir's Representative comprised Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and senior officials of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the UN commits to keeping backing sustainable peace efforts, echoing his call for an immediate Gaza ceasefire. Guterres made the remarks while addressing a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) held late Friday upon Algeria's request on the Middle East situation, including the Palestinian issue. "The key to peace in the region is a political



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince receives the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince receives the Prime Minister of Lebanon on the sidelines of the 'High-Level Week' in New York.

solution," he said, calling on the international community to mobilize for an immediate ceasefire and the beginning of an irreversible process towards the end of Zionist occupation and the creation of a Palestinian State.

"I urge the Council to unite in support of an immediate ceasefire leading to a viable two-state solution. That is the only way to end this cycle of tragedy," he added. The UN chief warned that shockwaves radiating from the unprecedented death and destruction

in Gaza now threaten to push the entire region into the abyss: a full-scale conflagration with unimaginable consequences.

He added that the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice found that Zionist occupation's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unlawful, and that occupation has an obligation to end it as rapidly as possible. On the situation in Lebanon, Guterres sounded the alarm that war in Lebanon could lead to further escalation involving outside powers.

US Secretary of State Antony J Blinken said that the recent events show that the Middle East and the world are facing a precarious moment. "The events of the past week and the past few hours underscore what a precarious moment this is for the Middle East and for the world," he told a press conference in New York. He added that the choices that all parties make in the coming days would determine which path this region is on with profound consequences for its people, now and possibly for years to come. — KUNA



NEW YORK: Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met with his Algerian counterpart Ahmed Attaf on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly's 79th session in New York late Friday. — KUNA photos



Minister of Foreign Affairs meets with San Marino counterpart Luca Beccari, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly's 79th session in New York. The two sides discussed developing cooperation and bilateral ties, as well as the recent regional and international developments.



Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya meets with his Philippine counterpart Enrique A Manalo on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly.

GCC, China discuss strategic partnership and cooperation

NEW YORK: Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya took part in the joint ministerial meeting between GCC foreign ministers and their Chinese counterpart and state advisor Wang Yi. During the meeting, held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly's 79th session in New York late Friday, the two sides discussed strategic partnership and cooperation in different fields. They also discussed regional and international topics of mutual concern and the current developments in the region.

In another development, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya participated in the joint ministerial meeting of the GCC countries and Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), held on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly. The meeting focused on friendship, cooperation, and coordination between both sides and ways of promoting and bolstering them in political, economic, and investment domains. Both sides underlined all shared commitments, principles, and goals of cooperation and strategic partnership, along with the latest regional and international developments.

Counterterrorism Forum

The Minister of Foreign Affairs took part in the ministerial plenary meeting of the Global Counterterrorism Forum in New York. In a press statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the meeting was chaired by Vice President of the European Commission and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell and Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs,



Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met on Friday with the International Peace Institute (IPI) President Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly.

Migration, and Expatriates Dr. Badr Abdelatty.

The meeting reviewed frameworks for enhancing joint international cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and types and supporting the exchange of expertise and capacity building between national and regional institutions, the ministry said.

The conferees also mulled boosting cooperation and integration to eliminate fanaticism, extremism, and terrorism and support international and regional organizations specialized in this domain. The meeting also tackled the issue of foreign terrorist fighters and their families' repatriation to their countries of origin and integrating them into their communities after they undergo rehabilitation programs preceded by fair trials and serving their sentences in their countries and taking the necessary legal measures in accordance with local laws and human rights principles.

UNSC reforms

Meanwhile, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for reforming the global mul-



Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya takes part in Global Counterterrorism Forum ministerial meeting.

tilateral system, mainly the financial architecture and the UN Security Council, to make them more legitimate and effective. This came during Guterres' speech at the Annual Meeting of the Group of 77 Foreign Ministers, where he welcomed the recent adoption of the Pact for the Future, the Declaration on Future Generations, and the Global Digital Compact.

Guterres called for climate justice and urged G20 countries to implement action plans to reduce emissions, prevent the worst impacts of climate chaos, and set the world on a path to phasing out fossil fuels. He emphasized the need for technological justice, ensuring its benefits reach all of humanity, and called on academia and civil society to collaborate in managing the risks of emerging technologies, including AI. Furthermore, Guterres confirmed that his high-level advisory body on AI released its recommendations last week, which included bridging the AI divide through a global fund and a capacity-building network to boost AI expertise in developing countries. — KUNA

MoH develops action plan for antimicrobial resistance



Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi is seen delivering a speech at a high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance. — KUNA

NEW YORK: Kuwait has developed a national action plan to combat antimicrobial resistance based on a strong multi-sectoral approach on the "One Health" principle, Health Minister Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi said. This came in a speech delivered by Al-Awadhi during a high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance held as part of the activities of the high-level week of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

During the meeting, world leaders adopted a political declaration on antimicrobial resistance committing to a clear set of goals and actions, including reducing deaths linked to bacterial antimicrobial resistance by 10 percent by 2030. Al-Awadhi stressed that Kuwait realizes that antibiotic resistance is one of the most dangerous threats facing humanity and constitutes a threat that transcends borders, making it a global challenge, noting that this requires international cooperation to confront it.

Al-Awadhi pointed out that the national strategy for antimicrobial resistance focuses on programs for the optimal use of antibiotics, infection prevention and control programs, and the implementation of strict regulations aimed at reducing the prescription of inappropriate antibiotics. He pointed out Kuwait's success in enhancing its participation in the World Health Organization's Global Surveillance System for Antibiotic Resistance and Use (GLAS).

Al-Awadhi explained that Kuwait is keen to have updated policies for the use of these antibiotics in all its health facilities, pointing out the launch of a national unit to regulate the use of antibiotics under the umbrella of the Kuwait Center for Disease Prevention and Control (Kuwait CDC). Regarding the framework of scientific research and development, the Kuwaiti Minister said that the country has deepened its scientific participation in research related to antibiotic resistance, citing Kuwait's obtaining of a patent for developing animal production and food safety.

He added that the country is committed to supporting international efforts aimed at strengthening national and global responses to combat antimicrobial resistance by participating in ministerial conferences and contributing to the formulation of policies related to combating antibiotics. Al-Awadhi stated that Kuwait sets goals that are consistent with the World Health Organization's action plan on antimicrobial resistance, noting that it seeks to enhance its successes within the framework of the AWARE program for classifying antibiotics. The minister stressed that Kuwait calls for continuous work and cooperation between countries to maintain the progress made and achieve long-term goals in reducing antibiotic resistance, thus enhancing everyone's commitment to global health security. — KUNA



Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya holds talks with US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly.



Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya receives Montenegrin counterpart Dr Filip Ivanovic on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly.



Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met on Friday with Slovenian counterpart Tanja Fajon on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

Oil undersecretaries seek unified vision

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Oil affirmed on Saturday the importance of the 18th meeting of the Undersecretaries of the Ministries of Petroleum in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, scheduled to be held in Qatar on Monday, with the aim of enhancing joint cooperation in the field of oil and gas to face regional and global challenges in the oil market.

The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Oil, Sheikh Dr Nemer Fahad Al-Malik Al-Sabah, said in a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the meeting aims to present a unified Gulf vision on the international scene that enhances the region's position as a major source of energy. Sheikh Nemer Al-Sabah explained that this meeting comes in preparation for the meeting of the Petroleum Cooperation Committee at the level of oil ministers, which will be held on October 6, where many important issues will be discussed to enhance joint work among member states.

He pointed out that the agenda includes discussing and approving four main topics and six other topics for review and briefing, stressing the importance of effective coordination among GCC countries to face future challenges in the energy sector, unify visions, and present a unified Gulf vision on the international scene that enhances the region's position as a major source of energy.

For her part, the Director of Public Relations and Petroleum Media at the Ministry, Sheikha Tamader Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, said in a statement to KUNA that the 18th meeting reflects the importance of cooperation to enhance Gulf integration in the oil and gas sector, especially since this meeting comes at an important time when the world is witnessing rapid changes in energy markets. She added that Kuwait always places Gulf cooperation at the forefront of its priorities, expressing its aspiration through this meeting to strengthen ties and work together to direct efforts towards achieving economic and environmental sustainability in the oil and energy sector.

She stated that Gulf cooperation is a fundamental pillar in enhancing the stability of oil markets, stressing that integration between the GCC countries in facing increasing challenges will contribute to enhancing competitive capabilities at the global level and secure the future of the oil and energy sector in the region. The Kuwaiti delegation, which will be headed by Sheikh Nemer Al-Sabah, includes Sheikha Tamader Al-Sabah, Director of the Planning and International Relations Department, Manahil Al-Rashidi, and Director of the Office of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Oil, Mudhi Al-Shammari. — KUNA



Sheikh Dr Nemer Fahad Al-Malik Al-Sabah

Zain Great Idea bootcamp kicks off to upskill entrepreneurs, startup owners

Intensive bootcamp features workshops, training programs, and one-on-one mentoring sessions



Zain officials with partners during the bootcamp kick-off event.



Great turnout from entrepreneurs to learn most essential business skills.

KUWAIT: The Zain Great Idea (ZGI) accelerator program's first phase has kicked-off. The bootcamp witnessed great turnout from idea owners and entrepreneurs to learn the most essential business and startup management skills, featuring intensive workshops, training programs, and one-on-one mentoring sessions, aims to upskill entrepreneurs and startup owners, and is facilitated by a group of experts from local, regional, and international academic institutions.

The all-new Zain Great Idea accelerator program recently launched in strategic partnership with Rasameel Investment Company and continues its decade-long mission of opening doors to sustainable growth and investment opportunities for entrepreneurs and innovators in Kuwait. Prior to the bootcamp's kick-off, the new participants joined a special orientation session, where they were introduced to the program's plan, objectives, and stages, as well as the schedule for workshops, mentoring sessions, and discussions during the bootcamp, which is one of the program's key stages.

The bootcamp is a significant phase of ZGI, lasting three weeks and providing participants with a wealth of information and essential skills for the success of any tech company. This is done through interactive workshops, training programs, one-on-one mentoring sessions, and discussions with

founders and executives, all aimed at sharing experiences and helping participants find the best opportunities for growth.

The camp's content is delivered by a group of trainers, specialists, and experts from leading local, regional, and global academic institutions, including Prof. Paris de l'Etraz, an IE Business School Professor with a PhD on elements of emotional intelligence in the workplace. He has 20 years of experience in investment banking and venture capital, and holds the position of MD of IE Venture Labs, the largest startup accelerator in Europe. Paris founded multiple startups and supported others in the field of gaming, solar power, technology, and CRM Banking software.

Also joining the bootcamp is Prof Mike Grandinetti, an active Professor in the fields of innovation, entrepre-

neurship, human-centric design and digital marketing. He has started and spent his entire career in the world's most leading innovation clusters running over 200 Hackathons and actively accelerated several hundred startups at Brown, Harvard and MIT.

In addition, the program features Gaelle Bou Abdo, a successful serial entrepreneur specializing in HR and organizational development. With expertise in consumer behavior and market research, complemented by her certification as a digital marketing professional, she brings a unique blend of skills to her work. As the Head of Innovation at Nestlé MENA, Gaelle focuses on developing new products, creating innovative business models, and streamlining processes to drive significant business outcomes. In addition, Gaelle mentors startups and scale-ups around the world. She is also an Adjunct Professor at IE Business School in Spain.

Also joining the bootcamp is Noorhan Al Zann, Founder & CEO of Noor Coaching and Consultancy. She's a CFA Charter holder with an MBA focused on sustainable finance. She's been a mentor and investment advisor for over 450 startups in 6 countries and enjoys a career of over 12 years in financial services focusing on treasury & investments. Noorhan also has 8+ years of experience as a Senior Lecturer (GCC) on Banking & Invest-

ment topics. The bootcamp is also set to feature other experts joining from the Applied Innovation Institute, a non-profit thinktank from Silicon Valley focused on accelerating innovation and empowering entrepreneurs.

In addition, a number of sessions will be facilitated by experts from Architech Solutions, the Kuwait-based technology consultancy firm, helping participants with technology consulting, online business strategy, product development, digital marketing, user experience consulting, and more. For more than 14-years, Zain Great Idea has been a unique success story, establishing itself as one of the most impactful business accelerators locally and regionally. It has provided numerous opportunities for hundreds of ambitious entrepreneurs and startups, connecting many with leading tech companies and organizations in places like Silicon Valley, to gain first-hand experience.

Through this program, Zain aims to empower Kuwait's tech startup ecosystem and foster an innovation-driven environment that creates tangible economic and social impact. This step also translates the company's strategic plans as a business that seeks promising opportunities for diversification and sustainable growth in a highly competitive market. Additionally, Zain may acquire shares in the ZGI startups to boost their potential and commercialization drive.

MoH holds training course for doctors

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health organized the first training course for doctors of the Kuwaiti Board of Otorhinolaryngology (ENT) and participants from various specialties on the mechanism of conducting scientific research and practical training. Head of the Otorhinolaryngology Department at Farwaniya Hospital and Director of the Otorhinolaryngology

Program at the Ministry, Dr Ahmad Al-Rashidi, said in a press statement on Saturday that the aim of the course, organized by the administration of the Kuwaiti Board of Otorhinolaryngology (ENT) Program, is to know all the requirements and techniques required to publish this scientific research, whether locally or internationally.

Al-Rashidi pointed out that this comes within the framework of the Ministry's constant efforts to develop and enhance the capabilities of its doctors and the continuous encouragement of the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi for continuing medical education and raising the scientific and professional level of doctors in Kuwait, noting that the course was held with the support of officials of postgraduate studies at the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations.

He stated that Dr. Ahmed Haraz lectured on the principles and basics of scientific research and how to formulate it in a way that ensures its acceptance for international publication, with a remarkable presence of Kuwaiti Board doctors and a number of doctors working in the Ministry. Consultant Otorhinolaryngologist and Head of the College of Otorhinolaryngology, Dr Abdul Mohsen Al-Turki, explained that scientific research is the key to progress and advancement in medical services and keeping pace with medical developments in various parts of the world, indicating that many similar scientific and research events will be held in the future.

Al-Turki stressed the need to encourage doctors to conduct medical research in order to enhance their capabilities and excel in providing services with a high level of accuracy in diagnosis, treatment, and the best health practices for members of society. For his part, Consultant Otorhinolaryngologist and Scientific Research Officer at the Kuwaiti Board of Otorhinolaryngology, Dr. Tamim Al-Ali, said that the interest of Kuwaiti Board doctors in scientific research and their efforts to learn its foundations and how to formulate it is a clear indication of raising the level of medical services in the future and placing Kuwait medically in a prestigious position among various countries.

Al-Ali stated that the Ministry pays great attention to medical education and training programs and sponsors scientific activities and training courses to encourage keeping up with the latest developments globally and locally and exchanging knowledge and expertise in a way that reflects on the service provided to patients and the reality of the health system in general. He said that holding such training courses is evidence of doctors' insistence on scientific progress and development, pointing to the importance of the various topics raised by the course and the new developments in the broad field of specialization that aim to enhance optimal medical practice based on evidence and the role of young doctors in research and publication. — KUNA



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Newly discovered comet appears in Kuwait's sky

KUWAIT: Comets are celestial bodies of ice orbiting in the solar system, they can be seen with the naked eye when they are close to the

sun, but otherwise telescopes are required to view them. One such comet is C/2023 A3 (Tsuchinshan-ATLAS), which was discovered in 2023 and enters the inner solar system to orbit the sun once every 80,000 years. Pictures of this comet were taken by Kuwaiti astrophotographer Khalid Al-Mutairi in Al-Salmi area west of Kuwait, at 4:49 am, Saturday local time, (1:49 GMT), at an altitude of five degrees above the horizon line. — KUNA photos



US, Asia-Pacific nations hold exercises in South China Sea

Harris vows migration crackdown, reform as she finally visits border

Page 6

Page 7



BEIRUT: A man points to a television set displaying an image of the late leader of Hezbollah Hassan Nasrallah with a black stripe for mourning during a broadcast from the private Lebanese station NBN in Beirut on Sept 28, 2024. — AFP

Nasrallah led Hezbollah to become regional force

Leadership was marked by conflict with Zionists and regional influence

BEIRUT: Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, whose death was announced on Saturday, led the Lebanese group through decades of conflict with Zionist entity, overseeing its transformation into a military force with regional sway and becoming one of the most prominent Arab figures in generations - with Iranian backing.

Hezbollah said in a statement that Nasrallah had been killed, but it did not say how. The Zionist entity military said earlier it had killed Nasrallah in an airstrike on the group's central headquarters in the southern suburbs of Beirut on Friday. Nasrallah's death deals a huge blow to the group. He will be remembered among his supporters for standing up to Zionist entity and defying the United States.

His regional influence was on display over nearly a year of conflict ignited by the Gaza war, as Hezbollah entered the fray by firing on Zionist entity from southern Lebanon in support of its Palestinian ally Hamas, and Yemeni and Iraqi groups followed suit, operating under the umbrella of "The Axis of Resistance".

"We are facing a great battle," Nasrallah said in an Aug 1 speech at the funeral of Hezbollah's top military commander, Fuad Shukur, who was killed in a Zionist entity strike on the Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs of Beirut. Yet when thousands of Hezbollah members were injured and dozens killed, when their communications devices exploded in an apparent Zionist entity attack last week, that battle began to turn against his group. Responding to the attacks on Hezbollah's communications network in a Sept 19 speech, Nasrallah vowed to punish Zionist entity.

"This is a reckoning that will come,

its nature, its size, how and where? This is certainly what we will keep to ourselves and in the narrowest circle even within ourselves," he said. He had not given a broadcast address since then. Zionist entity has meanwhile dramatically escalated its attacks, killing several senior Hezbollah commanders in targeted strikes and unleashing a massive bombardment in Hezbollah-controlled areas of Lebanon, which has killed hundreds of people.

Recognized even by his enemies as a skilled orator, Nasrallah's speeches were followed by friend and foe alike. Wearing the black turban of a sayyed, or a descendant of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), Nasrallah used his addresses to rally Hezbollah's base but also to deliver carefully calibrated threats, often wagging his finger as he does so. He became secretary general of Hezbollah in 1992 aged just 35, the public face of a once shadowy group founded by Iran's Revolutionary Guards in 1982 to fight Zionist entity occupation forces.

Zionist entity killed his predecessor, Sayyed Abbas Al-Musawi, in a helicopter attack. Nasrallah led Hezbollah when its guerrillas finally drove Zionist entity forces from southern Lebanon in 2000, ending an 18-year occupation.

Conflict with Zionist entity largely defined his leadership. He declared "Divine Victory" in 2006 after Hezbollah waged 34 days of war with Zionist entity, winning the respect of many ordinary Arabs who had grown up watching Zionist entity defeat their armies.

But he became an increasingly divisive figure in Lebanon and the wider Arab world as Hezbollah's area of operations widened to Syria and beyond, reflecting

an intensifying conflict between Iran and US-allied Arab monarchies in the Gulf.

While Nasrallah painted Hezbollah's engagement in Syria - where it fought in support of President Bashar Al-Assad during the civil war - as a campaign against jihadists, critics accused the group of becoming part of a regional sectarian conflict. At home, Nasrallah's critics said Hezbollah's regional adventurism imposed an unbearable price on Lebanon, leading once friendly Gulf Arabs to shun the country - a factor that contributed to its 2019 financial collapse. In the years following the 2006 war, Nasrallah walked a tightrope over a new conflict with Zionist entity, hoarding Iranian rockets in a carefully measured contest of threat and counter threat.

The Gaza war prompted Hezbollah's worst conflict with Zionist entity since 2006, costing the group hundreds of its fighters including top commanders. After years of entanglements elsewhere, the conflict put renewed focus on Hezbollah's historic struggle with Zionist entity.

"We are here paying the price for our front of support for Gaza, and for the Palestinian people, and our adoption of the Palestinian cause," Nasrallah said in the Aug 1 speech. Nasrallah grew up in Beirut's impoverished Karantina district. His family hail from Bazouriyeh, a village in the Lebanon's predominantly Shiite south which today forms Hezbollah's political heartland.

He was part of a generation of young Lebanese whose political outlook was shaped by Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution. Before leading the group, he used to spend nights with frontline guerrillas fighting Zionist entity's occupying army. His teenage son, Hadi, died in battle in 1997, a loss that

gave him legitimacy among his core Shiite constituency in Lebanon.

Powerful enemies

He had a track record of threatening powerful enemies. As regional tensions escalated after the eruption of the Gaza war, Nasrallah issued a thinly veiled warning to US warships in the Mediterranean, telling them: "We have prepared for the fleets with which you threaten us."

In 2020, Nasrallah vowed that US soldiers would leave the region in coffins after Iranian general Qassem Soleimani was killed in a US drone strike in Iraq. As regional tensions rose in 2019 following an attack on Saudi oil facilities, he said Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates should halt the Yemen war to protect themselves. "Don't bet on a war against Iran because they will destroy you," he said in a message directed at Riyadh. On Nasrallah's watch, Hezbollah also clashed with adversaries at home in Lebanon.

In 2008, he accused the Lebanese government - backed at the time by the West and Saudi Arabia - of declaring war by moving to ban his group's internal communication network. Nasrallah vowed to "cut off the hand" that tried to dismantle it. It prompted four days of civil war pitting Hezbollah against Sunni and Druze fighters, and the Shiite group to take over half the capital Beirut.

He strongly denied any Hezbollah involvement in the 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri, after a UN-backed tribunal indicted four members of the group. Nasrallah rejected the tribunal - which in 2020 eventually convicted three of them in absentia over the assassination - as a tool in the hands of Hezbollah's enemies. — Reuters

Over 50,000 have fled Lebanon for Syria: UN official

GENEVA/BEIRUT: The UN refugee chief said Saturday that more than 50,000 people had fled to Syria amid escalating Zionist entity air strikes on Lebanon. "More than 50,000 Lebanese and Syrians living in Lebanon have now crossed into Syria fleeing Zionist entity air strikes," Filippo Grandi said on X. He added that "well over 200,000 people are displaced inside Lebanon".

A UNHCR spokesman said the total number of displaced in Lebanon had reached 211,319, including 118,000 just since Zionist entity dramatically ramped up its air strikes on Monday. Zionist entity has shifted the focus of its operation from Gaza to Lebanon, where heavy bombing has killed more than 700 people, according to Lebanon's health ministry, as cross-border exchanges escalated over the past Thousands of residents in Beirut's densely-packed southern suburbs camped out overnight in streets, public squares and makeshift shelters after Zionist entity ordered them out before its jets attacked the Hezbollah stronghold.

"I expected the war to expand, but I thought it would be limited to (military) targets, not civilians, homes, and children," said south Beirut resident Rihab Naseef, 56, who spent the night in a church yard. AFP photographers saw families spend the night in the open, scenes unheard of in Lebanon's capital since the Iran-backed Hezbollah and Zionist entity last went to war in 2006.

"I didn't even pack any clothes, I never thought we would leave like this and suddenly find ourselves on the streets," Naseef said. Zionist entity jets pounded Beirut's south and its outskirts throughout the night, and Beirut woke up to the aftermath of a night at war, smoke billowing from blazes in several places.

"I'm anxious and afraid of what may happen. I left my home without knowing where I'm going, what will happen to me, and whether I will return," Naseef said. Despite a night of intense strikes, the extent of the devastation and the casualty toll was still unclear early Saturday. Hezbollah's Al-Manar television broadcast footage from southern Beirut that showed flattened buildings, streets filled with rubble and clouds of smoke and dust above the area known as Dahiyeh.

Both Zionist entity and US media reported that Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah was the target, although a source close to the group said he was "fine". The group has not officially confirmed that he is still alive.

Martyrs' Square, Beirut's main public space, was filled with exhausted and worried families camping out in the open. "The bombing intensified at night and our house started shaking," said an angry Hala Ezzedine, 55, who slept in the square after fleeing the Burj Al-Barajneh neighborhood in Dahiyeh where strikes took place.

"What did the (Lebanese) people do to deserve this?" she asked, adding that her home had been destroyed by Zionist entity strikes during the 2006 war. "They want to wage war but what wrong did we do?" she said after nearly a year of cross-border violence between Zionist entity and Hezbollah which says it is acting in support of its ally Hamas in Gaza. — Agencies

Shots in the air, wails and disbelief on Beirut streets

BEIRUT: Armed men fired shots in the air and shut down shops in parts of Beirut and Hezbollah supporters said they were in a state of shock and disbelief on Saturday after the death of the Lebanese armed group's leader, Hassan Nasrallah. Hezbollah confirmed on Saturday Nasrallah had been killed, issuing a statement hours after the Zionist entity military said it had eliminated him in an airstrike on the group's headquarters in Beirut's southern suburbs on Friday. Nasrallah's death marked a devastating blow to Hezbollah as it reels from an intense campaign of Zionist entity attacks, and even as the news emerged some of the group's supporters were desperately hoping that somehow he was still alive.

"God, I hope it's not true. It's a disaster if it's true," said Zahraa, a young woman who had been displaced overnight from Hezbollah's stronghold in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

"He was leading us. He was everything to us. We were under his wings," she told Reuters tearfully by phone. She said other displaced people around her fainted or began to scream when they received notifications on their phone of Hezbollah's statement confirming his death. Nasrallah, who led Hezbollah since the group's previous leader was killed in a Zionist entity operation in 1992, was known for his televised addresses - watched carefully by both the group's backers and its opponents.

"We're still waiting for him to come out on the televi-



TEHRAN: A demonstrator holds a framed picture depicting (left to right) Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei; late Lebanese Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah; and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) Quds Force commander late Qasem Soleimani. — AFP

sion at 5 p.m. and tell us that everything is okay, that we can go back home," Zahraa said. In some parts of Beirut, armed men came into shops and told owners to shut them down, witnesses said. It was not immediately clear what faction the armed men belonged to. Sprays of gunshots were heard in the Hamra district in the city's west as mourners fired in the air, residents there said. Crowds were heard chanting, "For you, Nasrallah!"

Such firing often accompanies processions of either mourning or celebration in the Middle East - in this case, the former. Similar processions made their way through Beirut's southern

suburbs, according to Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV.

Lebanon's army tightened security measures across the capital, a security source told Reuters, after having protectively deployed around the US embassy north of Beirut. A second security source said Lebanon's security forces were preparing for a possible outbreak in sectarian tensions.

Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV played verses from the holy Quran to mourn the group's slain leader. A correspondent from MTV Lebanon, a station whose editorial line is typically anti-Hezbollah, offered her condolences on a live broadcast. — Reuters

International

Harris vows migration crackdown, reform as she finally visits border

Trump is 'fanning the flames of fear and division', says US VP

DOUGLAS: Kamala Harris pledged Friday she would tighten the border and fix America's broken immigration system on her first visit to the US-Mexico frontier as a presidential candidate. The US vice president is playing catch-up on immigration, with a majority of Americans saying they trust Republican rival Donald Trump more than her on one of the most important issues for voters ahead of November's election.

In a speech in Douglas, Arizona before a friendly audience, Harris tried to straddle a tough-on-illegal-migration line with a promise to reach across the aisle to fix an immigration system she said was broken. "The United States is a sovereign nation, and I believe we have a duty to set rules at our border and to enforce them, and I take that responsibility very seriously," she said.

"We are also a nation of immigrants... and so we must reform our immigration system to ensure that it works in an orderly way, that it is humane and that it makes our country stronger."

Harris said as president she would revive a bipartisan border bill Trump "tanked" last year, which would add 1,500 border agents and pay for 100 machines to detect smuggled fentanyl, a synthetic opioid ravaging US communities. And she said anyone crossing the border illegally would be barred from seeking asylum in the country.

But "hard-working migrants" who come to the US legally should be given a pathway to citizenship, she said. "I reject the false choice that suggests we must either choose between securing our border or creating a system of immigration that is safe, orderly and humane. We can and we must do both."

She said Trump, who has repeatedly demonized immigrants as murderers, rapists and mentally ill people, is "fanning the flames of fear and division." "The American people deserve a president who

cares more about border security than playing political games and their personal political future."

Harris earlier visited the border wall in Douglas, where she met with Border Patrol officials and was photographed alongside the distinctive metal slats. It was her first visit to the frontier since Joe Biden ceded the Democratic Party nomination to her, and Republicans have hammered her for staying away.

Arizona is one of the half-dozen battleground states expected to decide the agonizingly close November 5 election, and it is where polls show Harris may have to do the most work.

Hours before Harris spoke figures from the US Department of Homeland Security showed 425,000 non-citizens convicted of crimes are living in the United States, including more than 13,000 who have convictions for homicide. Trump leapt on the news, saying these people had been "let out of jail, and they're roaming our streets."

Trump claimed—wrongly—that the numbers referred to people who had entered illegally under the Biden-Harris administration. In fact, the figures give no details on how long these people have resided in the United States, and experts say many could have been in country for decades.

"These are people who, primarily, have already been charged and convicted and served their time," Aaron Reichlin-Melnick of the American Immigration Council told AFP. Reichlin-Melnick added that, under Trump, there were also millions of non-citizens living in the United States, including hundreds of thousands with criminal records. "The only reason that they cannot be deported is because of diplomatic issues with their home country and nothing to do with the US government's policy or practices," he said.

Recent polls have seen Harris eating into Trump's lead on migration with voters, yet it still remains a



SAN FRANCISCO: US Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris waves as she walks to a vehicle after arriving at San Francisco International Airport on Sept 27, 2024. — AFP

weak spot, with record illegal border crossings under her and Biden's watch. But Harris points to numbers that have plummeted since Biden signed an executive order in June temporarily closing the border to asylum seekers—to around 58,000 in August from a peak of 250,000 last December.

Republicans have focused on Harris's role early in the administration when Biden tasked her with looking into the causes of illegal migration from Central America. Trump's campaign slammed her "disgraceful" vis-

it, branding it "a desperate attempt to fool Americans into forgetting the chaos and devastation she has unleashed over her four years as Border Czar."

Trump has doubled down on his rhetoric targeting migrants, seeing it as appealing to his base of largely white, blue-collar voters. In remarks Thursday, Trump repeated his claim that migrants were "infecting our country," using language Biden's team has compared to that used by Nazi Germany. — AFP

9 dead, 48 missing as migrant boat sinks off Spanish isle

MADRID: A boat carrying migrants capsized off Spain's Canary Islands overnight, killing at least nine and leaving 48 missing, the national maritime rescue service said on Saturday. Eighty-four people were on board and 27 were saved after rescuers responded to a distress call received shortly after midnight from off El Hierro, one of the islands in the Atlantic archipelago, a statement said.

This follows the death of 39 migrants in early September when their boat sank off Senegal while attempting a similar crossing to the Canaries, from where migrants hope to reach mainland Europe.

Thousands of migrants have died in recent years setting off into the Atlantic to reach Europe onboard overcrowded and often dilapidated boats. The latest tragedy "again underlines the dangerousness of the Atlantic route", Canaries regional president Fernando Clavijo wrote on X.

"We need Spain and the EU to act decisively in the face of a structural humanitarian tragedy" as lives are lost "meters from Europe's southern border", he added. In late August, Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez visited Mauritania and The Gambia to sign cooperation agreements to crack down on people smugglers while expanding pathways for legal immigration. As of August 15, 22,304 migrants



LA RESTINGA, Spain: A Spanish Salvamento Marítimo (Sea Search and Rescue agency) vessel tows a boat after 3 "cayuco" boats with around 180 persons onboard arrived at La Restinga port on the Canary island of El Hierro. — AFP

had reached the Canaries since the start of the year, up from 9,864 in the same period the previous year. Almost 40,000 migrants entered the Canaries in 2023, a record on course to be broken this year as easier navigation conditions from September tend to lead to a spike in crossing attempts.

The Atlantic route is particularly deadly, with many of the crowded and poorly equipped boats unable to cope with the strong ocean currents. Some boats depart African beaches as far as 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from the Canaries. The International Organization for Migration, a UN agency, estimates that 4,857 people have died on this route since 2014. Many aid organizations say that is a massive undercount, with Caminando Fronteras, a Spanish NGO that aids migrants, saying 18,680 have died trying to reach Europe. — AFP

Church must learn from abuse victims, says Pope

BRUSSELS: Pope Francis said Saturday the Catholic Church must learn from victims of child sexual abuse, as he was pressed on the issue on the second day of his Belgium visit partially overshadowed by past scandals. Replying at a meeting in Brussels to a scripted question by a representative of an organization helping abuse victims, the pontiff acknowledged the "atrocious suffering and wounds" caused by the Church. "There is a need for a great deal of mercy to keep us from hardening our hearts before the suffering of victims, so that we can help them feel our closeness," Francis said at the meeting with clergy and pastoral workers, a day after meeting with a group of Belgian abuse victims.

"We must learn from them, as you said, to be a Church at the service of all without belittling anyone," the 87-year-old pope told the gathering at the vast Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Koekelberg, one of the largest churches in the world. "Indeed, one of the roots of violence stems from the abuse of power when we use the positions we have to crush or manipulate others."

His words came in response to Mia De Schampheleere, a Belgian politician and the coordinator of a Flemish centre for abuse victims, who asked how the Church could learn from its mistakes and create a safe environment for everyone. Decades of scandals and cover-ups have loomed large over the pope's visit to Belgium, where a hard-hitting documentary last year put the issue back



Pope Francis waves from his car as he arrives to meet with bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated persons, seminarians and pastoral workers in Brussels on Sept 28, 2024. — AFP

on front pages, prompting new victims to come forward. On Friday evening, 17 clerical sexual assault victims shared their stories and expressed their expectations to the pope, who "took note" of their requests, according to the Vatican. In an open letter this month, some victims had demanded the pontiff address paedophilia and set up a process for financial reparations.

Beginning his visit on Friday, Francis said the Church had to "seek forgiveness", calling child sexual abuse "our shame and our humiliation," after being questioned on the issue by King Philippe and Prime Minister Alexander De Croo. In a more jovial atmosphere on Saturday, Francis blessed children after his remarks, taking selfies and shaking hands with a crowd of faithful that greeted him at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. — AFP

NASRALLAH ASSASSINATED...

Continued from Page 1

devastating fortnight for Hezbollah, starting with a deadly attack on thousands of wireless communications devices used by its members. The Zionist entity also significantly ramped up air-strikes in Lebanon, killing several top Hezbollah commanders and hundreds of other people across wide areas of the country.

Hezbollah gave no immediate indication of who might succeed Nasrallah. Senior Hezbollah official Sayyed Hashem Safieddine has long been regarded as heir apparent. The group has not issued any statement on Safieddine's status or that of any other Hezbollah leaders — apart from Nasrallah — since the attack.

Friday's attacks on Dahiyeh were followed by more strikes on the area and other areas of Lebanon on Saturday. Huge explosions lit up the night sky, and more strikes hit the area in the morning. Smoke rose over the city. Hezbollah continued its cross-border rocket fire on Saturday, setting off sirens and sending residents running for shelter deep inside the Zionist entity.

The escalation has increased fears the conflict could spin out of control, potentially drawing in Iran, Hezbollah's principal backer, as well as the United States. Hezbollah has been waging hostilities with the Zionist entity since the eruption of the Gaza war a year ago, when it opened fire declaring solidarity with its Palestinian ally Hamas. Hezbollah has said it would only cease fire when the Zionist entity's Gaza offensive ends. Hamas and other allies of Hezbollah issued statements mourning his death.

Hamas condemned Nasrallah's assassination "in the strongest terms" and criticized the strikes on southern Beirut as "barbaric Zionist aggression and targeting of residential buildings". "We consider it a cowardly terrorist act," the group said in a statement that offered "condolences, and solidarity with the brothers in Hezbollah and the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon on the mar-

tyrdom of... Nasrallah".

Yemen's Houthi rebels said Nasrallah's killing would strengthen their determination to confront their Zionist foes. "The martyrdom of... Hassan Nasrallah will increase the flame of sacrifice, the heat of enthusiasm, the strength of resolve," the rebels' leadership council said in a statement, vowing to achieve "victory and the demise of the (Zionist) enemy".

Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani condemned the slaying of the Hezbollah chief as a "crime that shows the Zionist entity has crossed all the red lines". In a statement, he called the Zionist strikes on south Beirut a "shameful attack" and described Nasrallah as "a martyr on the path of the righteous".

Residents have fled Dahiyeh, seeking shelter in downtown Beirut and other parts of the city. "Yesterday's strikes were unbelievable. We had fled before and then went back to our homes, but then the bombing got more and more intense, so we came here, waiting for Netanyahu to stop the bombing," said Dalal Daher, speaking near Beirut's Martyrs Square, referring to Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Zionist entity says it has been attacking Hezbollah with the aim of allowing tens of thousands of residents evacuated from the north to return home. In Lebanon, well over 200,000 people have been displaced, around half of them since Monday.

Lebanon's transport and public works ministry asked an Iranian plane not to enter Lebanese airspace after the Zionist entity warned on Friday air traffic control at the Beirut airport that it would use "force" if it landed, a source at the Lebanese transport ministry told Reuters. The source said it was not clear what was on the plane, adding: "The priority is people".

Late on Friday, Zionist military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said Zionist air force planes were "patrolling the area of the Beirut airport" and would not allow "hostile flights with weapons to land" there. "We know about Iranian arms transfers to Hezbollah and are thwarting them," he said. Iran Air has canceled all flights to Beirut until further notice, the airline's spokesman told local media on Saturday. — Agencies

Ukraine says nine killed in Russian strikes on hospital

KYIV: Russian strikes on a hospital in the Ukrainian border city of Sumy killed nine people Saturday, as President Volodymyr Zelensky condemned Moscow for "waging war on hospitals".

Sumy lies just across the border from Russia's Kursk region, where Kyiv launched a shock offensive on August 6, aimed in part at creating a "buffer zone" inside Russia. "Russia hit one of the city's hospitals with Shahed drones," Zelensky wrote on Telegram and regional authorities said the toll had risen to nine dead and 12 injured. The attack comes as Zelensky is pressing Kyiv's Western allies to allow the use of long-range precision weapons to strike deep inside Russia.

"Everyone in the world who speaks about this war must pay attention to what Russia is targeting. They are waging war on hospitals, civilian objects, and people's lives," the

Khamenei slams massacre, Erdogan...

Continued from Page 1

supplied the Zionist entity with advanced weapons. "The Americans cannot deny their complicity with the Zionists," Pezeshkian said in a statement carried by state media.

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said Saturday that the killing of Nasrallah will bring about the Zionist entity's "destruction". "We warn the leaders of the occupying regime that the unjust bloodshed... especially of Hezbollah's secretary general, martyr Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah, will bring about their destruction," Iran's ISNA news agency quoted Aref as saying. Aref said that Iran will "stand by the Islamic resistance".

Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani vowed in a post on X that Nasrallah's "path will be continued and his holy goal will be realized in

president said. Ukrainian Prime Minister Shmygal said the attack was "more evidence of Russia's war crimes".

Zelensky posted photos of smoke pouring from windows above the destroyed entrance to the hospital, rescuers carrying patients down the stairs and treating two policemen lying on the ground.

On Saturday morning, three drones attacked the regional capital city and two hit the hospital. Ukraine's air force said. A first strike was followed by another around an hour later on Saturday morning, officials said, apparently targeting the rescue operation to maximize casualties. Ukrainian Interior Minister Igor Klymenko wrote on Telegram that the first strike "killed 1 person" and damaged several floors of the hospital. "During the evacuation of patients, the enemy struck again", Klymenko wrote.

Russia has destroyed or damaged at least 1,736 medical facilities in Ukraine since its February 2022 invasion, Human Rights Watch reported in July. A Russian missile struck a Kyiv children's hospital in July and a maternity hospital in Mariupol was bombed in March 2022.

Ukraine's National Police condemned the twin strikes as a "cynical attack" that killed one policeman and injured another. Regional prosecutors said the first attack took place at around 7.35 am (0435 GMT) and the second about an hour later. — AFP

the liberation of Jerusalem". Meanwhile, two regional officials briefed by Tehran told Reuters that Khamenei has been transferred to a secure location inside the country with heightened security measures in place. The sources said Iran was in constant contact with Lebanon's Hezbollah and other regional proxy groups to determine the next step after the killing of Nasrallah.

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Saturday the Zionist entity was committing a genocide in Lebanon after Nasrallah was confirmed among hundreds killed in Zionist strikes this week. "Lebanon and the Lebanese people are the latest target of a policy of genocide, occupation and invasion carried out by (the Zionist entity) since October 7," Erdogan wrote on X, without directly referring to Nasrallah's death.

"No person with a conscience can accept, excuse or justify such a massacre," he added, calling for a stop to the Zionist entity's "mindless" attempts to extend conflict across the region. Erdogan has regularly accused the Zionist entity of genocide throughout the devastating Gaza war. — Agencies

International

US, Asia-Pacific nations hold exercises in South China Sea

China also conducts military drills in disputed waterway

MANILA/BEIJING: The armed forces of five countries conducted joint maritime exercises in a portion of the South China Sea on Saturday as China carried out its own military drills in the disputed waterway.

The exercises involving the Philippines, United States, Australia, Japan and - for the first time - New Zealand took place in Manila's exclusive economic zone and sought to improve the militaries' interoperability, the Philippine armed forces said in a statement. Saturday's exercises included a Philippine warship, the United States' USS Howard, Japan's JS Sazanami, and New Zealand's HMNZS Aotearoa, it added. Australia's Department of Defense said the drills demonstrated "our collective commitment to strengthen regional and international cooperation in support of a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific". The exercises follow a series of air and sea encounters between the Philippines and China, which have sparred over disputed areas of the South China Sea, including the Scarborough Shoal, one of Asia's most contested features. The shoal has been occupied by China's coast guard for more than a decade.

On Wednesday, naval vessels from New Zealand and Australia sailed through the Taiwan Strait, part of the South China Sea. China, which claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own, says it alone exercises sovereignty and jurisdiction over the strait. Both the US and Taiwan say the strait - a major trade route through which about half of global container ships pass - is an international waterway.

Australia has "consistently pressed China on

peace and stability in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait", Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said in a speech to the UN General Assembly on Saturday. "We have welcomed the resumption of leader and military level dialogue between the US and China," Wong said, according to a transcript.

Chinese naval and air forces conducted patrols around a flashpoint reef in the South China Sea on Saturday, after a slew of tense encounters with the Philippines in the disputed waterway in recent months. The patrols coincided with joint exercises carried out by the United States, Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the Philippines in Manila's exclusive economic zone and within the South China Sea.

Beijing claims almost the entire South China Sea, brushing off rival claims of several Southeast Asian countries, the Philippines among them, and an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis.

Its claims include the waters around Scarborough Shoal—which Beijing seized from Manila in 2012 -- where the Chinese military's Southern Theater Command said Saturday it held air and sea patrols.

The triangular chain of reefs and rocks is 240 kilometers (150 miles) west of the Philippines' main island of Luzon and nearly 900 kilometers from the nearest major Chinese land mass of Hainan.

Beijing said the training activities around the shoal included "reconnaissance, early warning, and air-sea patrols". "Certain countries outside the region are stirring up trouble in the South China Sea, creating instability in the region," the Southern Theater Command said in a statement. — Agencies



AT SEA: A China Coast Guard ship is seen from the Philippine Coast Guard vessel BRP Cabra during a supply mission to Sabina Shoal in disputed waters of the South China Sea on August 26, 2024. — AFP

Nepal floods and landslides kill 66 people, 69 missing

KATHMANDU: At least 66 people have been killed in Nepal since early on Friday as persistent downpours triggered flooding and landslides, closing major roads and disrupting domestic air travel, officials said on Saturday. The death toll could rise, they added, with another 69 people reported missing, and 60 injured since Friday morning, home ministry official Dil Kumar Tamang told Reuters.

Most of the deaths took place in the Kathmandu valley, which is home to 4 million people and the country's capital, where the flooding brought traffic and normal activity to a standstill.

Rescue workers used helicopters and rubber boats to help people stranded on rooftops or elevated ground as some parts of Kathmandu reported up to 322.2 mm (12.68 inches) of rain over the last day. Most rivers in the Himalayan nation have swollen, spilling over roads and bridges, authorities said, after nearly a week's delay in the retreat of South Asia's annual monsoon rains brought torrential downpours across the region. Police were working to clear debris and reopen roads after landslides blocked highways in 28 places, said police spokesperson Dan Bahadur Karki.

The earliest let-up in the rains might not come until Sunday, said Binu Maharjan, a weather forecasting official in Kathmandu, who said a low pressure system over parts of neighboring India had caused this year's extended rains. "Heavy rains are likely to continue until Sunday morning and weather is likely to clear after that," Maharjan told Reuters.

Most central and eastern areas had received



KATHMANDU: Residents climb over a rooftop as their neighborhood submerged in flood waters after the Bagmati River overflowed in Kathmandu on Sept 28, 2024. — AFP

moderate to extremely heavy rainfall, ranging from 50 mm (2 inches) to more than 200 mm (8 inches), she added, with moderate levels recorded elsewhere.

International flights are operating, but many domestic flights have been disrupted, said Rinji Sherpa, a spokesperson for Kathmandu airport. The Koshi River in the southeast, which causes deadly floods in India's eastern neighboring state of Bihar almost every year, was running above the danger level at 450,000 cusecs, versus the normal figure of 150,000

cusecs, one official said.

A cusec is a measurement of water flow equivalent to one cubic foot a second. The river level is still rising, added Ram Chandra Tiwari, the area's top bureaucrat. Hundreds of people die in the monsoon season every year in the landslides and flash floods common in the mountainous nation. Authorities said at least 254 people have died and 65 missing in landslides, floods and lightning strikes since mid-June when the annual monsoon rains started. — Reuters

Blinken questions China peace push over Russia help

NEW YORK: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday questioned China's sincerity in seeking peace in Ukraine as he directly pressed his counterpart over exports that boost Russia's military.

Blinken met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, the latest talks as the two powers look to dial down once-soaring tensions. While crediting the diplomacy with bringing progress, Blinken warned that the United States would not back down on concerns over China's exports to Russia and made clear that Washington could impose more sanctions.

Blinken said that China is fueling the "war machine" of Russian President Vladimir Putin. "When Beijing says that, on the one hand, that it wants peace, it wants to see an end to the conflict, but on the other hand is allowing its companies to take actions that are actually helping Putin continue the aggression, that doesn't add up," Blinken told a news conference.

"Our intent is not to decouple Russia from China. Their relationship is their business," he said. "But insofar as that relationship involves providing Russia what it needs to continue this war, that's a problem for us, and it's a problem for many other countries, notably in Europe," Blinken added.

The top US diplomat said that China has provided 70 percent of machine tools and 90 percent of microelectronics needed by Russia for military production that includes rockets and armored vehicles.

Wang told Blinken during the meeting that China's position on the Ukraine conflict was "open and aboveboard, always advocating for peace and dialogue, and working towards a political solution", Beijing's foreign ministry said in a statement on Saturday. "The US should stop smearing and sanctioning China and refrain from using the issue to create divisions and provoke bloc confrontations," Wang added. China says it has not directly provided weapons to Russia and draws a contrast with the United States, which has shipped billions of dollars in weap-



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken greets China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi before a meeting on September 27, 2024, in New York. — AFP

ons to Ukraine since the 2022 invasion by Russia. Wang told a Security Council session on Tuesday that China was "not a creator of the Ukraine crisis, nor are we a party to it. China has all along stood on the side of peace."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in a UN address criticized China and Brazil for promoting negotiations to end the war, saying that forcing Ukraine to accept a peace deal was akin to colonialism. The two countries kept up the drive on Friday, leading a statement with other emerging powers that calls for a "comprehensive and lasting settlement" through diplomacy. But in a thinly veiled criticism of Putin's recent saber-rattling, the emerging powers called on all sides to refrain "from the use or the threat of weapons of mass destruction."

South Africa and Turkey were among the powers that also signed the statement. Putin this week threatened to use nuclear weapons in the event of a major attack on Russian soil as Ukraine, looking to hit back against the invasion, seeks Western weapons to strike deeper across the border. Since Blinken and Wang last met in July at a regional conference in Laos, China has pleased the United States by releasing an American pastor imprisoned for years, although other Americans are detained. Chinese President Xi Jinping, during a summit in November 2023 with counterpart Joe Biden, agreed to key US demands of restoring military communication between the two powers. — AFP

UK navy officer laid to rest in Sri Lanka after 25-year delay

COLOMBO: A British naval officer's wish to have his ashes scattered at a strategic base in Sri Lanka has been granted 25 years after his death, officials said Saturday. Lieutenant Norman Schofield had served as a communications officer at Trincomalee, a key staging post for Allied troops on the island nation's east coast during World War II.

Schofield's wish was held up by bureaucratic hurdles, with Sri Lanka's navy saying it was unable to be accommodated earlier because the country had prohibited the practice of scattering ashes.

An exception was made following requests through diplomatic channels. His wife Marian's ashes were also flown to Sri Lanka to be scattered together at Trincomalee on Friday. Fourteen Sri Lankan sailors formed a guard of honor while the Last Post was played, with two urns containing ashes placed on a pedestal draped with the Union Jack.

"Honoring the officer's final wish, his and his wife's ashes were scattered at sea near Ostent Point, Naval Dockyard Trincomalee—a place he held dear to his heart," the Sri Lankan navy said.

Navy Chief Priyantha Perera was present at the ceremony alongside British diplomat Darren Woods. "Today it is my honor as the British defense adviser to represent the United Kingdom armed forces as we gather to bid a final farewell to Royal Navy officer Lieutenant Norman Schofield and his wife Marian," Woods said.

Two relatives of the Schofields were also present, the navy added. Trincomalee was the headquarters of Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten's South East Asia Command after the fall of Singapore. Schofield served at Trincomalee in 1957 when the port transferred from British colonial rule to the control of the then government of Ceylon, as Sri Lanka was then known. — AFP

News in Brief

Pakistan oil company says six killed in helicopter crash

ISLAMABAD: A helicopter belonging to a Pakistan oil company crashed on Saturday after suffering a technical fault during takeoff, killing six people, the company said. Fourteen people were on board including three Russian pilots and crew when it crashed in North Waziristan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, near the border with Afghanistan. "In the accident, six people died and eight people were injured," said the statement issued by Mari Petroleum Company (MPC). — AFP

Vietnam puts Typhoon Yagi economic losses at \$3.3bn

HANOI: Vietnam suffered \$3.3 billion in economic losses as a result of deadly Typhoon Yagi, which swept across the country's north earlier this month causing hundreds of fatalities, state media reported Saturday. Yagi battered northern Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar in early September, triggering floods and landslides that left more than 700 people dead. Officials have calculated that economic losses in communist Vietnam amount to \$3.3 billion, state media said in reports on a government meeting about the consequences and lessons learned from the disaster. — AFP

Deaths from Russian service station blast rise to 13

MOSCOW: Russia said Saturday the death toll from a blast at a service station in the North Caucasus republic of Dagestan a day earlier had risen to 13. The emergency services ministry said on Telegram that rescuers had pulled three bodies from the rubble Saturday morning after finding 10 bodies Friday, including those of two children. The ministry put the number of injured at 23, posting a video of firefighters and rescuers still working in the still-smoldering ruins. Russia's Investigative Committee said Saturday it had opened a probe into the provision of dangerous services causing multiple deaths, a crime punishable by up to a decade in prison. — AFP

Iran policeman killed in attack claimed by jihadists

TEHRAN: A police captain has been killed in Iran's restive southeast in an attack claimed by a jihadist group, local media reported on Saturday. Captain Abolghassem Piri from the police command in Suran village in Sistan-Baluchistan province on the border with Pakistan "was assassinated by armed criminals", the ISNA news agency reported, citing police. The Pakistan-based Sunni jihadist group Jaish al-Adl (Army of Justice in Arabic) claimed the attack in a message on Telegram. — AFP

Indonesia landslide death toll revised down to 11

JAKARTA: The death toll in a landslide at an illegal mine in Indonesia has been revised down to 11, with miscounting linked to the remote location, a local disaster agency official said Saturday. The landslide hit a remote site in West Sumatra province on Sumatra island Thursday evening after heavy rains in the area, with rescue workers struggling to locate the dead and injured. Search efforts were being hindered by the remote location, with rescuers including police officers, soldiers and civilians having to walk for hours from the nearest village to reach the area. — AFP

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2024

Gold pushed to new records as India demand reignites

Fears of rising geopolitical conflict add to price hike

LONDON: Gold reached record-breaking levels in September, buoyed by a bumper US interest rate cut, fears of rising geopolitical conflict, and an import tax cut in India that has galvanized local demand.

India, the world's second largest consumer of gold jewelry, cut the import tax on gold in July to six percent from 15 percent, sparking a significant increase in appetite for gold jewelry, bars and coins. The legislation has led to "soaring" local imports of the metal which has given "fresh impetus" to its upwards price, explained Han Tan, chief market analyst at Exinity in an interview with AFP.

Gold has been smashing records throughout September, reaching a new high of \$2,685.58 an ounce on Thursday, up around 30 percent from the start of the year. The sky-high prices have also been buoyed by gold's status as a safe haven investment during times of economic and political uncertainty.

Investors have increasingly turned to the metal as conflicts in Ukraine and

the Middle East unsettled markets for raw materials. It's also been lifted by the Federal Reserve's jumbo 50 basis point interest rate cut in September. With falling returns on dollar deposits, major central banks have shifted reserves from the greenback to gold, in a process of "de-dollarization". The same dynamic has also benefited silver, which reached \$32.71 per ounce on Thursday—its highest price since December 2012 -- after soaring by around 35 percent in the first nine months of 2024.

India's resurgence in demand has revived excitement for the metal, after the market for gold jewelry had previously cooled as buyers were put off by high-prices. Purchases of jewelry, which represent three-quarters of the Indian gold market, fell 17 percent in the second quarter of 2024 compared to that of the previous year.

To stimulate demand, India's government cut the customs levy for gold. Gold imports into India more than tripled in August from the previous month, dou-

bling from a year earlier to \$10.1 billion, according to calculations by the World Gold Council (WGC). The reduction "boosted demand for gold in India as expected, as it makes the metal cheaper for buyers there", Frank Watson, market analyst at Kinesis Money told AFP. The boost took full effect at the start of September as India's festival season began, which includes the festival of Diwali—synonymous with purchases of gold bars, necklaces, rings and bracelets. "After recent import duty cuts, retailers are restocking ahead of the festive and wedding season," noted analysts at ANZ bank.

"Rising per capita income, a young population and urbanization are supporting jewelry buying," ANZ analysts added in a second report shared with AFP. Demand has also been reignited in India's rural areas, driven by favorable monsoons which should "improve crop yields and help support the economy, boosting demand for gold as a portable store of value," Watson told AFP.

Meanwhile, the world's biggest gold



KOLKATA: Gold jewelry kept on display inside a shop in Kolkata in this file photo. — AFP

buyer, China, continues to face a weak gold jewelry market in the context of the country's ailing economy. However, the

country's authorities announced measures this week aimed at stimulating demand. — AFP

Interest rate cuts: A global trend with local implications

By Hassan Abdulrahim

The global economic landscape has been shaken by a series of interest rate decisions aimed at balancing inflationary pressures with economic growth. Central banks around the world, including the US Federal Reserve (Fed), have been walking a fine line between controlling inflation and avoiding a deep economic slowdown. The recent reduction in interest rates by the Fed, along with other countries in the region, including those in the Gulf, has sparked both hope and concern.

In this article, we'll explore how these rate cuts are impacting businesses and consumers in Kuwait and the broader Middle East.

A global shift in monetary policy

The US Federal Reserve recently decided to ease its stance by reducing interest rates, signaling a potential end to the aggressive rate-hiking cycle that began in 2022. The central bank had been raising rates at an unprecedented pace to combat surging inflation, which hit its highest levels in over 40 years. Now, as inflation shows signs of cooling, the Fed has turned to moderate rate cuts to spur economic activity and prevent a recession. Similarly, other central banks, especially in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, have followed suit. Given that most Gulf countries peg their currencies to the US dollar, their monetary policies tend to move in tandem with the Fed's decisions. This includes Kuwait, which operates a managed float system tied largely to a basket of currencies, heavily weighted toward the US dollar.

The Impact on Kuwait's economy

The reduction in interest rates offers both opportunities and challenges for Kuwait's economy. For businesses, particularly SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises), which form the backbone of Kuwait's private sector, lower borrowing costs may provide a much-needed boost. With reduced interest expenses, companies have more room to invest in operations, hire employees, and expand their business activities.

Access to cheaper credit

Lower interest rates make borrowing cheaper for businesses, especially those looking for short-term capital to manage their working capital needs or long-term financing for expansion projects. This can encourage increased investment in the private sector, helping to spur economic growth. Many SMEs, who often struggle with high financing costs, may find this as an opportunity to accelerate their business plans.

Consumer spending and confidence

On the consumer side, reduced interest rates can also stimulate spending. When borrowing costs are lower, consumers are more inclined to take loans for major purchases, such as homes or vehicles. In Kuwait, where personal loans are a significant portion of the banking sector's lending portfolio, this could lead to an uptick in consumer spending, benefiting retail, automotive, and real estate sectors.

Real estate and housing market

The real estate market, a key driver of Kuwait's economy, could see renewed interest with cheaper financing options. Lower mortgage rates can make homeownership more affordable, potentially increasing demand in the housing market. Additionally, developers might find it easier to secure funding for new projects, boosting the construction sector and creating jobs in the process.

Challenges amid a slowing global economy

However, while the interest rate cuts bring benefits, they also come with risks. The global economy is still facing uncertainty, with weak growth in major economies, including Europe and China, and geopolitical tensions continuing to weigh on trade and investment flows. This makes it difficult to predict how sustainable the recovery will be, even with lower interest rates.

Inflationary concerns

Although inflation has shown signs of easing, it remains a persistent concern, especially in the face of potential supply chain disruptions and energy price volatility. If inflationary pressures resurface, central banks may be forced to reverse course and raise rates again, which could catch businesses and consumers off guard. In Kuwait, where inflation is relatively moderate compared to global levels, the risk of imported inflation—especially in the food and energy sectors—still lingers. Impact on Savings: For savers, the downside of lower interest rates is that it reduces the returns on deposits and savings accounts. In a country like Kuwait, where many citizens rely on interest income from their savings, lower rates could impact household budgets. Banks may also offer lower yields on fixed deposits, pushing savers to seek alternative investment avenues, such as real estate or the stock market, both of which carry higher risks.

Monetary policy across the GCC

In other Gulf countries, the monetary policy response has been similarly accommodative. Central banks in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, and Bahrain, which all peg their currencies to the US dollar, have mirrored the Fed's rate cuts. The rationale behind these cuts is the same: stimulating domestic demand while maintaining currency stability in an uncertain global economic environment.

Saudi Arabia: Saudi Arabia, the largest economy in the region, has also cut interest rates to boost domestic demand. The kingdom is embarking on massive diversification projects under Vision 2030, and lower borrowing costs could support investments in infrastructure, tourism, and the non-oil sector. However, with oil revenues still playing a significant role, the kingdom must balance growth with fiscal prudence.

United Arab Emirates: The UAE, a financial hub and a key player in global trade, has also benefited from lower rates. This has been particularly significant in Dubai's real estate market, where reduced borrowing costs have made property investments more attractive, both for domestic and international buyers. On the other hand, the hospitality and retail sectors, already affected by global economic uncertainties, could see a slow recovery despite easier access to credit.

Qatar: In Qatar, the rate cut coincides with the nation's ongoing preparations for the 2030 Asian Games and continued investments in the LNG sector. Lower borrowing costs may stimulate private sector growth, but the country also faces challenges related to inflationary pressures and supply chain constraints.

Bahrain and Oman: Bahrain and Oman, the smaller economies in the GCC, have also cut rates, though their fiscal constraints are more pronounced. Both nations are heavily reliant on external financing, and lower interest rates can provide some relief by reducing their debt servicing costs. However, the impact on domestic growth remains to be seen, given their ongoing structural challenges.

Future outlook: A delicate balancing act

As central banks globally, including those in the Gulf, continue to navigate the post-pandemic economic environment, the recent interest rate cuts represent a cautious attempt to stimulate growth without reigniting inflation. The success of these policies will depend on several factors, including the resilience of global supply chains, the direction of oil prices, and the ability of governments to implement effective fiscal measures alongside monetary policy.

For Kuwait and other GCC economies, lower interest rates offer a lifeline to businesses and consumers looking to navigate a challenging economic environment. However, the road ahead is far from certain. Policymakers must remain vigilant to changing global conditions and be prepared to adjust their strategies as needed.

Note: Hassan Abdulrahim is Senior Instructor, Economics & Finance, at Canadian College Kuwait and Deputy CEO at Visionary Consulting Company

Gulf Bank provides 8 essential tips for banking customers

KUWAIT: As part of its commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and its dedication to safeguarding and educating both its customers and the broader community, Gulf Bank is proactively raising awareness about the risks associated with cybercrime, particularly in relation to personal information and bank accounts. This initiative is part of Gulf Bank's active participation in the "Diraya" campaign, an awareness drive led by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) in collaboration with the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA).

The "Diraya" campaign aims to educate banking customers about the critical services available to them, while also enhancing their capacity to conduct financial transactions safely. Through this initiative, the campaign seeks not only to secure financial transactions but also to promote financial inclusion and support economic stability by thoroughly educating customers about their rights and responsibilities.

Additionally, the campaign underscores the advantages of electronic financial transactions and provides essential guidance on minimizing associated risks, ultimately contributing to enhanced cybersecurity. In this regard, Gulf Bank offers the following essential tips to banking customers:

1. Refrain from storing sensitive information—such as ATM or credit card numbers and personal identification numbers (PINs)—on mobile devices.
2. Never write down your PIN on your credit card or share one-time passwords (OTPs) with others.
3. Always log out from the bank's app or website immediately after completing transactions.
4. Ensure that antivirus software and related programs are regularly updated to maintain robust security.
5. Avoid clicking on or opening links in unsolicited emails; instead, manually type the URL directly into your browser.
6. Exercise caution when opening email attachments and links, especially if they appear suspicious or unexpected.
7. Only download software from reputable and

India allows non-basmati white rice exports

NEW DELHI: India gave the go-ahead on Saturday for exports of non-basmati white rice to resume as inventories in the world's biggest exporter of the grain surge and farmers prepare to harvest a new crop in the coming weeks. Bigger rice shipments from India would beef up overall global supplies and soften international prices by forcing other major exporters of the staple such as Pakistan, Thailand and Vietnam to reduce their rates, traders said.

New Delhi set a floor price for non-basmati white rice exports of \$490 per metric ton, a government order said. That came a day after the government cut the export tax on white rice to zero. New Delhi's decision to allow traders to sell non-basmati white rice on the world market follows a series of moves to ease export restrictions on premium, aromatic basmati and parboiled varieties. On Friday, India also reduced the export duty on parboiled rice to 10 percent from 20 percent previously.

Earlier this month, the government removed a floor price for basmati rice exports to help thousands of farmers who complained about a lack of access to lucrative overseas markets such as Europe, the Middle East and the United States. As the El Nino weather pattern raised the specter of poor monsoon rains, India imposed various curbs on rice exports last year and extended them into 2024 to



legitimate sources to reduce the risk of malware or hacking.

8. Keep all systems on your devices updated, including security systems, applications, and operating systems.

Gulf Bank further advises customers to remain vigilant when receiving unsolicited emails, text messages, or phone calls from unfamiliar sources that may attempt to impersonate bank employees. The Bank strongly emphasizes the importance of ignoring such communications and protecting account information to prevent potential theft by international fraudsters who often target unsuspecting victims.

Customers are reminded that legitimate banks will never request personal information through email, text messages, or phone calls. As such, it is crucial not to respond to these messages, as they are typically fraudulent attempts designed to access banking information and unlawfully obtain funds or personal data. Clicking on links in such messages may inadvertently expose sensitive banking details to theft. Moreover, Gulf Bank draws attention to reports of an increase in fraudulent activities through fake donation pages, particularly following disasters. These scams exploit individuals' willingness to assist those in need, thereby deceiving them into providing funds to fraudulent causes.

The Bank stresses that customer awareness is a fundamental line of defense in protecting banking data, particularly in light of the growing reliance on electronic services. Gulf Bank advises all customers to exercise caution, ensuring that they are engaging with legitimate websites and verified, licensed institutions, especially when making donations.

By sharing these essential guidelines, Gulf Bank reaffirms its commitment to fostering a secure banking environment and empowering its customers with the knowledge necessary to protect their financial well-being.



A farmer sprinkles fertilizer over crops at a rice field on the outskirts of Amritsar. — AFP

keep local prices in check ahead of the April-June national election.

Since the 2023 ban on exports, local supplies have picked up, bumping up stocks at government warehouses. Rice stocks at the state-run Food Corporation of India on Sept. 1 stood at 32.3 million metric tons, 38.6 percent higher than last year, giving the government ample room to ease rice export curbs. Buoyed by copious monsoon rains, farmers have planted rice on 41.35 million hectares (102.18 million acres), up from 40.45 million hectares (99.95 million acres) last year and an average of 40.1 million hectares (99.09 million acres) over the last five years. The decision to allow non-basmati rice exports will raise farm incomes in the countryside and help India regain its position in the global market, said Rajesh Paharia Jain, a New Delhi-based trader. — Reuters

Business

NBK celebrates the success of 'Bankee'

NatCen Social Research-UK organizes seminar to promote financial literacy



Manal Al-Mattar, Sumaya Al-Jasem, Asma Bin Hussein and Rana Al-Rashid with participants from NBK and Creative Confidence at the seminar.



Sumaya Al-Jasem speaking at the seminar.

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait participated in a seminar titled "Transformative Education Initiatives: Insights from the UK and Kuwait" held in London. The event, organized by NatCen Social Research, focused on evaluating Kuwait's financial literacy experience following the launch of the Bankee program two years ago.

The seminar brought together educators, policy-makers, and researchers from Kuwait and the UK to explore educational innovation and the role of public-private partnerships in driving transformative educational interventions. Discussions centered on the evaluation of Bankee, a key social initiative by NBK in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Kuwait's Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) and Creative Confidence. Since 2022, the program has been implemented in primary schools across Kuwait, and NBK was recently awarded the Bronze Award for Bankee in the ESG category at the Qorus Banking Innovation Awards.

In her keynote address, Manal Al-Mattar, Assistant General Manager and Head of Corporate Communi-



Manal Al-Mattar

and fostering public-private partnerships."

She expressed her pride in the positive impact Bankee has had on the young Kuwaitis. "By providing students with essential financial skills, we are laying the foundation for a more inclusive and sustainable financial future." Al-Mattar also reaffirmed NBK's CSR strategy, particularly in financial education. "At NBK, we place education and financial literacy as key pillars of our social responsibility efforts. Our objec-

Manal Al-Mattar

- Our goal is to build a financially aware society that can support sustainable economic growth in Kuwait by adapting financial literacy into curricula and fostering public-private partnerships
- Bankee is a successful model of public-private collaboration in education aimed at enhancing financial literacy
- Financial literacy is a key element in Kuwait's economic development strategy, and Bankee serves as a model for the future
- NBK's CSR is based on six pillars: community, education, employee well-being, environment, health and women, aligning with Kuwait's Vision 2035 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Bankee program. The results showed a 10 percent improvement in students' behavior, enhanced decision-making in financial matters, improved spending patterns, and increased charitable actions, demonstrating the program's significant impact on the educational landscape. Sumaya Al-Jasem, founder of Creative Confidence- NBK's partner in the Bankee program, expressed her satisfaction with NatCen's invitation to showcase Bankee to researchers and academics in the UK.

She proudly shared how the program has evolved into Kuwait's first comprehensive financial education experience for students starting at the age of six. "By empowering students to make their own financial decisions, we are helping them build financial skills in a safe and supportive environment."

Al-Jasem emphasized the importance of showcasing Bankee as a successful model of public-private collaboration in education, designed to enhance financial literacy. She noted that the program's success demonstrates the potential for strong public-private partnerships to deliver impactful and sustainable results. Reviewing the program's two-year journey, Al-Jasem outlined how the pilot year (2022-2023) involved 11 schools, 900 teachers, and 4,000 students. In the first full year (2023-2024), the program expanded to 30 schools, 3,400 teachers, and nearly 16,000 students. Looking ahead to the second year (2024-2025), the program aims to reach 60 schools, 6,000 teachers, and 30,000 students.

Regarding the program's expansion strategy, Al-Jasem said: "To scale Bankee and ensure its sustainability, we focused on building capacity within participating schools through train-the-trainer workshops, providing tools and resources, and reducing teachers' reliance on external support by offering user-friendly data dashboards. We also created a self-sustaining system within the Ministry of Education, enabling capable teachers to join the 'Bankee Certified Train-

ers' network and extend vital support beyond their schools." The NatCen study's initial findings revealed a significant increase in students' financial literacy levels, including a better understanding of key financial terms and concepts such as quality versus quantity. Furthermore, behavioral changes were observed, with students showing greater independence in managing their finance, becoming more selective in their purchases, prioritizing long-term savings, and exhibiting charitable behavior.

During the event, the development of Bankee was reviewed, from its inception to its national rollout. NBK proudly shared how the program empowers students to make financial decisions in a safe educational environment, starting as early as 6 years old.

"Stories of how schools have adapted Bankee as an effective classroom management tool, making education more engaging, were also highlighted. The continuous support from NBK's executive management has been crucial to the program's success," said Al-Jasem.

The seminar provided an opportunity to compare educational interventions in Kuwait, the Gulf region, and the UK, with NatCen offering a platform for sharing best practices and fostering innovation in education. The event facilitated fruitful dialogue and collaboration between education specialists from Kuwait and the UK, with a focus on the opportunities and challenges posed by innovative educational interventions, especially those driven by public-private partnerships.

Through initiatives like these, NBK reaffirms its leadership in corporate social responsibility and sustainable banking, aligned with Kuwait's Vision 2035 and global standards of excellence in social responsibility. NBK remains committed to expanding the Bankee program, with plans to reach more schools and students across Kuwait, ensuring the program's continued relevance and impact through ongoing evalua-

Sumaya Al-Jasem

- We are proud to be invited to showcase the Bankee program in the United Kingdom as a pioneering model in the field of financial literacy education in the region
- The seminar is an opportunity to highlight Bankee program as the first comprehensive financial experience for students in Kuwait
- We are proud of how Bankee has empowered students to make financial decisions, starting at the age of 6, in a safe learning environment
- NatCen's study revealed significant improvements in students' financial literacy levels and a better understanding of key financial terms

atations at NBK, offered insights into the bank's strategic investments in corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects, particularly in education, youth development and financial literacy. Al Mattar emphasized the importance of financial literacy as a cornerstone of Kuwait's economic development strategy and highlighted Bankee's success as a model for the future.

Al-Mattar added: "This initiative aligns with Kuwait's Vision 2035 and the UN's SDGs through strategic partnerships with the Ministry of Education, Nazaha, and our strategic partner Creative Confidence. NBK has successfully reached more than 15,000 students and 3,000 teachers, equipping the next generation with essential financial skills." Al-Mattar further noted, "Our goal is to build a financially aware society capable of supporting sustainable economic growth in Kuwait by adapting financial literacy into curricula

is to ensure that every young person in Kuwait is equipped with the tools needed to make informed financial decisions, contributing to the creation of a stronger society."

She highlighted that NBK's social responsibility initiatives are based on six pillars: youth and education, women empowerment, healthcare, employee well-being, community outreach, and environmental sustainability. Bankee stands as a prime example of how public-private partnerships (PPPs) can raise financial awareness and create long-lasting positive impacts on future generations.

Evaluation of the Bankee program

Representatives from NatCen and Creative Confidence presented evaluation findings on the development, implementation, and outcomes of the



Wall Street Week Ahead

Jobs data to test US stock market's soft-landing hopes

NEW YORK: Investor hopes for a soft landing for the US economy will be put to the test next week, as the government releases closely watched labor market data following a series of disappointing jobs reports. Wall Street's benchmark S&P 500 index is up 20 percent year-to-date near a record high. With the third quarter ending on Monday, the index is on track for its strongest January-September performance since 1997. Hopes for a soft landing in which the Federal Reserve tames inflation without badly hurting growth, have helped drive those gains, along with a 50 basis point rate cut the central bank delivered at its monetary policy meeting this month.

Some worry that the rate cuts may not be enough

to avert a downturn, and Wall Street views the monthly employment report as one of the more critical reads on the economy. The prior two monthly reports have shown weaker-than-expected job increases, raising the stakes for the Oct 4 data.

"Stocks are priced for a Goldilocks/soft landing-type scenario," said Wasif Latif, president and chief investment officer at Sarmaya Partners. "The jobs report could potentially either confirm that or derail that." Some recent payroll reports have roiled markets, particularly data showing an unexpected slowdown that helped spark a sharp, days-long selloff in the S&P 500 in early August. The index has since recovered those losses and gone on to make fresh highs.

For the September report due out next week, non-farm payrolls are expected to have increased by 140,000, according to Reuters data on Friday. The labor data could help solidify views on the Fed's next move at its Nov 6-7 meeting. Futures tied to the fed funds rate currently show bets almost evenly split between a 25 basis point cut or another 50-basis-point reduction.

"While the totality of the data will always be important, the burden will be on incoming labor market data to



NEW YORK: Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange during morning trading. — AFP

provide the Fed with greater confidence that the softening trend is stabilizing," economists at Deutsche Bank said in a recent note. Investors will also watch an address from Fed Chairman Jerome Powell, set to speak on the economic outlook before the National Association for Business Economics on Monday. Hefty gains in US stocks so far this year bode well for the rest of 2024, if history is any

indication. Since 1950, the S&P 500 has gained at least 15 percent through September in 17 instances, according to Keith Lerner, co-chief investment officer at Truist Advisory Services. In the fourth quarter of those years, the index rose a median of 5.4 percent and posted a gain in all but three of them, Lerner found.

Still, the state of US growth is a focus for investors. A survey of fund managers earlier this month named a US recession as the top "tail risk" for markets, according to BofA Global Research.

Garrett Melson, portfolio strategist at Natixis Investment Managers Solutions, said the recent strength in defensive sectors such as utilities and consumer staples reflect concerns over a looming downturn. Strong economic data, on the other hand, could provide a boost for economically sensitive groups such as industrials and financials, he said. The S&P 500 industrial sector has gained nearly 11 percent in the quarter, and the financial sector .SPSY is up around 10 percent. "There's still probably a case to be made that we've priced in too much recession risk at this point," Melson said. "There's plenty of scope for further upside into year-end." — Reuters

Burgan Bank unveils latest invitation-only credit card

KUWAIT: In its latest effort to entwine banking excellence with luxury, Burgan Bank announced the launch of its most exclusive and prestigious Visa credit card to date. The invitation-only credit card, available to a group of ultra-high-net-worth (UHNW) clients, unlocks a world of high-end services, luxury experiences, and unmatched benefits. This new product comes as part of Burgan's unyielding efforts to offer its clients a banking experience that matches their lifestyles and high standards.

"A refined lifestyle is the sum of distinguished choices made at every step of one's journey. With our new prestigious Visa card, our esteemed clients can now choose a credit card that matches their standards and suits their uncompromising lifestyle," said Meshari Abduljalil Shehab, General Manager – Private Banking and Wealth Management at Burgan Bank, commenting on the Visa credit card reveal. "Designed to match their distinguished lifestyles, the Visa credit card offers the market segment of UHNW clients exclusive access to endless deluxe offers, exquisite experiences, and world-class ser-



Meshari Abduljalil Shehab

vices, while flawlessly fulfilling their banking and financial needs and aspirations."

"Not only does this premium card offer a rewarding proposition that caters to the affluent but it also provides them with the best that digital payments can offer. Burgan Bank's Visa cardholders will enjoy the peace of mind that comes with Visa's

advanced security technology, whether at home or abroad, as well as worldwide acceptance at over 130 million merchant partners for those traveling abroad. Visa is pleased to partner with Burgan Bank to introduce this Visa credit card designed for ultra-high-net-worth individuals in Kuwait," said Mohamed Reyad, Visa's Head of Financial Institu-

• Bank confirms its commitment to elevating its ultra-high-net-worth clients' banking experience to unmatched heights

tions in Kuwait.

To guarantee an unmatched banking experience for the new credit cardholders, Burgan Bank partnered with Visa to provide the best-in-class services in travel, retail, hospitality, fine dining, and much more. Among the numerous exclusive services and experiences that the cardholders can enjoy are unlimited 24/7 access to global concierge service; complimentary travel benefits, premium hotel and dining benefits, comprehensive insurance coverage, and much more.

To learn more about the Visa affluent credit card or Burgan Bank's latest services and products, please call the hotline at 1804080 or visit the Bank's website at www.burgan.com.



Japan's speedy, spotless bullet trains turn 60

TOKYO: Her white-gloved, waistcoated uniform impeccable, 22-year-old Hazuki Okuno boards a bullet train replica to rehearse the strict protocols behind the smooth operation of a Japanese institution turning 60 Tuesday. High-speed Shinkansen trains began running between Tokyo and Osaka on October 1, 1964, heralding a new era for rail travel as Japan grew into an economic superpower after its World War II defeat. The service remains integral to the nation's economy and way of life—so keeping it dazzlingly clean, punctual and accident-free is a serious job.

At a 10-storey, state-of-the-art staff training centre, Okuno shouted from the window and signaled to imaginary colleagues, keeping her cool when a video screen down the platform shows a flailing passenger stuck in a door. The live-in facility southwest of Tokyo offers what rail operator JR Central describes as an "intense education" for future conductors, drivers and other team members.

"Thank you for riding," Okuno practiced saying, bowing deeply after checking the time on her watch.

Each day nearly a quarter of a million passengers ride the Tokaido Shinkansen line, which stretches from Tokyo past Mount Fuji to Hakata around five hours away. One top-speed Nozomi train arrives up to every five minutes. JR Central says it has never had an accident resulting in death or injury on the bullet train, even in a country where earthquakes, typhoons and heavy snow are common.

Safety is "our top priority", Daisuke Kumajima, the



TOKYO: Staff members cleaning the front of a train at the JR Central Shinkansen depot in the Shinagawa district of Tokyo. — AFP

company's PR officer, told AFP.

So "we take our education and training of our employees very seriously." This month for the first time, on another line run by the company JR East, two linked bullet trains uncoupled, resulting in an emergency stop but no injuries.

With routes spanning the country, the Shinkansen's top speed of 320 kilometers (200 miles) per hour is no longer the world's fastest, having been outpaced by China. But the original high-speed locomotive's streamlined nose and spacious interiors

remain a symbol of Japanese engineering prowess and attention to detail. It's also a tourist must-do and pop culture mainstay—such as in Brad Pitt's 2022 blockbuster "Bullet Train". A meticulous maintenance schedule means the trains are gleaming outside and in, with cleaners adjusting headrests and using brushes to ensure the seats are free of crumbs.

In some countries, train delays mean there is little time for such primping, said Christopher Hood who authored the book: "Shinkansen: From Bullet Train to Symbol of Modern Japan." — AFP

Shanghai exchange apologizes for slowdown

SHANGHAI: The Shanghai Stock Exchange apologized on Friday for an "abnormal slowdown" in transactions that sent jitters through investors as they rushed in to pick up stocks after China unveiled a string of economy-boosting measures.

Equity markets in the city as well as Hong Kong and Shenzhen have rocketed this week in reaction to a raft of much-needed stimulus including help for the troubled property sector, interest rate cuts, making cash available to banks to lend and pledges to boost jobs. The People's Bank of China on Friday cut the amount of money banks must hold in reserve—as flagged on Tuesday—releasing an estimated \$142.6 billion in liquidity into the financial market.

However, officials in the mainland financial hub said Friday their systems were coming under strain as traders rushed in. "After the market opened, there was an abnormal slowdown in the confirmation of transactions during stock auctions on our exchange, which had an impact on transactions," the bourse said in a social media statement. "Upon handling the situation, stock auction transactions were gradually restored from 11:13 am," the statement said. "The exchange expresses its deep apologies for this abnormal occurrence," it said.

The bourse gave no reason for the slowdown, though a previous statement on Friday said the cause was being investigated. Comments on the X-like Weibo platform suggested that the incident had seeded chaos among investors. "There are people who... haven't touched their accounts for many years rushing to ask their brokers about their fund accounts," one user wrote.

Another quipped: "They all say the real bull market has returned, and it's time to roll up our sleeves and work hard. As a result, the exchange crashed." Nonetheless, the Hong Kong and Shanghai stock markets soared again Friday, with the latter recording its strongest weekly gain in 16 years.

The rally has seen a surge across several sectors, with beaten-down, debt-addled property firms among the biggest winners, having tanked since China embarked on a crackdown in 2020. In Hong Kong, Kaisa Group rose nearly 77 percent Friday and has almost doubled since Thursday's close, while Sunac, which is undergoing a debt restructuring, is up about 60 percent this week. Fantasia Holdings is up around 50 percent this week, as is Agile Group.

Tech firms, which have also had a painful few years owing to government moves to clamp down on the industry, were also enjoying some much-needed buying. Ecommerce giant JD.com rose around 10 percent Friday and 36 percent this week, with rival and market heavyweight Alibaba piling on 20 percent over the past five days. —AFP

Crisis-hit German auto giant VW cuts forecasts

FRANKFURT: Auto giant Volkswagen cut its 2024 forecasts Friday, as it battles a deep crisis that it has warned could prompt the closure of factories in Germany for the first time.

One of Germany's best-known firms, Volkswagen shocked employees at the start of this month when it said that it needed to urgently restructure, including possibly shuttering plants at home and implementing deep job cuts. The carmaker, which has some 300,000 workers in Germany, has been hit hard by high manufacturing costs, a stuttering switch to electric vehicles and rising competition in key market China.

In the latest sign of its problems, the 10-brand group cut a host of forecasts for this year.

VW said that it now expected revenues to be about 320 billion euros (\$357 billion), after previously fore-



WOLFSBURG, Germany: An RB (regional railway) train leaves the main railway station in front of the power plant at the headquarters of German carmaker Volkswagen (VW) on September 25, 2024 in Wolfsburg. — AFP

casting they would grow five percent from 322.3 billion euros in 2023.

The group—whose brands range from its core VW models to Seat, Skoda and Porsche—also said it expected

to deliver nine million vehicles. Previously it had forecast deliveries would increase up to three percent this year from the 9.24 million vehicles it delivered in 2023.

our conviction that the near-term outlook for the economy remains bright," said Michael Pearce, deputy chief US economist at Oxford Economics. "That should eventually help drive a re-acceleration in the pace of hiring and help keep labor market conditions solid over the coming year or two. That is one factor that will help convince the Fed to slow the pace of rate cuts next year."

Consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of U.S. economic activity, rose 0.2 percent last month after an unrevised 0.5 percent gain in July, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis said. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast consumer spending climbing 0.3 percent. Spending was concentrated in services, which increased 0.4 percent after advancing 0.3 percent in July. Outlays on housing and utilities as well as financial services and insurance topped the list. There were also increases in spending on health-care, transportation and recreation services. Consumers additionally boosted spending at bars and restaurants and stayed at hotels and motels. Goods spending, however, dipped 0.1 percent as purchases of motor vehicles and parts fell. Receipts at service stations also dropped amid cheaper gasoline.

Food and beverages sales fell. Price-conscious consumers are trading down to cheaper store-brand items. These declines more than offset increases in outlays on other nondurable goods and recreational goods and vehicles. Adjusted for inflation, consumer



BETHLEHEM, US: People line up at the entrance to the New Bethany food pantry in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on July 22, 2024. — AFP

spending rose 0.1 percent after climbing 0.4 percent in July. Economists estimated that the so-called real consumer spending was running at a 3.4 percent annualized rate so far this quarter. It grew at a 2.8 percent pace in the second quarter.

Consumer spending continues to be supported by

still-solid wage gains even as the labor market has slowed considerably. Annual revisions to national accounts data published on Thursday showed stronger wages and salaries growth in the second quarter than had been previously estimated. The saving rate also was higher than previously thought. — Reuters

US consumer spending resilient; inflation continues to abate

WASHINGTON: US consumer spending increased slightly less than expected in August, but that did little to change expectations that solid economic growth persisted in the third quarter, while the annual rise in prices was the smallest in just over 3-1/2 years. Strong growth expectations this quarter were underscored by other data from the Commerce Department on Friday showing the goods trade deficit narrowed by the most in nearly two years last month. That suggested trade would likely impose a modest drag on gross domestic product, which could be more than offset by a rise in inventories.

Economists did not view the data as soft enough to compel the Federal Reserve to deliver another 50 basis points interest rate cut in November as hoped by investors, with an elevated saving rate and still-strong wage gains seen providing a firmer base for consumer spending in the months ahead.

September's employment report next week could offer more clues on the size of future reductions in borrowing costs. "The resilience of consumer spending and the stronger foundations strengthen

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2024

'CRAZY' TREE PLANTER GREENING SAO PAULO CONCRETE JUNGLE

In just over two decades, Brazilian Helio da Silva has single-handedly planted about 40,000 trees in the urban jungle that is Sao Paulo. The former food industry executive says he was called "crazy" when he started his quest to transform what used to be a hangout for drug users between two busy avenues. Today, there stands the Tiquatira Park with thousands of trees of 160 species stretched over 3.2 kilometers (two miles) long and 100 meters (328 feet) wide.

Da Silva, 73, told AFP he did it because he "wanted to leave a legacy to the city that hosted (me). I started and never stopped." Da Silva hails from the town of Promissao, about 500 kilometers from Sao Paulo, the biggest city in Latin America, where he moved decades ago. Without any formal authorization, Da Silva started in 2003, with no funding but his own savings, to collect and buy cuttings to plant in his adopted city.

Five years later, Sao Paulo formally named his project the city's first linear park. According to the municipality, 45 types of birds have been identified in the park. "Look how he has transformed that degraded area. It's splendid!" said Angela Maria Fiorindo Pereira, a 69-year-old retired teacher who frequently walks in the park.

Experts say green spaces like these are crucial to lower the temperature in concrete urban centers and to improve air quality. Sao Paulo, a city of 12 million people, is highly polluted and has seen air quality degrade even further in recent weeks due to the forest fires ravaging Brazil.

Tree hugger

Da Silva said he got his idea while out walking with his wife Leda in 2003 in what was then a derelict area of the metropolis. He estimates he has spent about \$7,000 per year on the project, at the current exchange rate, but did not share his total outlay. Retired since 2022, he spends his days checking on his trees, seeing whether they need pruning or composting.

He is proud of his work, and likes to stroll among the trees, stopping occasionally to hug a trunk or point out a family of trees from great-grandfather to great-grandson. Da Silva often travels with two photo albums depicting the transformation of the land and is greeted affectionately wherever he goes.

He says it takes him about 10 minutes to plant a cutting, and he likes talking to them "in a low voice" so people don't think he is crazy "once again." Da Silva gets sporadic help from volunteers, but his vigor for his work remains untainted by age. His ultimate goal is to plant 50,000 trees, said the man whose business card reads: "Helio da Silva, Tree Planter."—AFP



Helio da Silva, creator of the Tiquatira Linear Park Engineer Werner Eugenio Zulauf, looks up at the trees in the park, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. — AFP photos



Helio da Silva, creator of the Tiquatira Linear Park Engineer Werner Eugenio Zulauf, plants a tree at the park, in Sao Paulo, Brazil.



This aerial view shows the Tiquatira Linear Park --officially named Tiquatira Linear Park Engineer Werner Eugenio Zulauf-- in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Radiohead reworks Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' for new stage production



Philip Selway (left) and Ed O'Brien of Radiohead attend the 34th Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony at Barclays Center on March 29, 2019 in New York City. — AFP

Shakespeare will meet Radiohead in a new stage production of "Hamlet" due to premiere next year, set to a reworked version of the band's "Hail to the Thief" album. Alternative rockers Radiohead had a string of best-selling singles in the 1990s and early 2000s including "Creep," "Paranoid Android" and "No Surprises". Frontman Thom Yorke's lyrics for the 2003 album were originally a response to the election of George W. Bush as US president and his "war on terror" that followed the September 11 attacks. The singer-songwriter is deconstructing and reworking the album for the production, which will be performed by a cast of some 20 musicians and actors. Yorke, who is working with Tony and Olivier award-winning designer Christine Jones and director Steven Hoggett, said in a statement it was an "interesting and intimidating challenge".

"For years I've wanted to see the play and album collide in a piece of theatre; eventually I shared the idea with Thom, who was intrigued," said Jones, who conceptualized the idea. She had been struck by the "uncanny reverberances between the (Hamlet) text and the album," she said. "We've found that the play haunts the album, and the album haunts the play."—AFP

Monet's odes to London's 'beautiful' smog appear in city

Claude Monet was enchanted by the mysterious light generated by London's famous "smog", and the city he loved is now hosting a new exhibition recognizing his strange fascination with the industrial pollution. "Monet and London. Views of the Thames" opening Friday will be the first time his paintings of the Houses of Parliament and the River Thames go on show in the city, as he had wished 120 years ago.

The French Impressionist painter made three visits to London, for several months at a time, between 1899 and 1901. The city was then the most populated city in the world and a major industrial center, its air often thick with pollution.

He stayed in the Savoy Hotel, from where he had a breathtaking view of the Waterloo and Charing Cross bridges. To paint the Palace of Westminster -- the UK parliament -- he crossed the river and set up his easel on a terrace of St Thomas' Hospital, which is still in use today.

"Every day, I find London more beautiful to paint," the artist wrote to his stepdaughter in 1900.

In a letter to his wife, he wrote of the ever-changing

weather and its transformative effects on the Thames. "You wouldn't believe the amazing effects I have seen in the nearly two months that I have been constantly looking at the River Thames," he wrote.

He told a US journalist in 1901 that "London is the more interesting that it is harder to paint.

"The fog assumes all sorts of colors; there are black, brown, yellow, green, purple fogs," he added.

In one painting, the outline of Charing Cross Bridge can just be seen against a yellow haze, probably caused by sulphur emissions.

The painting was given to Winston Churchill in 1949 by his literary agent, accompanied by a note wishing that "the fog that shrouds Westminster", then ruled by the Labour party, would lift.

'Pure gold'

Monet's favorite season in London was winter, when "the fog mixed with all the pollution, the smoke from the factories, all the particles in the air," said Karen Serres, curator of the exhibition at the Courtauld Gallery.

"One thing that Monet also really loved was the moment when the clouds opened just a little bit, and a ray of sunlight kind of punctured through and illuminated the Thames," she added.

Monet, who died of lung cancer in 1926 aged 86, described one such moment to his wife. "The sun came up, so blinding that one could not look at it," he wrote. "The Thames was pure gold. God it was so beautiful." Monet would return to Giverny, north of Paris, after his London trips with dozens of paintings to finish in his studio. —AFP



A gallery assistant studies a work by the French impressionist painter Claude Monet, "The Houses of Parliament. Sunset" 1904 (center), at a press view for "Monet and London".—AFP

Van Gogh painting falls short of expectations in Hong Kong auction



This photo shows the painting "Les canots amarres" by Vincent Van Gogh from 1887, at Christie's in Hong Kong which is set to break a record for the most expensive painting sold in Asia if the work fetches its US\$50 million estimate at an auction in their new Asia Pacific headquarters at the Henderson Centre in Hong Kong on Septem-

A Vincent van Gogh painting displaying the artist's shift from dark realism to vibrant impressionism sold for US\$32.2 million at a Hong Kong auction, falling short of expectations that it would fetch a record-breaking price.

"Les canots amarres" -- or "the moored boats" -- was the centerpiece of an inaugural evening sale held to celebrate the opening of auction house Christie's new Asia Pacific headquarters. According to Christie's, it was expected to fetch HK\$230-380 million (US\$30-50 million) on the auction floor. If bidding had reached the higher end of the estimated value, it could have surpassed Jean-Michel Basquiat's "Warrior" -- which went for HK\$323.6 million in 2021 -- as the most expensive Western painting sold in Asia.

But the hammer of auctioneer Adrien Meyer fell Thursday at HK\$250 million. Cristian Albu, deputy chairman and head of 20th/21st century art at Christie's Asia Pacific, said the price was the "record of a Van Gogh in Asia".

The auction house was "cautious" with its lineup on Thursday in hopes of boosting market confidence, added Ada Tsui, head of evening sale and specialist for 20th/21st century art.

Owned by the Italian royal family of Bourbon Two Sicilies, the Van Gogh painting is "the most important painting by the artist ever to be offered in Asia", Christie's said in its introduction.

"Les canots amarres" marks a vital stepping stone in his career," it said.

The painting is one of about 40 works Van Gogh developed around the scenic French town of Asnieres, a boating hub on the outskirts of Paris, during the summer of 1887.

With those paintings, "he left behind for good the dark, earthy tones of his realist pictures of old. He now adopted a vibrant palette and loose expressive brush instead," said Christie's.

In a letter to his sister Willemien in October 1887, the artist wrote: "When I painted landscape in Asnieres this summer, I saw more color... than ever before." — AFP

Lifestyle

Paris fashion: The Dries dream lives on without VAN NOTEN



Models present creations by Dries Van Noten for the Women Ready-to-wear Spring-Summer 2025 collection as part of the Paris Fashion Week, in Paris. — AFP photos



The "Prince of Prints" is gone, but Dries Van Noten the style legend lives on, wowing his army of fans at Paris Fashion Week with his brand's first show since the designer retired in June. The Flemish master, whose departure was compared to beloved coach Jurgen Klopp leaving Liverpool football club, left the keys to his studio team, saying: "I have been preparing for this moment." His many fans are near fanatical about collecting his timelessly practical pieces that rarely appear on the resale market.

Many wondered if the self-confessed fashion "addict" was really the retiring type, and whether he could ever stay away. Yet there was no sign of the 66-year-old at his brand's packed Paris show, where his studio took the bow and a standing ovation at the end. Any lingering doubts that this might be the end of one of fashion's longest love stories quickly evaporated as the languid loveliness of the first prints hit the catwalk, with veteran fashion editor Suzie Menkes—a living legend herself—bestowing her favor as she left.

All those luxurious Van Noten colors were there with his quirky classic cuts, the collection unfurling like an exotic fever dream of muted African safari vibes with the most subtle snake, crocodile and leopard skin prints. A moment later we were off somewhere in Sarawak with the most delicate silk prints, all set off with a sequence of stunning cantilever-heeled shoes. Van Noten helped revolutionize



the runways in the 1980s as part of the Antwerp Six group that included Ann Demeulemeester and the eternal rebel Walter Van Beirendonck.

The cult designer said his career had been "a dream come true" as he left. "Seeing our clothes out in the world... has fulfilled me beyond words." "I want to shift my focus to all the things I never had time for. I'm sad, but at the same time, happy," he said.

Acne is spot on

Another Belgian designer, this time at the beginning of his career, impressed at French label Courreges. Nicolas di Felice quickened the heartbeat with a subtly sexy and subversive update of the brand's 1960s futuristic DNA, with barely-there drapes of flesh-colored cloth that seemed to float over the skin. Sweden's Acne Studio delivered one of the day's most successful experimental collections, full of cleverly realized ideas like the humble polo tops covered in butterfly bows that took them into haute couture territory.

Designer Jonny Johansson cut his oversized streetwear, ballooning denims and leatherette trousers with some top-notch draping on evening dresses. Almost everything was wearable and much—particularly his coats—was stand out. —AFP



Paris Fashion Week

Lifestyle

'National treasure': UK actor Maggie Smith dies aged 89

Britain's Maggie Smith, the double Oscar-winner who shone on stage and screen for more than seven decades, has died in hospital in London, her sons announced Friday, prompting a flood of tributes. "It is with great sadness we have to announce the death of Dame Maggie Smith," Chris Larkin and Toby Stephens said in a statement. "She passed away peacefully in hospital early this morning." Over the course of her career, Smith won a Tony, two Oscars, three Golden Globes and five Baftas.

And she achieved late-career international fame for her depiction of the acerbic Dowager Countess of Grantham Violet Crawley in the hit television series "Downton Abbey".

Britain's King Charles III called her "a national treasure" who was admired around the world. Paying tribute to her "warmth and wit that shone through both on and off the stage", he posted a photograph of him sharing a joke with the actor.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer also called her a "true national treasure" while the Bafta TV and film academy saluted "a legend of British stage and screen". Born in 1934 in Oxford in central England, the daughter of an Oxford professor of pathology, Smith made her stage debut in 1952 with the Oxford University Dramatic Society.

She won a best actress Oscar for the 1969 drama "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" based on Muriel Spark's novel, and best supporting actress for her role in the 1978 Neil Simon comedy "California Suite". "An intensely private person, she was with friends and family at the end," her sons, both actors, said. "She leaves two sons and five loving grandchildren who are devastated by the loss of their extraordinary mother and grandmother."



British actress Maggie Smith poses on arrival for the BAFTA British Academy Film Awards at the Royal Opera House in London on February 14, 2016.

'One-of-a-kind'

Famed for her scene-stealing charisma, Smith's long and successful career got started with a string of successes in London's West End and on Broadway in the 1950s. She famously appeared opposite Laurence Olivier in an adaptation of Shakespeare's "Othello" in 1959.

This led to her joining Olivier's celebrated 1960s National Theatre company where she earned critical acclaim alongside her husband, the actor Robert Stephens. Smith's marriage to heavy-drinking Stephens, with whom she had her two sons, collapsed in 1973 and they divorced two years later.

She remarried shortly after to the screenwriter Beverley Cross, who died in 1998.

Despite her serious acting reputation, Smith also appeared in lighter Hollywood hits such as 1992's "Sister Act" and the 1993 sequel "Sister Act 2". Whoopi Goldberg, who starred in both films, wrote on Instagram: "Maggie Smith was a great woman and a brilliant actress. I still can't believe I was lucky enough to work with the 'one-of-a-kind,'" she added.

UK actor Kristin Scott Thomas, who appeared alongside Smith in "My Old Lady" said her co-star "saw through the nonsense and razzmatazz" of acting. "She had a sense of humor and wit that could reduce me to a blithering puddle of giggles. And she did not have patience with fools," she wrote on Instagram.



US actor and director Dustin Hoffman (right) poses with British actress Maggie Smith (left) on the red carpet as they arrive to attend the premiere of 'Quartet' during the 56th BFI London Film Festival in London on October 15, 2012.

'Thank you, Maggie'

In recent decades, some of her best-known films included "Gosford Park" (2001), "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel" (2012) and "The Lady in the Van" (2015).

From 2001, her role as Minerva McGonagall in the "Harry Potter" films introduced her to a younger generation. "Somehow I thought she'd live forever," Harry Potter author JK Rowling posted on X, formerly Twitter. "RIP Dame Maggie Smith." Harry Potter star Daniel Radcliffe also paid tribute.

"I will always consider myself amazingly lucky to have been able to work with her, and to spend time around her on set," he said in a statement. "The word legend is overused but if it applies to anyone in our industry then it applies to her. Thank you Maggie."

'Great genius'

It was "Downton Abbey", which ran from 2010, that made her an international star again, unable to go out without being recognized.

"It's ridiculous," she told the British Film Institute in 2017. "I led a perfectly normal life until Downton Abbey. I would go to theatres, I would go to galleries and things like that on my own. And now I can't," she said. Julian Fellowes, creator and writer of Downton Abbey, said Smith had a "marvelous instinctive grasp, she could make you cry your eyes out one minute



A file photo taken on October 15, 2012, shows British actress Maggie Smith on the red carpet as she arrives to attend the premiere of 'Quartet' during the 56th BFI London Film Festival in London.—AFP photos

and laugh like a drain the next without turning into someone different.

"I realized I was working with a great genius," he added. Actor Hugh Bonneville, who played the son of the dowager duchess in the period drama, said: "Anyone who ever shared a scene with Maggie will attest to her sharp eye, sharp wit and formidable talent. Smith was made a Dame of the British Empire in 1990 by Queen Elizabeth II.—AFP



Margaret Maritz (center) celebrates her 118th birthday with two of her daughters, Gertryda Maritz (left), 81, and Liza Daniels (right), 67, in an old-age home in Touwsrivier.—AFP photos



The birthday cake for Margaret Maritz (not seen) who celebrates her 118th birthday is displayed on a table in an old-age home in Touwsrivier.



Margaret Maritz looks on while celebrating her 118th birthday in an old-age home in Touwsrivier .

S African woman turns 118, among the oldest in the world

A South African woman celebrated her 118th birthday Friday as one of the oldest people in the world with a small party at her care home. Margaret Maritz was born on September 27, 1906, according to

a copy of her identity card shown to journalists by a charity that helped to organize the party in Touwsrivier, 180 kilometers (110 miles) northeast of Cape Town. The document has not been independently verified but if

confirmed would make Maritz older than Japanese national Tomiko Itooka who was born on May 23, 1908 and is listed by the US-based Gerontology Research Group as currently the world's oldest living person.

Flanked by two of her 14 children, Maritz blew out a candle on a large pink birthday cake at the party in the small town of Touwsrivier. "She talks about her life as a young woman, (saying) you must respect your mother and your father. She didn't drink, she didn't smoke," a senior nurse at the

home, Gregory Elroy Adams, told AFP.

"We must be grateful," said one of her daughters, Liza Daniels, 67. "I don't know if I will reach that age one day. But for me it's a very, very big privilege to have a mother that reaches this age."

According to the Guinness World Records website, the oldest verified person is French national Jeanne Calment, who died in August 1997 at the age of 122 years and 164 days. "Several people have been claimed to be older than Jeanne, but there

has never been enough evidence to authenticate them," it says. The oldest known South African died in March 2023 just two months before turning 129.

Johanna Mazibuko was born on May 11, 1894 according to her identity papers, although these were not confirmed as authentic by authorities.—AFP

Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' targeted again with soup in UK after activists jailed

Three climate activists threw soup over two Vincent van Gogh paintings at the National Gallery in London, just hours after two others were jailed for committing the same act two years ago.

The gallery said "a soup-like substance" had been thrown over "Sunflowers" (1888) and "Sunflowers" (1889) and that three people had been arrested.

The Just Stop Oil group (JSO) said it had staged the "sign of defiance" after two of its activists were jailed earlier Friday for throwing soup at the "Sunflowers" (1888) painting in October 2022.

The attacks are the latest in a series of protests by the group, which seeks an end to the extraction and burning of oil, coal and gas, that have prompted an increasingly hard line by the authorities.

Phoebe Plummer, 23, and Anna Holland, 22, were convicted in July of criminal damage after pouring tomato soup over the screen protecting the still life masterpiece. Plummer was on Friday jailed for two years and Holland for 20 months. Both had pleaded not guilty. Greenpeace UK's co-executive director, Will McCallum, called the sentence "a draconian and disproportionate punishment for a protest that caused minor damage to a picture frame".

Sentencing the pair, Judge Christopher Hehir said the painting could have been "seriously damaged or even destroyed". "Soup might have seeped through the glass. You couldn't have cared less if the painting was damaged or not," he added. "You had no right to do what you did to 'Sunflowers'."

Supporters of the pair gathered outside Southwark Crown Court in south London, holding banners calling them "political prisoners". But Hehir dismissed the argument. "You think your beliefs entitle you to do anything," he told Plummer.

"The suggestion that you and others like you in a democracy are political prisoners is ludicrous, offensive and idiotic."

'Grim milestone'

The National Gallery said the jailed protesters caused around £10,000 (\$13,420) in damage to the

frame but the painting itself was protected by a screen and was unharmed. Holland and Plummer also glued themselves to the gallery wall during their protest. Plummer has already spent 58 days on remand in prison for another protest at London's Heathrow Airport in July. Greenpeace UK's McCallum called the sentencing "another grim milestone in the ongoing crackdown on peaceful protest". "Protest is by its nature inconvenient and occasionally messy. These defendants do not deserve to spend years behind bars for standing up for a liveable planet."

Holland said before she was sentenced that they would not be deterred by prison sentences.

JSO named the supporters in Friday's incident as Phil Green, 24, Ludi Simpson, 71, and Mary Patricia Somerville, 77, confirming they had thrown soup on the art works. "We will be held accountable for our actions today, and we will face the full force of the law," said Simpson. "When will the fossil fuel executives and the politicians they've bought be held accountable for the criminal damage that they are imposing on every living thing?" she asked.

Paintings 'unharmed'

The gallery said the incident occurred at 2:30 pm (1330 GMT) and that the paintings were found to be unharmed after being examined by a conservator.

"We are aiming to reopen the exhibition as soon as possible," it added.

Just Stop Oil has staged a number of high-profile stunts in recent years.

In July 2022, protesters glued themselves to the frame of John Constable's pastoral masterpiece "The Hay Wain", also in the National Gallery.

Five activists, including the climate group's founder, were given between four and five years in jail in June for conspiring to plan protests that blocked the M25 motorway surrounding London.

JSO activists were also arrested as they intended to protest at King Charles III's coronation in May last year. The group called the detentions "massive authoritarian overreach".—AFP



Members of the public queue to enter the Van Gogh: Poets & Lovers exhibition at the National Gallery in Central London.

Maneskin's Damiano David releases first solo song

Damiano David, lead singer of Italian rock band and Eurovision winner Maneskin, released his first solo track Friday, sparking fears among fans that the group might be about to split. David collaborated on the song, "Silverlines", with American artists Sarah Hudson and Ferras and the British rapper and producer Labrinth.

The Italian singer, whose live performances and party nights with bassist Victoria De Angelis fuelled Maneskin's sultry reputation, seems to suggest with the melancholy track that he has entered a more mellow period of his life.

"I don't feel sad anymore, the calm after the storm, peace belongs to me," he sings.

"This song is very special to me," he told Italy's La Stampa daily in an interview published Friday.

"I naturally chose it as the start of this new chapter in my artistic life, and I sincerely hope that people are ready to take this journey with me."



Italian singer Damiano David from band Maneskin arrives to attend the MTV Video Music Awards at UBS Arena in Elmont, New York, on September 11, 2024.—AFP

David said at the MTV Video Music Awards in New York this month that his solo project did not mean the end of Maneskin. "One thing is certain, the band will continue to make records together. We get on very well, and my solo record will not put an end to our activity as a band," he said. Maneskin won the Eurovision Song Contest in 2021 and David is its best-known member, with over five million followers on Instagram.—AFP

Sports

Brook says return to form 'a matter of time' as England hammer Australia

Match reduced by rain to 39 overs per side

LONDON: England captain Harry Brook insisted he was always confident of coming good after starring in a 186-run rout of Australia at Lord's on Friday that set up a one-day international series decider with the world champions.

Brook, leading England in the absence of the injured Jos Buttler, followed his match-winning and maiden ODI hundred at Chester-le-Street on Tuesday with a superb 87 from 58 balls at Lord's.

In a match reduced by rain to 39 overs per side, the big-hitting Liam Livingstone added late impetus with a whirlwind 62 not out from just 27 balls as England posted an imposing total of 312-5. Australia, following a promising start to their reply, collapsed to 126 all out inside 25 overs as England levelled the five-match series at 2-2 ahead of Sunday's finale at Bristol.

Brook came under fire from former England captains Michael Vaughan and Alastair Cook for the way he succumbed to frustration while being dismissed in this month's third Test loss to Sri Lanka at the Oval.

But in an ODI format which is unfamiliar to many members of a new-look England side, the 25-year-old produced his second superbly-paced innings of the week. "It felt like only a matter of time for me," Brook told reporters. "I feel like I've been playing well all summer, everything just needed to click. The last couple of games for me have been really special."

England opener Ben Duckett survived an awkward opening spell from Mitchell Starc to make 63 before Livingstone smashed seven sixes, including four in

an astounding last over from the left-arm fast bowler that cost 28 runs. "He was striking it unbelievably well," Brook said of Livingstone. "We all know what he's capable of doing at the back end (of an innings)."

'Phenomenal'

Travis Head and Mitchell Marsh put on 68 in the first nine overs of Australia's reply before the innings subsided as Brydon Carse (3-36) and Jofra Archer (2-33) did the bulk of the early damage in helpful conditions under the floodlights.

Archer, plagued by injury since starring in England's triumphant 2019 World Cup campaign, touched speeds of 93 mph (150 km/h), with fellow pacesman Matthew Potts rounding off the home side's fine all-round display with an ODI best 4-38.

And express quick Archer also struck Marnus Labuschagne a nasty blow on the elbow. "It was phenomenal to watch," Brook said. "We knew the seamers were getting the most out of the pitch so I just tried to bowl them as many overs as possible."

Australia, without Cameron Green after the all-rounder suffered a tour-ending back injury, had few answers as skipper Marsh admitted. "Fair play to England, they put us under a lot of pressure with the bat," Marsh told Sky Sports. "We couldn't get early wickets and they thoroughly out-played us today. Liam Livingstone played a gem of an innings." He added: "England bowled really well. We lost wickets continually and that's cricket." — AFP



LONDON: England's Jofra Archer celebrates taking the wicket of Australia's captain Mitchell Marsh for 28 runs during the fourth One Day International (ODI) cricket match between England and Australia at Lord's in London. — AFP

IPL's Modi blasts cricket's Hundred as 'big fat Ponzi scheme'

LONDON: Indian Premier League founder Lalit Modi has labelled the Hundred competition a "big fat Ponzi scheme", accusing English cricket chiefs of unrealistic financial projections. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is seeking private investment in the 100-ball-per-side competition, which was launched in 2021.

The Hundred, which involves men's and women's teams, has been controversial as it is not mapped onto the traditional county structure, but authorities say it brings much-needed TV revenue into the sport.

A document distributed to investors and seen by Britain's Daily Telegraph newspaper says domestic TV rights would rise from a projected £54 million (\$72 million) in 2025 to £85 million from 2029. The Telegraph said it is understood that Indian TV rights are projected to climb from £1.3 million to £1.8 million per year from 2026 to 2029, and then rocket to £15 million per year from 2030.

This is despite the fact that Indian players are currently barred from franchise leagues outside of their own country. Modi, whose IPL has transformed the global cricket economy and spawned other Twenty20 competitions, said projections for the Hundred were far-fetched. "The ECB's financial projections for The Hundred, particularly beyond 2026, appear overly optimistic and disconnected from reality," Modi said on X.

"The international TV rights figures make little sense, given the global competition from other cricket leagues like the IPL," The Indian businessman previously offered to buy the Hundred. "Want to clarify about my billion dollar offer," he said on X. "It was to buy out the tournament in perpetuity and the idea was to redo it as a T20 tournament. Not another new format the global audience have ZERO idea about."

He added: "My concern now is that they are trying to lure current @ipl20 owners into this non-starter league and building a hype around it that has no justification or guarantees on numbers. Basically a big fat #ponzischeme."

A Ponzi scheme is a notorious type of investment that pays early investors with money taken from subsequent investors. But ECB chief executive Richard Gould dismissed Modi's remarks by telling BBC Radio on Friday: "We are very confident in the strength of the game in England and Wales." — AFP

S Lanka scent series victory as NZ 199-5 after follow-on

GALLE: Sri Lanka were just five wickets away from a crushing second Test and series victory over New Zealand on Saturday, with the tourists 199-5 at stumps on the third day, having followed on after collapsing to 88 all out in their first innings.

Tom Blundell was not out on 47 and Glenn Phillips on 32 when bad light forced an early end to play in Galle after debutant off-spinner Nishan Peiris took three top-order wickets. "Obviously the first innings wasn't ideal. It was a bitter pill to swallow," said Blundell afterwards. "Things were happening very quick. Sri Lanka are a very good team and their spinners bowled really well."

Devon Conway, battling to save both his team and his place in the side, joined forces with former captain Kane Williamson in a dogged 97-run partnership for the second wicket.

De Silva lured Conway, who had made 61 off 62 balls, into a drive towards the vacant deep cover boundary that was caught by Dinesh Chandimal in a

spectacular backward running catch. Williamson, the world's second-ranked batsman behind England's Joe Root, departed when he misjudged a shot off Peiris, with Ramesh Mendis grabbing a tumbling catch at long-on.

Tom Latham had been the first wicket to fall after the follow-on was enforced just before lunch, caught by Pathum Nissanka for a duck at short leg off Peiris, who earlier had taken three first-innings wickets.

'Dictate terms'

Sri Lanka declared Friday on a mammoth 602-5 for their first innings, then spinner Prabath Jayasuriya took 6-42 for his ninth five-wicket haul as the visitors failed to get to three figures. Jayasuriya will need to dismiss all five remaining New Zealand batsmen to equal the record for fastest bowler to 100 Test wickets, held since 1896 by England's George Lohmann who reached the milestone in his 16th Test.

"I love bowling in Galle," he said. "But that milestone looks out of reach now. Obviously when you have runs on the board you can dictate terms like we did today," he added. "We will be delighted with a series win." Resuming at a precarious 22-2 in their first innings, New Zealand's batsmen barely put up a fight and their highest partnership was the 20 added by last pair Mitchell Santner, who top scored with 29, and William O'Rourke (two).



GALLE: New Zealand's Kane Williamson plays a shot during the third day of the second Test cricket match between Sri Lanka and New Zealand at the Galle International Cricket Stadium in Galle. — AFP

Captain de Silva took five catches at first slip to tie the record for most in a Test innings by a non-wicketkeeper, a milestone shared with 15 others. — AFP

Mexico's men, women sweep to Homeless World Cup triumphs

SEOUL: Mexico won both the men's and women Homeless World Cups on Saturday in Seoul, in an event partnered by FIFA for the first time. Mexico's men beat England 6-5 in the final at Hanyang University in Seoul, shortly after the women's team secured a 5-2 victory against Romania.

The country's women players, some carrying Mexican national flags, rushed on to the field to embrace their teammates after the men's team secured their victory. Lithuania were third in the men's event, while Poland took bronze in the women's. This year's tournament was the first edition hosted in Asia since it began in 2003.

Billing itself as helping participants change their lives for the better through football, the Homeless World Cup sparked a feel-good documentary starring Bill Nighy, plus a 2023 Korean movie called "Dream". This year's tournament featured 52 teams from 38 countries worldwide and was the first since FIFA signed an agreement to partner organizers the Homeless World Cup Foundation.

"FIFA is excited to contribute, because we share the view of the Homeless World Cup



SEOUL: Team Mexico members celebrate their victory with the trophy after winning the men's 4x4 football final match between Mexico and England at the 2024 Homeless World Cup in Seoul. — AFP

Foundation that football is a force for good," FIFA president Gianni Infantino said last month. FIFA, as well as providing trophies and medals,

streamed the event free on the FIFA+ platform. There was free admission to matches, which comprised two halves of seven minutes. — AFP

Bagnaia halves Martin's MotoGP lead with win

LOMBOK: Francesco Bagnaia won a dramatic Indonesia MotoGP sprint race on Saturday, capitalizing on an early crash by championship leader Jorge Martin to halve the Spaniard's lead to 12 points at the top of the standings.

Pramac rider Martin slid off on the first lap to gift reigning champion Bagnaia the race lead in a blow to his championship hopes with Sunday's grand prix and five race weekends to go.

"Everybody knows how important it was to gain points, we gained 12 (points). So thanks to the mistake of Jorge, we are close again," Bagnaia told reporters. Bagnaia's teammate Enea Bastianini finished second, while six-time MotoGP champion Marc Marquez of Gresini completed the podium in third.

Martin had secured pole position at the sweltering Mandalika track on Lombok island with a lap record in qualifying but could only claw his way back to 10th place after the costly incident. A win in the sprint would have guaranteed Martin the champi-

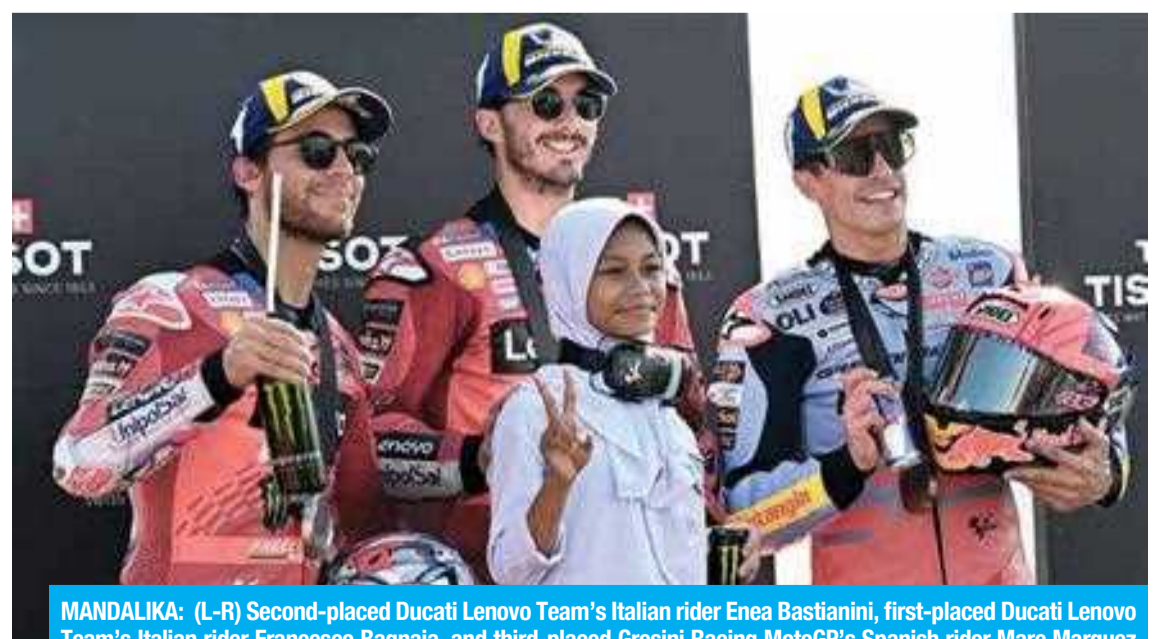
onship lead leaving heading into next week's Japan MotoGP, the first of five remaining race weekends in the 2024 season.

Bagnaia can now overtake Martin in the championship depending on results in Sunday's GP. Bastianini battled with Marquez for second place but held on to finish behind his teammate. The Italian rider, who will be replaced by Marquez at Ducati's factory team next season, is 50 points behind Martin ahead of Sunday's GP. "I am happy. After I bring my pace and levelled up, I was a bit faster. In the last lap I tried to catch Pecco (Bagnaia) but the gap was important. The second position is okay," Bastianini told reporters.

Marquez surge

Marquez, who has pulled himself back into the title picture in recent weeks, made an incredible early surge from 12th to finish third after crashing twice in final qualifying earlier in the day and failing to register a lap time. He is now 53 points behind Martin in the championship standings.

"The Q2 is a nightmare for me at the moment. But still we keep working and try to understand what is going on," the Spaniard told reporters. Marco Bezecchi, who survived a crash in qualifying to secure a front-row place on the grid, finished fourth. Red Bull GasGas rider Pedro Acosta completed the front-row line-up but could only finish sixth.



MANDALIKA: (L-R) Second-placed Ducati Lenovo Team's Italian rider Enea Bastianini, first-placed Ducati Lenovo Team's Italian rider Francesco Bagnaia, and third-placed Gresini Racing MotoGP's Spanish rider Marc Marquez pose with a schoolgirl on the podium following the MotoGP sprint race of the Indonesian Grand Prix. — AFP

Aprilia's Miguel Oliveira however was ruled out of the race weekend and left a doubt for next week's Japan MotoGP after fracturing his right wrist in Friday

morning's free practice session. MotoGP returned to Indonesia in 2022 for the first time since 1997, at a new venue on the resort island of Lombok. — AFP

Sports

Ruthless Olympic champ Zheng joins Sabalenka in Beijing third round

Paul stunned by Machac as Japan Open upsets keep coming

BEIJING: Olympic champion and hometown hero Zheng Qinwen thrilled a packed house at the China Open on Saturday to join top seed Aryna Sabalenka in the third round in Beijing.

Sabalenka labored in the first set before defeating tricky Thai qualifier Mananchaya Sawangkaew 6-4, 6-1 in her first match since winning the US Open. Zheng, playing at home for the first time since winning Paris gold, swatted aside 71st-ranked Russian Kamilla Rakhimova 6-1, 6-1 in 75 minutes.

Sabalenka and Zheng are on course to meet in the semi-finals in a repeat of the Australian Open final, where the Belarusian crushed her opponent 6-3, 6-2. But with the crowd screaming her on, the 21-year-old Zheng should be a different proposition in the Chinese capital.

The fifth seed plays Nadia Podoroska of Argentina or Ukraine's 25th seed Dayana Yastremska next. Sabalenka faces 68th-ranked Ashlyn Krueger of the United States. The world number two made hard work in the first set of an opponent ranked 187 in the world and playing the biggest match of her young career.

Sabalenka barely raised a smile at the end after eventually easing to a straight-sets victory. "I'm super-happy to get through this match," the 26-year-old said. "In the first set I was struggling a little bit with the rhythm, with the speed of the court, with the way balls are getting heavier."

"In the second set seems like everything started working much better." The 22-year-old Mananchaya may have been inexperienced at this level but the athletic Thai refused to give up seemingly lost causes. Mananchaya struggled though on serve and three-time major champion Sabalenka broke for a 4-2 first-set lead. The Thai refused to be overwhelmed by Sabalenka's far greater power and she

broke back immediately, to roars of approval from the Beijing crowd.

An error-prone Sabalenka could not get into her groove but created a first set point on the Thai's serve, only to put a straightforward volley wide. She made no mistake on her second opportunity and then broke for 3-1 in the second set as she belatedly found form.

Also into the third round of the WTA 1000 event is third seed Jasmine Paolini, but the Italian did it the hard way, fighting back to beat Denmark's Clara Tauson 1-6, 7-5, 6-4. World number one and defending champion Iga Swiatek pulled out before the tournament because of "personal matters".

Meanwhile, fifth seed Tommy Paul became the latest top player to make an early exit at the Japan Open when he lost 2-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) to Tomas Machac in the second round on Saturday. The American's departure means only two of the eight seeds are still standing in Tokyo. Top seed Taylor Fritz, number three Casper Ruud, fourth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas and number seven Frances Tiafoe all lost in the first round.

Hubert Hurkacz, seeded two, was beaten by Britain's Jack Draper in the second round. Denmark's number six seed Holger Rune avoided an upset with a 6-2, 6-4 win over Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka. But Paul failed to join him in the quarter-finals after losing to the Czech Republic's Machac back into a match that the American looked to have total control of.

"Even the not-seeded players here are great," said the 23-year-old Machac, who has a world ranking of 34 and is looking to win his first career title. "I'm just happy that I'm in and I just try to believe as much as possible." Paul won five straight games in the first set but Machac came roaring back in the second and dug in when he found himself 3-0



BEIJING: China's Zheng Qinwen hits a return to Russia's Kamilla Rakhimova during their women's singles match at the China Open tennis tournament in Beijing. — AFP

down in the final set.

"I feel great," said Machac. "First set he was better, second set I found my rhythm. In the third set I was playing unbelievable so I'm super-happy with my performance." Machac's quarter-final opponent will be American Alex Michelsen, who beat Australia's Christopher O'Connell 6-1, 6-4.

Japan's Kei Nishikori also reached the quarter-

finals with a 6-2, 6-3 win over Australia's Jordan Thompson. Nishikori, 34, has been plagued by injuries and he returned to Grand Slam competition at the French Open in May after an absence of almost three years. He was in inspired form as he beat Thompson in 1hr 22min, but he refused to get carried away with his performance. "It's just one match, I can't let my guard down," said Nishikori. — AFP



Kuwait to partake in regional sailing competition in Dubai

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait will participate for the first time in the Special Olympics MENA Regional Sailing Competition in Dubai which will be held from October 2 to 7, and the event will be hosted by Dubai International Marine Club.

A delegation headed by Secretary General of Tomoooh Sports Club for the Mentally Disabled Sadeeqa Al-Ansari, accompanied by players Suleiman Al-Nassar, Nawaf Awadh, Abdulrahman Al-Kandary and Munaf Al-Wuhaib left for Dubai to join a training camp in preparation for the competition.

Al-Ansari said this is the first time the Special Olympics participate in the sailing contest which is being held within the framework of the unified sport and sports inclusion in which athletes of Special Olympics join their non-disabled partners. She pointed to the importance of such contests in facilitating the positive environment to implement the principle of inclusion and social empowerment for the disabled through sports activities.

She said the Special Olympics will have a training camp in the UAE to train the players on the game's techniques which relies on the ability to determine the direction, set the speed and balance to confront the winds and movement of sea currents.

Al-Ansari thanked Kuwait Sea Sport Club for participating in preparing the players for the competition, while expressing confidence in the players' ability to perform honorably in the name of Kuwait.

Al-Ansari thanked the Public Authority for Sport and Sea Club as well as the UAE's Special Olympics for organizing and hosting the event.

per Cup with eight wins, but have now lost four times as well. A tense finish after Zamalek equalized was some compensation for the capacity 30,000 crowd at the Kingdom Arena stadium in the Saudi Arabian capital after a stop-start affair.

Zamalek were furious after Ahly were awarded a 34th-minute penalty when Hamza Mathlouthi stamped on the left leg of Akram Tawfik, who had spoilt a good run with a weak shot at Awad. The Libyan referee checked the incident on the VAR monitor and when he indicated a penalty, furious Zamalek players surrounded him.

At one stage Zamalek players moved to the sideline, hinting they might walk off in protest, and it took 10 minutes before play resumed and Palestine international Abou Ali scored from the spot. When the referee blew for half-time, security officials rushed on to the pitch and escorted him to the changerooms amid more Zamalek protests. With Zamalek making little impact in attack, Portuguese coach Jose Gomes introduced Mansy, and he connected with an Omar Gaber cross to push the ball wide of goalkeeper Mohamed el Shenawy. — AFP

Clarke's two tries help All Blacks to win over Wallabies

WELLINGTON: Wing Caleb Clarke scored two tries as New Zealand overcame a slow start to overwhelm Australia 33-13 in their final match of the Rugby Championship on Saturday.

The All Blacks racked up five tries to one in a fast-moving contest in Wellington to stretch their winning streak against the Wallabies to nine straight matches and leave them with four wins from six at the end of the Rugby Championship.

Having trailed for much of the first half, the home side took a 19-13 lead on the stroke of half-time through an audacious try by Clarke before dominating the remainder of the contest. Joe Schmidt's Wallabies crashed to their fifth Rugby Championship defeat of a troubled campaign and remain without a win over the All Blacks on New Zealand soil since 2001.

New Zealand captain Scott Barrett was pleased his team overcame their hoodoo in the country's capital city, having failed to win any of their previous five Tests in Wellington. "Really pleased to have reversed the curse. We didn't start too well, but I'm really pleased with how we finished," lock forward Barrett said. "We talked about owning our effort and it showed there on our line, it was pleasing to not let them in. And I'm pleased to finish on a high in our

final home game." It was an improved finish to the match for Scott Robertson's New Zealand, who have faltered badly in the closing stages of several recent Tests, including last week's 31-28 defeat of the Wallabies that saw them retain the Bledisloe Cup.

As with the Sydney contest, both teams adopted a ball-in-hand approach, with the in-form Clarke a chief beneficiary as he took his tally to seven tries in five Tests this year. It was the last home Test for two long-serving New Zealand players, with flanker Sam Cane and scrum-half TJ Perenara both moving to Japanese clubs at the end of the year. It was also the 100th Test for former skipper Cane, who was typically industrious and received a standing ovation from a crowd of 32,000 when he was substituted in the second half.

Beauden Barrett, who started in place of Damian McKenzie at fly-half, landed four conversions for the All Blacks while Wallabies counterpart Noah Loleso kicked eight points, including the conversion of their lone try scored by Fraser McReight. Australia were awarded the first six penalties of the match and dominated the opening stages before flanker McReight burrowed over. The All Blacks improved their discipline and registered three tries before the interval, all to outside backs.

Wing Sevu Reece capitalized on a break and accurate long pass from centre Anton Lienert-Brown to score, before fullback Will Jordan danced through the defence for his 35th try in 37 Tests. The home side turned down a simple penalty shot at goal on the stroke of half-time and their gamble paid off, with Lienert-Brown's pass sending Clarke through and untouched next to the posts. — AFP



WELLINGTON: New Zealand's Caleb Clarke breaks a tackle during The Rugby Championship and Bledisloe Cup match between New Zealand All Blacks and Australia Wallabies at Sky Stadium in Wellington. — AFP

Classifieds

Change of Name

I, **Fatema** holder of Passport No. M4641789 do hereby change my name to **Fatema Taher** (as given name) **Baghly** (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name **Fatema Taher Baghly** and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (#6175 27/09/2024)

I, **Mabel** Malcolm Fernandes, holder of Passport No. R8131312 do hereby change my

name to **Malcolm Fernandes** for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name **Malcolm Fernandes** and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (#6169 26/09/2024)

I, **Mahamadali** Saudagar Sarda, holder of Indian Passport No. Y3681670, having permanent address Hill Mist Residency, Plot No. 82, Mantri Chandak Vihar, Flat No. 6 Hotgi road, Solapur-413003, Maharashtra, India

residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) **Sardar Ali Mohammed Ali** and (surname) **Saudagar**. (#6174 26/09/2024)

I, **Gurbhej** Singh (surname **Sidhu**), holder of Indian Passport No. X3277300, having permanent address Pandori, Sidhwan, VPO Pandori, D.T. Tarnataran, Pin - 143401 Punjab, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth

my name will be read as (given name) **Gurbhej Singh** and (surname) **Sajjan**. (#6172 26/09/2024)

I, **Tasneem**, holder of Indian Passport No. M6103113, having permanent address of Dungarpur, Rajasthan, India, residing in Kuwait at present, I hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) **Tasneem** and (surname) **Tekriwala**. (#6173 26/09/2024)

Man City held without Rodri as Palmer's 4-goal haul fires Chelsea

Arsenal score two stoppage time goals to beat Leicester



LONDON: Arsenal's English midfielder #53 Ethan Nwaneri (L) vies with Leicester City's Danish defender #16 Victor Kristiansen (R) during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Leicester City. — AFP

LONDON: Manchester City felt the absence of star midfielder Rodri as the Premier League champions were held to a damaging 1-1 draw at Newcastle, while Cole Palmer scored four times in Chelsea's 4-2 win against Brighton on Saturday.

City's second successive draw in the league was especially frustrating as Arsenal climbed above them with a last-gasp 4-2 win against Leicester a few hours later. Rodri has been ruled out for the rest of the season after surgery on a knee injury suffered in last weekend's bruising 2-2 draw with title rivals Arsenal.

Josko Gvardiol put City in front at St James' Park, but Newcastle were well worthy of the point given to them by Anthony Gordon's second-half penalty. Guardiola described Rodri, who is unbeaten in his past 52 Premier League appearances stretching back to February 2023, as "irreplaceable".

To fill the void left by the Spaniard, Rico Lewis was thrust into a central midfield role alongside Mateo Kovacic. But City lacked the control and poise so often provided by Rodri on and off the ball.

"It is always difficult here with their physicality and they defend so deep. We had chances but (Nick) Pope (the goalkeeper) was brilliant so we take the point," said Guardiola.

"We made bad decisions (with the chances) to make it 2-0." At the Emirates Stadium, Gabriel Martinelli put Arsenal ahead in the 20th minute with his first goal this season, the Brazilian winger drilled a low finish inside the far post from Jurrien Timber's cross.

Martinelli turned provider on the stroke of half-time, setting up Leandro Trossard to stroke in Arsenal's second goal. James Justin reduced the deficit with a deflected 47th-minute effort and stunned the Emirates Stadium into silence in the 63rd minute when his thunderous volley cannoned in off the woodwork.

But Mikel Arteta's men stole the points four minutes into stoppage-time when Trossard's shot deflected off Leicester's Wilfred Ndidi for an own goal, with Kai Havertz netting moments later to confirm the victory.

Palmer runs riot

Palmer became the first player ever to score four goals in the first half of a Premier League match with a stunning display at Stamford Bridge. Former Brighton duo Moises Caicedo and Robert Sanchez were guilty of mistakes when Georginio Rutter put the Seagulls ahead in the seventh minute.

Just moments after hitting the post and then having a goal disallowed, it was third time lucky for Palmer in the 21st minute. Palmer equalized with a clinical finish after Nicolas Jackson seized on Adam Webster's mistake to tee up his fellow forward.

When Jadon Sancho was tripped in the area by two Brighton defenders, there was never any doubt that penalty expert Palmer would step up to dispatch the 28th-minute spot-kick with ease. Palmer completed his nine-minute-and-48-second treble in the 31st minute, curling a brilliant free-kick past Bart Verbruggen from 25 yards to make it five goals in six league games this term.

Carlos Baleba pulled one back in the 34th min-

ute, but Palmer's incredible afternoon wasn't over and, in the 41st minute, the England star converted Sancho's pass with an emphatic strike. West Ham midfielder Tomas Soucek rescued a 1-1 draw at Brentford, who made Premier League history thanks to Bryan Mbeumo's quick-fire opener.

Under-fire Hammers boss Julen Lopetegui saw his side fall behind after just 37 seconds as Mbeumo's superb volley made Brentford the first Premier League team to score in the first minute in three consecutive games.

But Soucek swept in West Ham's 54th-minute equalizer to avoid a fourth defeat in their last five games in all competitions. Dwight McNeil struck twice in the second half as Everton beat Crystal Palace 2-1 to end their winless start to the league season, just days after the Goodison Park takeover by a group led by American billionaire Dan Friedkin. Raul Jimenez's 51st-minute penalty gave Fulham a 1-0 win at Nottingham Forest. Liverpool will go top of the table if they win at Wolves in Saturday's late game. — AFP

Kuwait to participate in World Ice Hockey Championship: Al-Ajmi

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Kuwaiti Winter Games Club Fahid Al-Ajmi announced on Saturday that the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) has approved the participation of the Kuwaiti national team in the upcoming edition of the World Ice Hockey Championship. Al-Ajmi told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the Kuwaiti team will be in the fourth level, which will include six Asian teams: Iran, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Malaysia and Armenia, which will host the event in April 2025.

He explained that this decision was taken during the IIHF Congress meeting currently being held in Greece. It is a qualitative leap for the participating teams in this classification, as their number has been increased to six teams after it was four in previous editions, which will raise the level of the championship and develop the players of the teams by gaining more experience.

He added that the meeting, which was attended by President of the International Olympic Sports Committee Thomas Bach, resulted in several important decisions, including granting the Bahrain Ice Hockey Club full membership in the federation. Expressing

his congratulations to the brothers in Bahrain on this step that will lead to further development of the game. On another note, Al-Ajmi explained that the Kuwait Winter Sports Club is continuing its preparations to participate in the 9th Asian Winter Games scheduled to be held in the Chinese city of Harbin, as it is participating in five events and individual games, namely ice hockey, figure skating, curling, ice skating and speed skating.

He pointed out that a Kuwaiti delegation headed by the club's board member, Mishaal Al Awadhi, recently participated in an important meeting of the Asian countries participating in the tournament, where the laws of the Olympic Games that will be held in the tournament were clarified and the sports facilities where each game will be held separately and the training sites were inspected.

He explained that the meeting was fruitful, as it confirmed the readiness of the city of Harbin to host this major continental sports event, which is the second continental gathering after the Asian Summer Games (ASIAD). He stated that Kuwait winter sports also had an important participation in the meeting of



Fahid Al-Ajmi



Participants at the meeting of the Organizing Committee of the Harbin 2025 Asian Winter Games. — KUNA photos

the International Ski Federation (FIS) currently being held in Switzerland, as the latter agreed to organize the Kuwaiti club for an international championship game next April, adding that "the federation made a promise to grant Kuwait full membership in the federation in its next meeting in 2025.

He stressed the club's keenness to participate in all sports meetings and tournaments held under the supervision of international, continental and regional sports organizations in all five winter games to support and develop its players to achieve good results in the most important sports events. — KUNA

Sinner 'disappointed' by WADA appeal over doping case

BEIJING: Tennis world number one Jannik Sinner said he was "disappointed and surprised" on Saturday after the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) appealed over his steroid case. "We cannot control everything. Obviously I'm very disappointed and also surprised," he told reporters at the China Open, having been cleared in August of wrongdoing.

"We had three hearings. All three hearings came out very positively for me." WADA made the announcement on Saturday but appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) on Thursday.

The 23-year-old Italian Sinner said he knew "a couple of days ago" about the appeal. "Maybe they just want to make sure that everything is in the right position. Yeah, I'm just surprised that they appealed." — AFP