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Jordan honors Amir on state visit

King Abdullah decorates Sheikh Mishal with highest award after official talks



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is welcomed and honored by Jordanian King Abdullah II during a state visit on April 23, 2024. — KUNA photos

AMMAN: HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and an official delegation accompanying him arrived on Tuesday in Jordan on a state visit. HH the Amir was received by Jordanian King Abdullah II and the Crown Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah. His Highness the Amir is accompanied by an official

delegation that includes the Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Anwar Al-Mudhaf, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya and senior officials in the Amiri Diwan. HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal and King Abdullah held an official session of talks at Basman Palace. During

the talks, both sides touched on the deep-rooted bilateral ties between the two countries and ways of boosting cooperation to serve the aspirations of the two peoples. HH the Amir congratulated King Abdullah II on the 25th anniversary of his coronation, praising Jordan's achievements under his wise leadership.

HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal received the Al-Hussein Necklace from King Abdullah. The Al-Hussein Necklace is the highest civilian medal in the Kingdom of Jordan. King Abdullah later held a banquet in honor of HH the Amir and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of the state visit. — KUNA (See Page 3)

NEWS IN BRIEF

EU envoy hails visa decision

KUWAIT: EU Ambassador to Kuwait Anne Koistinen welcomed the European Commission's decision to grant five-year multiple-entry visas to citizens of Kuwait and other Gulf Cooperation Council countries. With the summer holidays approaching and an anticipated surge in visa applications, Koistinen urged prospective travelers to apply for visas well in advance, with applications accepted up to six months ahead of travel. She reiterated her commitment to securing visa-free travel for Kuwaiti citizens, hoping the European Parliament will support the Schengen visa waiver proposal. (See Page 3)

Mubarak Port delays queried

KUWAIT: A number of lawmakers on Tuesday demanded a probe on the failure to complete and operate the multibillion-dollar Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port, which is running way behind its opening target, after neighboring Iraq signed a key transportation agreement with Turkey, Qatar and the UAE to cooperate on the Development Road project, a major rail and road link between Iraq's Grand Faw Port, just opposite Kuwait's Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port, and the Turkish border. MPs are upset that due to red tape, the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port has missed several target dates, thus forcing Kuwait to miss golden economic opportunities that neighboring countries have capitalized on. The \$3.2 billion project was launched as early as 2006 and was scheduled to become operational in 2010.

New Maghreb coalition eyed

TUNIS: Tunisia held a "first advisory meeting" Monday in its capital Tunis with Algerian and Libyan leaders in the hope of establishing a new Maghreb regional coalition. No leaders from Morocco or Mauritania were present at the meeting, set to take place every three months. The coalition is aimed at furthering "security, stability and development throughout the region", Tunisian foreign minister Nabil Ammar read from a statement. — AFP (See Page 6)

Kuwait sends first relief aid plane to Sudan

KUWAIT: Kuwait has sent its first aircraft carrying 40 tons of food and medical supplies and ambulances to Port Sudan International Airport. Speaking to KUNA on this occasion, Deputy General Manager of Kuwait Society for Relief Omar Al-Thuwaini said the aid plane is part of a humanitarian campaign that was jointly launched by the society and eight other Kuwaiti charities to help Sudanese people who have been affected by their country's war. The Kuwaiti initiative is mainly intended to help answer Sudanese people's basic

needs, primarily food, medicine and shelter, amid the tough living conditions they are facing, he added. In this context, he voiced gratitude and appreciation to Kuwaiti state bodies, chiefly the ministries of defense, foreign affairs, social affairs and information, for their efforts to facilitate and speed up the humanitarian mission.

Chief of Relief and Projects at the Kuwait Society for Relief Mahmoud Al-Mesbah said the first Kuwaiti aid aircraft carried 20 pallets of medical supplies, 20 pallets of foodstuff and three ambulances. Kuwaiti relief aid comes under the direction of the country's political leadership for sending necessary humanitarian aid to the Sudanese people to ease the impact of war. Kuwait sent 16 relief aid planes carrying hundreds of tons of food and medical supplies, clothes and ambulances to Sudan in June. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Aid officials pose before a plane carrying relief supplies for Sudan on April 23, 2024. — KUNA

No let-up on 200th day of war in Gaza

GAZA: The Zionist war in Gaza entered its 200th day on Tuesday with fears mounting of a Zionist invasion in the overcrowded south of the besieged Gaza Strip. The Zionist army carried out intense shelling overnight of Gaza City. AFP correspondents and witnesses said, with the military saying it also struck Hamas positions in south Gaza. Shelling and loud explosions were heard in southwest Gaza and the city of Khan Yunis in the south, while air

strikes struck near the Bureij refugee camp and artillery fire hit the Nuseirat refugee camp. The Zionist military offensive has killed at least 34,183 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in the territory.

As diplomacy aimed at ending the war stalls, key mediator Qatar said Hamas' political leadership would stay in Doha "as long as their presence here... is useful and positive in this mediation effort", according to foreign ministry spokesperson Majed Al-Ansari. The Gulf state, which has hosted Hamas leaders since 2012, said last week it was reassessing its mediation role, fueling speculation that the Palestinian group could be asked to leave. Continued on Page 6



GAZA: People rush towards landing humanitarian aid packages dropped over the northern Gaza Strip on April 23, 2024. — AFP

Arrests at NYU campus as Gaza protests spread

NEW YORK: More than 130 people were arrested overnight during pro-Palestinian protests at the New York University campus, as student demonstrations gather pace in the United States over the Zionist-Hamas war. Some of America's most prestigious universities have been rocked by

protests in recent weeks as students and other agitators take over quads and disrupt campus activities.

The demonstrations come amid sweeping debates over the Zionist entity's assault on Gaza. Such bastions of higher education — Harvard, Yale, Columbia and others — are grappling for a balance between students demanding free speech rights and others who argue that campuses are encouraging intimidation and hate speech.

On Tuesday, the New York Police Department told AFP that 133 people had been arrested at NYU. Continued on Page 6



BERKELEY, California: Pro-Palestinian protesters set up a tent encampment during a demonstration in front of Sproul Hall on the UC Berkeley campus on April 22, 2024. — AFP



India hails trade relations with Kuwait, eyes more investments

Ambassador: India offers diverse range of investment opportunities across various sectors



Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika poses for group photo. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Officials and businessmen attending the conference.

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Embassy of India held on Tuesday the 'India-Kuwait Investment Conference' in collaboration with the Indian Business & Professional Council (IBPC) and with the support of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Union of Investment Companies at Four Seasons Hotel. Ambassador of India to Kuwait Dr Adarsh Swaika said bilateral trade between the two countries reached about \$14 billion based on oil and food-sector trade. "We are seeing encouraging signs of diversification in our export basket to Kuwait such as infrastructure, manufacturing, renewable energy, technology, healthcare, tourism, agriculture, etc. I strongly believe trade and investment go hand in hand", he said.

The Indian ambassador indicated that transforming growing trade relations between both countries into a robust investment partnership requires a strategic approach and concerted efforts from both sides, noting that the positive vibes created by last year's investment conference encouraged them to organize the event this year as well.

"India is the fastest growing major economy in the world, the 5th largest economy with GDP of \$3.5 trillion, where the GDP growth last year was 7.2 percent. My country has consistently attracted foreign direct investment," Swaika said, pointing out that FDI inflow during the last 10 years was \$596 billion and annual FDI doubled in 8 years from \$35 billion to \$84 billion last year.

"India offers a diverse range of investment opportunities across various sectors, including but not limited to manufacturing, infrastructure, renewable energy, technology, healthcare and agriculture. Initiatives such as 'Make in India' and 'Digital India' fur-



Saleh Al-Selmi, Chairman of the Union of Investment Companies.

ther enhance the attractiveness of investing in India. Not only does India provide a market size of over 1.4 billion people, it serves as a strategic gateway to the vast markets of South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Middle East," Ambassador Swaika added.

In envisioning independent India at 100 in 2047, the ambassador said the landscape appears remarkably transformed, with the nation poised as the world's second-largest economy, boasting an estimated GDP of \$32 trillion. This monumental growth is underpinned by a surge in foreign direct investment, projected to soar twelvefold to reach \$1 trillion, alongside a parallel expansion in exports, anticipated to skyrocket to \$8 trillion, reflecting a twelvefold increase as well.

Central to India's economic prowess is its burgeoning workforce, hailed as the largest and youngest globally, with a median age of 29, underscoring the nation's demographic dividend and its



Gurvinder Lamba, Chairman of the Indian Business and Professional Council.

potential to fuel sustained growth and innovation across industries.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Union of Investment Companies Saleh Al-Selmi praised the relationship between the two countries, saying the strategic geographical location of Kuwait and the vibrant economy of India have complemented each other, offering significant opportunities for bilateral investment and trade. He noted that India is one of Kuwait's largest trading partners, with key exports including petroleum products, chemicals and machinery, while imports from India consist of textiles, pharmaceuticals and agricultural products.

"Kuwaiti investments in India have witnessed remarkable growth, with cumulative investments exceeding \$30 billion across various sectors. Similarly, Indian companies have made significant investments in Kuwait, contributing to the development of key sectors. I am confident that the



Ambassador of India to Kuwait Dr Adarsh Swaika speaks at the conference.

enduring partnership between two countries will continue to thrive, driven by our shared values, mutual interests and unwavering commitment to progress," Selmi said.

Chairman of the Indian Business and Professional Council Gurvinder Lamba revealed that IBPC operates under the patronage of the Indian ambassador to Kuwait, where it serves as a platform for Indian businesspersons and diaspora in Kuwait, offering both cultural and professional exposure and interaction. "India is emerging as a key player in the global value chain, with its ever-growing skilled workforce, IT solutions and the expansion of its manufacturing sector in the pharmaceutical, electronics, chemical, automotive, aerospace, agricultural, sustainable energy and many industries. Foreign direct investment, in particular, has played a crucial role in this economic growth," Lamba pointed out.

In my view

War, peace and unity



Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

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"War and Peace", a novel by Russian author Leo Tolstoy, was published between 1865 and 1869 in the Russian correspondent magazine "Russkiy Vestnik". The novel recounts the story of Russian society during Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Russia in 1812. Initially, it focused on a limited Russian plot but evolved into a work of world literature, depicting events among characters representing human diversity, particularly during periods of class struggle, war, defense of the land, adherence to honor and psychological conflicts that reveal both the worst and best in individuals, irrespective of their education or origin.

This global dimension arose from Tolstoy's personal experiences during the war and his firsthand exposure to human suffering. The narrative revolves around three main characters. As Napoleon's army invades Russia, Tolstoy adeptly traces the lives of characters from diverse social backgrounds — peasants, nobles, civilians and soldiers — and depicts how events shape their personalities, deeply rooted in culture and history. As the story unfolds, these characters transcend their personal struggles to become iconic figures in world literature.

Times of instability and conflict unveil the essence of individuals. Many live and die without realizing their true abilities or selves. The novel reveals how few grasp the depths of their capabilities for good or evil, as characters' interactions lead them from tranquility to violence and strife. Human life during peacetime differs markedly from its wartime counterpart. People's personas during peace starkly contrast with those during conflict.

World literature underscores humanity's unity, highlighting that individuals are paramount regardless of time or place. Educated elites, intellectuals and authors champion literature that human complexity, as it resonates universally, transcending culture, language, color or nationality. Such monumental novels affirm human unity, offering a solution to eradicate racism and demonstrating the unity of the human mind, all stemming from a common origin.

Youth in times of war and global conflicts

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Uncertainty, emotional distress, educational disruptions, loss of innocence, forced recruitment, health risks, and other unfortunate lasting aftermaths of the traumatic ordeals within war and global conflicts intertwine with the very essence of young people's lives, suffocating their serenity and ambitions. During times of war, the profound burden of distress weigh heavily on every single soul, yet, the youth bear the lion's share for being in a critical stage of human life cycle.

To shed light on youth's challenges during times of war and global conflicts, Kuwait Times interviewed, Dr. Dalal Al-Baloul, faculty member at Kuwait University (who specialized in sociology), along with Jumanah Mohammed, Psychologist and Mental Health therapist. Al-Baloul elaborated on war's impact on youth who are directly exposed to the harsh circumstances and those who are indirectly exposed but are confronted with war-related news through unsettling depiction on social media.

"Those directly exposed often struggle with intense feelings of fear and insecurity. A significant number of young people are expected to endure post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the foreseeable distant future - a condition known to prompt symptoms of anxiety, nervous tension, irritable bowel syndrome, and severe panic attacks characterized by rapid breathing and heightened heart rate, besides eating disorders," she explained.

Regarding indirect exposure, Al-Baloul added: "The impact can be equally distressing. Such exposure has the potential to stir profound levels of fear within viewers, triggering fears and anxieties

Oil minister commends 'environmental report'

KUWAIT: Kuwait's state of the environment report is considered a milestone for the country's environmental conditions and a starting point for further environmental studies, affirmed Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil, Dr. Emad Al-Atiqi, on Tuesday. This came in a speech by Dr. Al-Atiqi on Tuesday, during a launch party by the Environment Public Authority (EPA) in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and other locally concerned entities.



Dr. Dalal Al-Baloul



Jumanah Mohammed

that may lie in their sub-consciousness." On her part, Mohammed shares strategies for people to navigate their mental and emotional health in the face of distress, emphasizing on the significance of expressing emotions.

"One of the most important ways to deal with

The state of the environment is a reflection of the fruitful cooperation between the EPA and other concerned parties that highlight Kuwait's environmental issues, improving issues concerning public and food security, added Dr. Al-Atiqi. On her part, EPA Acting General Director Samira Al-Kandari said in her speech that the report is a cooperative effort between the EPA and the UNEP in accordance with the 2022 signed agreement between the two parties, who mutually benefit from shared skills and environmental experiences.

She explained that the state of the environment report focuses on seven main issues, including climate change, waste management, land and water resources, biodiversity, and coral and marine environmental management.

stress and psychological pressure that appear due to experiencing war and harsh conditions is to express emotions, avoid layering them up, and stay away from isolation by seeking social engagement. It is crucial to limit the repetition of viewing painful images and videos to avoid psychological setbacks." She advised.

Al-Baloul also shared: "One advantageous approach for young individuals to manage the stress and pressures stemming from exposure to war circumstances involves acquiring skills in conscious breathing, meditation, and engaging in expressive writing to unload negative thoughts and emotions, thereby alleviating stress. Seeking guidance from mental health professionals must not be disregarded when experiencing persistent feelings of unease, fear, or tension, especially when intertwined with external events to avoid future episodes arising abruptly."

Al-Kandari said that the report is a foundation to plan future strategies and legislate policies at a time when the EPA seeks to analyze the leading cause of environmental change and eliminate the gap in existing policies regarding environmental management.

The UNEP representative and regional director, Sami Dimassi, said on his part that the report affirms the commitment of the EPA to conducting a comprehensive evaluation based on the global integrated analysis in accordance with the IEA and UN guidelines. Dimassi added that the report is an investment in the right direction and will play a role in managing the environment based on scientific and practical analyses in future planning and strategies. — KUNA

Kuwait and Jordan share solid bond, united on regional issues

Jordanian-Kuwaiti ties 'a model for joint Arab action'



AMMAN: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and an official delegation accompanying him arrived on Tuesday in Jordan on a state visit. His Highness the Amir was received by Jordanian King Abdullah II and the Crown Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah. His Highness the Amir was accompanied by an official delegation that included the Minister of Finance, the Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Dr Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, and senior officials in the Amiri Diwan. — KUNA



AMMAN: Speaker of the House of Nobles Parliament, Faisal Al-Fayez, and Speaker of the House of Representatives in Jordan, Ahmad Al-Safadi, both stressed the importance of the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Jordan. In a statement to KUNA, the two speakers stressed the depth of the historical relations between the two countries and Jordan's keenness to strengthen bilateral relations with Kuwait in various fields for the interest of the two nations.

Speaker Faisal Al-Fayez said in a statement to KUNA that the visit of His Highness the Amir to Jordan comes within the framework of joint Arab action between Kuwait and Jordan to enhance bilateral relations, reaffirm their solidarity, expand cooperation, discuss various regional issues, and unify posi-

tions regarding those issues.

Al-Fayez said that Kuwaiti-Jordanian relations constitute a model for joint Arab action and that there was constant communication and coordination between His Highness the Amir and King Abdullah II to strengthen bilateral relations and discuss various regional issues and everything that would serve the causes of Arab nations and end the aggression against Palestine.

He stressed Jordan's keenness to strengthen bilateral relations with Kuwait in various fields, noting that the significant developments witnessed in enhancing the relations were due to the directives of the leadership. Al-Fayez applauded the state of security and stability Kuwait enjoyed and the great development it is witnessing in various fields thanks to the wise lead-

ership of His Highness the Amir and his keenness on the security and stability of his homeland.

He also praised Kuwait's positions towards Jordan and expressed his gratitude to His Highness the Amir and the Kuwaiti people for their constant support and assistance to Jordan in confronting economic challenges. Al-Fayez also commended His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his position towards Arab issues, Arab unity, and the return of security and stability to the region.

On his part, Speaker of the House of Representatives Ahmad Al-Safadi said that the Kuwaiti-Jordanian relationship constitutes a model of strong relations built on trust, respect, and coordination at the highest levels. He pointed out that Kuwait and Jordan have a common destiny, close cooperation, and enjoy

leaderships who prioritize their nations' issues and interests above everything. He said that Kuwait and Jordan hold common positions and visions of what the Arab stance should be towards the Palestinian issue by adhering to the two-state solution.

Speaker Al-Safadi stressed that Kuwait and Jordan are blessed with wise leaders whose concern is always to achieve security and peace for their people and bridge the gap between the Arab nations. Al-Safadi stressed the importance of the positions of leadership in both countries, stressing that Kuwait and Amman firmly believe in the strength of the Arab nations and their ability to face all challenges. He stated that Jordan highly appreciates Kuwait for its continuous support for Jordan, stressing the unity of the destiny and future of Kuwait and Jordan. — KUNA

SAP appoints new Managing Director for Kuwait

KUWAIT: Global technology company SAP has announced the appointment of Eng Sundus Bushahri as Managing Director for its Kuwait operations. With more than 15 years of experience gained at large multinationals and Fortune 500 companies, Bushahri will lead her team in supporting Kuwait's ambitious digitalization and workforce training agenda, helping companies to leverage the enormous potential of cloud computing and business AI. "Kuwait is a highly significant growth market for SAP—one that is rapidly embracing digital transformation and working towards the creation of a sustainable workforce equipped with the skills needed for a thriving digital economy."

Sundus Bushahri has a deep understanding of global operations and firsthand knowledge of Kuwaiti culture, making her the ideal person to lead SAP's support of these national goals," said Ahmed Al Faihi, Senior Vice President of SAP Middle East and Africa – North, to whom Bushahri will report directly. "With her technical expertise, extensive market knowledge and natural leadership abilities, Sundus will lead her team in supporting the public and private sector adoption of new technologies, while



Eng Sundus Bushahri

also promoting the training and development of the Kuwaiti workforce." Immediately prior to her promotion, Bushahri was Vice President of Business Development and Sales for SAP Kuwait. In this diverse role she created tailored solutions for enterprises in the public and private sectors, while also building strong strategic relationships with SAP clients and partners. Commenting on her new role, Bushahri said, "As a proud Kuwaiti, I am grateful for this opportunity to help support the country's ambitious digital agenda. Our Kuwaiti public and private sectors have demonstrated a willingness to embrace digital transformation in a way that will ensure we remain at the forefront of new technological developments."

In addition to helping companies leverage emerging technologies such as Business AI, my team and I will also continue to support education initiatives to develop Kuwaitis' diverse technology talents." Bushahri studied in the US, and holds a BSc in Software Engineering from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Daytona Beach in Florida. Visit the SAP News Center. Follow SAP on Twitter at @SAPNews.

UNHCR, Kuwait Society of Lawyers sign deal

KUWAIT: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kuwait and the Kuwait Society of Lawyers (KSL) inked a partnership deal on Tuesday to boost cooperation and share expertise on humanitarian and legal issues related to asylum and displacement. Speaking in a news statement, Nisreen Rubaian, UNHCR representative in Kuwait, said the agreement enhances legal consultation and services for free, adding that it shows the importance of cooperation between civil society organizations and specialized associations in Kuwait.

She commended efforts made to raise legal awareness and achieve social justice, which is one of the main pillars of this strategic partnership, and the keenness of society to boost collaboration through offering support to the UNHCR. Meanwhile, Adel Abul, deputy chairman of KSL, praised this cooperation to provide legal support and disseminate legal awareness among individuals. He hoped that the KSL would have social participation in legal fields. This is the first deal of its kind in Kuwait that will link humanitarian action to societal legal responsibility through legal support for persons that concern UNHCR. — KUNA

In my view

Long-term multiple entry Schengen visa for GCC countries



By EU Ambassador Anne Koistinen

I warmly welcome yesterday's decision of the European Commission that will allow for stronger people-to-people contacts between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council states. Kuwaiti nationals already enjoy very favorable visa regime since 8 September 2023, when the European Commission adopted specific rules on the issuing of multiple entry visas to Kuwaiti nationals.

This has allowed all eligible applicants, including first-time applicants, to be issued with visas valid for five years, which is the longest possible validity of Schengen visa. Where the validity of the visa would exceed that of the passport, a visa is issued with a period of validity ending three months before the expiry date of the passport. With Schengen visa, travelers can stay 90 days in any 180-day period within the Schengen area which comprises 29 countries.

In the light of the upcoming summer holidays and increasing numbers of visa applications, I encourage all those planning to visit the Schengen Area to apply for the needed visas early. This can be done up to six months in advance. I invite all prospective applicants to follow the instructions and guidance published by the Consular offices of the European Union Member States they are planning to visit.

Visa free travel for Kuwaitis remains one of my priorities during my mandate as EU Ambassador to the State of Kuwait. I hope that the European Parliament will look favorably into the Schengen visa waiver proposal for Kuwaiti citizens. Visa waiver would be a major step in facilitating our people-to-people contacts and strengthening political and economic relations as well as research, educational and cultural exchanges."

Young researchers honored with Jaber Al-Ahmad award

KUWAIT: Kuwait Foundation for Advancements in Sciences (KFAS) announced Tuesday the winners of the Jaber Al-Ahmad Prize for Young Researchers in its 34th edition. The award, a sum of KD 10,000 (approx. \$33,000), is granted annually to Kuwaiti PhD holders. KFAS released a statement detailing the names of the winners and their respective fields, starting with Dr. Zaid Al-Marzouq, a cardiologist and clinical researcher at Mas General Brigham and Harvard University's medical school.

Dr. Al-Marzouq's research focuses on causal inference methods in treating cardiovascular diseases, with a special interest in modern cardiac devices. The statement also mentioned that Dr. Al-Marzouq has been awarded many prizes, including the Richard Gorlin Award. The award for biological sciences was given out to Dr. Fatima Al-Rashed, a scientist specializing in immunology and microbiology at the Dasman Institute for Diabetes, for her renowned research and contributions to the field.

Dr. Al-Rashed, a pioneer in her field, attained her doctorate from Nottingham University and was awarded many prestigious awards, including UNESCO's L'Oreal Award for women in science. Dr. Amar Bahman, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Kuwait University, was granted the award in the field of engineering sciences. Dr. Bahman's expertise lies in air conditioning systems suitable for high-temperature climates.

Bahman, whose research interests also include techno-economic analysis, exploration of substitute cooling methods, and heat transfer, got his degree from American Purdue University. As for the fields of social sciences and humanities, both Dr. Amal Al-Saleh of the educational planning and management department at KU and Dr. Fahad Al-Zumae, Associate Professor of Law, were granted the award for their expertise and valuable research.

KFAS wished all recipients further success in future research endeavors, stating that this reflects the exceptional role of Kuwaiti researchers and their contributions to knowledge in their various fields. The award was established back in 1988 as an initiative by His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to encourage and honor PhD holders. — KUNA

Pills or herbs? Traditional medicine in modern age

Minimal side effects compared to chemical pills

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: Ever wondered why the homemade remedies passed down by our grandparents are still used in the modern age, despite advancements in technology and medicine? The World Health Organization (WHO) found that 88 percent of countries worldwide use traditional methods like indigenous medicines, herbal remedies, and acupuncture for healing purposes. This trust in traditional medicine, also known as folk or complementary and alternative medicine, is driven by the belief in the safety of its natural ingredients, compared to the chemical components of contemporary medicine.

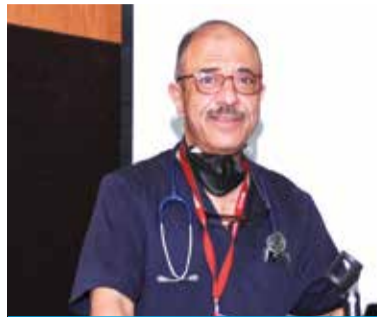
Less side effects

Surprisingly, this belief isn't limited to patients alone; even doctors specializing in modern medicine shared it. "Ninety percent of traditional medicine lacks any side effects...relying on it, especially in cases of chronic diseases, can be much safer than modern medicine," noted Dr. Hamed Hefiela, a consultant in Internal Medicine and Cardiology. Additionally, WHO has endorsed this belief, recognizing the health benefits of traditional medicine and its minimal side effects compared to chemical pills. This makes traditional medicine a perfect approach in addressing pre-disease cases, which represent medical conditions existing between illness and optimal health.

Dr. Hefiela explained that since these conditions do not entirely meet the criteria for diagnosable illness, modern doctors prefer to refrain from prescribing chemical medications that could potentially worsen the situation by harming other organs in the body. Instead, they prescribe medicinal herbs, aiming to provide safer and more gentle interventions for patients.

Originating from nature

Jawad Al-Rashed, specializing in herbal medicine, and known as Hakeem (a title equivalent to a doctor in traditional medicine) attributed the effectiveness of herbal medicines to centuries of accumulated wisdom and observations. Referring to it as "The green pharmacy," he elaborated, "It encompasses secrets and healing properties that were acquired through observation of animals' behavior." One intriguing example he mentioned involves snakes, which experience temporary blindness upon



Hamed Hefiela



Jawad Al-Rashed

emerging from hibernation. They have been observed rubbing against a plant known as "fennel" to restore their vision, a discovery which led to the understanding that fennel plants could be used to improve human sight.

The strong connection between traditional medicine and nature seems

ditional knowledge, including landmark drugs."

Incompatible role

Despite its proven record in treating diseases, traditional medicine often falls short in providing accurate diagnoses of diseases. Therefore, before

stages of medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, or hypertension, as he warned. "While traditional medicine remains very useful in supporting the treatment of already diagnosed cases, it cannot work alone in critical situations," he explained. He further clarified that he would never advise a patient in the advanced stages of any disease to discontinue their chemical medications in favor of herbal medicine. "It happened once with a diabetic case that I witnessed myself, which went into a diabetic coma from stopping insulin and relying solely on herbs," he noted.

Both Hefiela and Rashed are in agreement that traditional medicine still requires further research studies and supportive experiments to become more reliable in the modern age. Rashed expressed confidence, stating, "If more successful experiences were



to be the reason why the human body can more easily absorb natural remedies compared to chemical medications. This idea, shared by Hefiela, explains why many modern medicines still use natural ingredients to aid in the absorption process. It's even supported by WHO, which says, "around 40 percent of pharmaceutical products today draw from nature and tra-

seeking treatment, Rashed advocated for always consulting modern medical professionals and hospitals due to the accessibility of advanced diagnostic technologies. Following that, he suggested that the choice between traditional and modern medications should be based on individual preferences.

Yet, according to Hefiela, patients have no choice when it comes to later

proven, traditional medicine will undoubtedly prevail over any other form of medicine." Hefiela additionally recommended the integration of a specific department for studying traditional medicine within medical colleges. This approach would allow doctors and patients to choose their desired treatment method, providing more options and autonomy in healthcare decisions.



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Kuwait Red Crescent Society sent 26 trucks loaded with 675 tons of food to Gaza. — KUNA photos

KRCS sends 26 trucks loaded with 675 tons of food to Gaza City

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) sent on Tuesday 26 trucks loaded with 675 tons of food and nutritional materials to the Gaza Strip through Jordanian lands. In a statement for KUNA, KRCS Chairman Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer said that this campaign aims to aid the Palestinian people in Gaza and to lift their suffering. He pointed out that KRCS will not stop aiding the Palestinian

people in light of the rising numbers of refugees and injured people due to the Zionist aggression. Al-Sayer noted that these campaigns come under the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah within the framework of Kuwait's continuous support for the Palestinian people.

Meanwhile, some 34,183 Palestinians have been killed and more than 77,000 injured since the Zionist offensive against the Gaza Strip began in October, the Palestinian enclave's health authorities said on Tuesday. These casualties came after occupation forces committed more than 3,000 "massacres" since the violence began, with some 14,778 children, 30 of them starved to death, and 9,752 women among the victims, according to a Gaza's media office report. In more statistics, some 5,000 Palestinians, 310 of them healthcare personnel, have been detained since the violence began, according to the report, showing that some 181 government buildings have been destroyed amid continued Zionist aerial bombardments. — KUNA



KRCS Chairman
Dr Hilal Al-Sayer





Malaysia military helicopters crash, killing 10 crew

In world first, Venice to trial day tickets

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‘Miracle’ baby delivered from dying mother’s womb in Gaza

UN calls for international probe into deaths at Gaza hospitals

GAZA: Under a ceaseless storm of strikes in Gaza, a baby girl has survived insurmountable odds as the only member of her family left alive after she was delivered by Caesarian section as her mother lay dying. At just seven months pregnant, her mother, Sabreen Al-Sakani, reached the emergency unit in critical condition after she was fatally wounded in the head and abdomen at the weekend.

A Zionist air strike hit her family’s house in the east of the southern Gaza city of Rafah, witnesses told AFP. “It’s a miracle that she was still alive, despite her difficulties in breathing,” Sahib Al-Shams, a surgeon and director of the Kuwaiti hospital in Rafah, told AFP. While examining Sakani, the hospital’s medical team realized she was pregnant. They decided to go ahead with a C-section immediately, despite a lack of anesthetics. “The mother died 10 minutes later,” Shams said, adding that the baby’s father and sister had been declared dead on arrival at the hospital. Hospital staff said the baby was in stable condition on Tuesday morning. At least 19 people died in the air strike on the Sakani family home, according to Gaza’s health ministry.

The newborn was transferred to the pediatrics unit of the Emirati hospital, a field hospital established in December in Rafah to cope with the besieged Palestinian territory’s mounting toll of injured and dead. “We quickly put her in an incubator, put her on oxygen and treated her with antibiotics,” Haidar Abu Snimeh, an official at the Emirati hospital, told AFP.



GAZA: A Palestinian doctor tends to the baby of Sabreen Al-Sakani, who reached the emergency unit of the Kuwait Hospital in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip in critical condition after she was gravely wounded in the head and abdomen in a Zionist air strike on April 20, 2024. — AFP

than two kilograms, and that her mother had been in her seventh month of pregnancy when she was born. “The fact that this little girl was born alive despite the circumstances is nothing short of a great feat,” Abu Snimeh said. He added that when a pregnant woman like Sakani struggles to breathe, the fetus lacks oxygen, which can hinder its development. Palestinian journalists filmed the birth, footage of which was widely circulated Monday.

A handful of similar births were reported in the

coastal territory. Makkah Abu Chamalah was born by post-mortem C-section on Oct 21, after his mother was critically wounded by an air strike on their home in Rafah. The identification tag pinned to his incubator read “baby of the martyr Dareen Abu Chamalah”. UN Human Rights Chief Volker Turk said on Tuesday, “The latest images of a premature child taken from the womb of her dying mother, of the adjacent two houses where 15 children and five women were killed — this is beyond warfare.”

‘Horried’

Meanwhile, the UN called on Tuesday for an international investigation into reports of mass graves at two Gaza hospitals destroyed in Zionist sieges, saying war crimes may have been committed. The United Nations rights office said it was “horried” by the destruction of Gaza’s biggest hospital, Al-Shifa in Gaza City, and its second largest, the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis.

On Monday, the Palestinian territory’s Civil Defense agency said health workers had uncovered more than 200 bodies of people killed and buried at Nasser Hospital, which was besieged by Zionist troops last month. In early April the World Health Organization said Al-Shifa had been destroyed by a Zionist siege, leaving an “empty shell” containing many bodies.

The UN rights office on Tuesday demanded “independent, effective and transparent investigations into the deaths”. “Given the prevailing climate of impunity, this should include international investigators,” Turk said in a statement. Hospitals, which are protected under international law, have repeatedly come under Zionist bombardment over more than six months of war in Gaza. “Hospitals are entitled to very special protection under international humanitarian law,” Turk pointed out. “And the intentional killing of civilians, detainees and others who are hors de combat is a war crime.”

The UN rights office spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani said efforts were underway to corroborate reports and details given by Gaza authorities. The latter say 283 bodies were recovered from Nasser hospital, including 42 that had been identified. “Victims had reportedly been buried deep in the ground and covered with waste,” she told reporters in Geneva. Older people, women and wounded were reportedly among the dead, she said. Others were allegedly “found with their hands tied and stripped of their clothes”. — AFP

Azerbaijan, Armenia begin marking border ‘close’ to peace deal

BAKU: Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said on Tuesday a peace deal with Armenia was closer than ever before, as teams from both countries began demarcating the border in a bid to end decades of territorial disputes and clashes. Aliyev’s optimism comes amid progress on marking the border despite protests in Armenia, still bruised after Baku seized control of the contested Nagorno-Karabakh region in a lightning offensive last year.

On Tuesday, teams from both countries installed the first border marker after officials had agreed to delimit a section based on Soviet-era maps. “We are close as never before,” Aliyev said on Tuesday of an elusive peace deal. “We now have a common understanding of how the peace agreement should look like. We only need to address details,” he said. “Both sides need time... We both have political will to do it.”

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan last month agreed to return four border villages that were part of Azerbaijan when the two countries were republics of the Soviet Union. Aliyev said Tuesday he

had accepted a proposal by Kazakhstan to host a meeting of their foreign ministers. Several countries have tried to play mediator — including Russia, Iran, the United States, France and Germany — but years of talks have failed.

Aliyev downplayed the need for third party intervention. “We are not talking about any kind of mediation, because what happens now on our border demonstrates that when we are left alone... we can agree sooner than later,” he said. Experts from both countries installed the first marker on Tuesday, they announced in identical statements. Rallies had earlier erupted in Armenia, with protestors briefly blocking traffic at several points on the Armenia-Georgia highway, fearful of giving up more land. Yerevan said Tuesday it would not transfer “Armenia’s sovereign territory”.

The four abandoned settlements which are to be returned to Azerbaijan — Lower Askipara, Baghanis Ayrum, Kheirimly and Gizilhajili — were taken over by Armenian forces in the 1990s, forcing their ethnic Azerbaijani residents to flee. But Armenian residents of nearby villages worry they will end up isolated from the rest of the country and that some houses could fall into Azerbaijani territory. The area has strategic importance for landlocked Armenia. Several small sections of the highway to Georgia — a vital trade artery — could be handed over. The delimited border will run close to a major Russian gas pipeline, in an area that also offers advantageous military positions. — AFP

Trump accused of violating gag order amid criminal trial

NEW YORK: Prosecutors on Tuesday accused Donald Trump of brazenly violating a gag order imposed by the judge presiding over his “hush money” trial to prevent him from intimidating witnesses. “His attacks on witnesses clearly violate the order,” prosecutor Chris Conroy told Judge Juan Merchan at a hearing called to determine whether the former president should be held in contempt of court. “He knows about the order, he knows what he’s not allowed to do, and he does it anyway,” Conroy said. “His disobedience of the order is willful, it’s intentional.”



NEW YORK: Former US President Donald Trump attends his trial at Manhattan Criminal Court on April 23, 2024. — AFP

He urged Merchan to impose a maximum \$1,000 fine for each post on Trump’s Truth Social platform found to be in violation of the gag order and for the messages to be removed. “We are not yet seeking an incarceratory penalty,” Conroy said, but the court should “remind him that incarceration is an option should it be necessary.”

Jailing Trump could potentially set up a conflict with the Secret Service, the federal policing body charged with protecting former and current presidents. After hearing nearly 90 minutes of arguments from both sides, the judge said he would issue his ruling later. Trump, 77, is charged with falsifying business records to buy the silence of porn star Stormy Daniels over a 2006 sexual encounter that could have impacted his 2016 presidential bid.

Trump engaged in “election fraud” by paying hush money to the porn star just days before the 2016 White House vote, prosecutors said Monday at the first-ever criminal trial of a former US president. “This case is about a criminal conspiracy and a cover-up,” Assistant District Attorney Matthew

Colangelo said. “He orchestrated a criminal scheme to corrupt the 2016 presidential election. It was election fraud, pure and simple,” he said.

Prosecution witnesses are expected to include Daniels and Trump’s former fixer Michael Cohen, who arranged the alleged \$130,000 hush money payment to the adult film actress. Merchan imposed a partial gag order on the Republican presidential candidate on April 1 ordering him not to publicly attack witnesses, jurors and court staff but Trump has repeatedly lashed out. On Truth Social, Trump called Cohen and Daniels, for example, “two sleaze bags who have, with their lies and misrepresentations, cost our country dearly.” Trump’s lawyers have attacked the gag order as a violation of the former president’s free speech rights.

Trump’s attorney Todd Blanche told Merchan during the contempt hearing that “President Trump ‘truths’ repeatedly, virtually all the time, seven days a week,” but is “trying to comply” with the gag order. “President Trump is being very careful to comply with your honor’s rules,” he said. “There is no dispute that President Trump is facing a barrage of political attacks from all sides including from the two witnesses who are referenced,” Blanche said. — AFP

<p>From 24 to 27.04.2024 KD. 0.375 Banana Estrella (Philippines) per kg</p>	<p>From 24 to 27.04.2024 KD. 3.190 Indian Chilled Whole Mutton /kg</p>	<p>From 24 to 26.04.2024 KD. 3.390 Australian Fresh Local Lamb /kg</p>
<p>From 24 to 26.04.2024 KD. 4.890 White Pomfret (Medium) /kg</p>	<p>From 25 to 27.04.2024 KD. 2.590 Black Seabream /kg</p>	

International

Migrant detentions set to begin after parliament passes UK-Rwanda plan

UN, Council of Europe call on Britain to scrap migrant plan

LONDON: The UK readied on Tuesday to start detaining migrants within days for deportation to Rwanda after the controversial plan got parliament's approval, sparking outrage from the UN and rights groups. The new legislation — a flagship policy of the Conservative government that aims to curb irregular cross-Channel migration from northern France — cleared its final hurdle after a marathon late-night parliamentary tussle on Monday.

Just hours later French police said at least five migrants, including a child, died overnight during an attempt to cross the busy shipping lane in a small boat. Under the UK scheme, undocumented asylum seekers arriving in Britain would be sent to Rwanda, where their asylum claims would be examined and, if approved, would allow them to stay in Rwanda.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak says deportations are expected to begin within 10-12 weeks, with migrants identified for the first flight due to be detained and held from as early as this week. Rwanda said it was "pleased" to see the bill passed and was looking forward to "welcoming those relocated to Rwanda".

But the heads of the UN agencies for refugees and human rights warned it threatened the rule of law and set "a perilous precedent globally". They urged the UK to instead "take practical measures to address irregular flows of refugees and migrants, based

on international cooperation and respect for international human rights law". The Council of Europe also called for the new law to be scrapped and said it raised "major issues about the human rights of asylum seekers and the rule of law more generally".

'Deterrent'

Sunak said the "landmark legislation" would deter record numbers of migrants crossing the Channel from northern France, and disrupt people-smuggling gangs behind them. "The passing of this legislation will allow us to do that and make it very clear that if you come here illegally, you will not be able to stay," he added. "Our focus is to now get flights off the ground, and I am clear that nothing will stand in our way of doing that and saving lives."

The legislation, which will compel judges to regard the east African nation as a safe third country, now goes to head of state King Charles III for royal assent. He has reportedly criticized the plan as "appalling". It also gives decision-makers on asylum applications the power to disregard sections of international and domestic human rights law to get around a UK Supreme Court ruling that said sending migrants on a one-way ticket to Kigali was illegal.

But the government faced a parliamentary battle to do so, with the upper chamber House of Lords, which scrutinizes bills,

repeatedly sending the proposed legislation back to the lower House of Commons with amendments. Peers, who had criticized the bill as inadequate, notably wanted a requirement that Rwanda could not be treated as safe until an independent monitoring body said so.

MPs in the elected Commons, where the Tories have a majority, voted down every amendment and asked the Lords to think again in a back-and-forth process known as "parliamentary ping pong". The unelected upper chamber, where there is no overall majority for any party, dug in their heels but eventually agreed to make no further amendments, allowing the bill to pass.

Costly

Sunak's government, facing what opinion polls say will be a defeat at a general election later this year, has been under mounting pressure to cut record "small boat" arrivals, particularly after a promise of a tougher approach to immigration after the UK left the European Union. The Rwanda scheme was first proposed in 2022, but has been beset by legal challenges ever since and two years on, no migrants have been deported.

The National Audit Office, a public spending watchdog, has estimated it will cost the UK £540 million (\$665 million) to deport the first 300 migrants — nearly £2 million per



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak arrives to attend a press conference at the Downing Street Briefing Room on April 22, 2024 regarding the Britain and Rwanda treaty to transfer illegal migrants to the African country. — AFP

person. Charities have said the scheme is unworkable and, given the small numbers involved, would do little to cut the backlog of asylum claims.

Rwanda — a tiny nation of 13 million people — lays claim to being one of the most stable countries in Africa. But rights groups accuse veteran President

Paul Kagame of ruling in a climate of fear, stifling dissent and free speech. Sunak's plans could still be held up by legal challenges, while UN rights experts have suggested that airlines and aviation regulators could fall foul of internationally protected human rights laws if they take part in deportations. — AFP

Aide to German MEP arrested for spying for China

FRANKFURT: An aide to a German far-right member of the European Parliament has been arrested on suspicion of spying for China. German prosecutors said on Tuesday, deepening concerns about foreign interference ahead of June's European elections. The allegations, coming a day after three other people suspected of spying for China were detained in Germany, sparked an angry reaction from Beijing, which said the arrest was designed to "smear and suppress" China.

It was also a new blow for Germany's far-right AfD party, which has been battling a series of scandals, including allegations that some of its members have links to Russia. The suspect, identified only as Jian G., stands accused of sharing European Parliament information with a Chinese intelligence service and of spying on Chinese opposition figures in Germany, federal prosecutors said in a statement.

The European Parliament lists Jian Guo as an accredited assistant to MEP Maximilian Krah, the AfD party's lead candidate in the forthcoming European Union-wide elections. Guo is a German national who has reportedly worked as an aide to Krah in Brussels since 2019. Prosecutors said the suspect "is an employee of a Chinese secret service".

"In January 2024, the accused repeatedly passed on information about negotiations and decisions in the European Parliament," they said. "He also spied on Chinese opposition members in Germany for the intelligence service." The European Parliament said it had suspended the aide "with immediate effect" in the wake of the revelations. German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser called the allegations against Guo "very serious" and demanded a thorough investigation. "If it is confirmed that spying for China is happening from the European Parliament, then that is an attack on European democracy from within," she said. — AFP

In world first, Venice to trial day tickets

ROME: Venice will this week begin charging day trippers for entry, a world first aimed at easing pressure on the Italian city drowning under the weight of mass tourism. On Thursday — a public holiday in Italy — day visitors will for the first time have to buy a five-euro (\$5.3) ticket, monitored by inspectors carrying out spot checks at key points in the UNESCO world heritage site.

Venice is one of the world's top tourist destinations, with 3.2 million visitors staying overnight in the historic center in 2022 — dwarfing the resident population of just 50,000. Tens of thousands more pour into the city's narrow streets for the day, often from cruise ships, to see sights including St Mark's Square and the Rialto Bridge. The aim of the tickets is to persuade day trippers to come during quieter periods, to try to thin out the worst of the crowds.

Initially, tickets will only be required on 29 busy days throughout 2024, mostly weekends from May to July. But the scheme is being closely watched as tourist destinations worldwide grapple with surging numbers of visitors, who boost the local economy but risk overwhelming communities and damaging fragile ecosystems and historical sites.

In Spain, the world's second-most visited country after France, tens of thousands of people protested in the Canary Islands on Saturday to demand limits on visitor numbers to the archipelago. Luigi Brugnaro, the mayor of Venice, has described the city's scheme as "an experiment, and the first time it's been done anywhere in the world". "Our aim is to make Venice more livable," he told reporters earlier this month.

UNESCO warning

Venice, spread over more than 100 small islands and islets in northeastern Italy, is considered one of the world's most beautiful cities. The UN cultural body UNESCO listed the city and its lagoon as a world heritage site in 1987, citing it as an "extraordinary architectural masterpiece". But UNESCO threatened last year to put Venice on its list of heritage in danger, citing mass tourism and also rising water levels attributed to climate change.



VENICE: A person shows a calendar of the paying days to visit Venice on April 19, 2024 in front of Santa Lucia train station. — AFP

Venice only escaped the ignominy after local authorities agreed the new ticketing system. The idea had long been debated, but repeatedly postponed over concerns it would seriously dent tourist revenue and compromise freedom of movement. During a debate on the plan last September, opposition councillors cast the measure as a hastily arranged concession to UNESCO that would not have any impact. "Fifty euros might have done something," said one, Gianfranco Bettin. In 2021, Venice had already imposed a ban on massive cruise ships from which thousands of day-trippers emerge daily, rerouting them to a more distant industrial port. It has also introduced a tax for overnight visitors.

No queues

Venice's mayor has promised the new system will be

imposed with a light touch with "very soft controls" and "without queues", rejecting speculation the city would be installing barriers or turnstiles in the streets. Controllers will be stationed in and around the city's main entrances, notably the Santa Lucia train station, performing spot checks on visitors.

Tourists without their ticket will be invited to purchase one on arrival, with the help of local operators. But they could also risk fines ranging from €50 to €300. The "Venice Access Fee" targets only daily tourists entering the old town between 8:30 am and 4:00 pm, with tourists staying in hotels, minors under 14, and the disabled among those exempt. For the time being, there is no ceiling on the number of tickets — downloaded in the form of a QR code from a website — distributed each day. — AFP

No let-up on 200th day of...

Continued from Page 1

Gaza's Civil Defense agency said Tuesday that health workers had uncovered nearly 340 bodies, updating an earlier figure, of Palestinians killed and buried by Zionist forces at the Nasser Hospital complex. The United Nations rights office said it was "horrified" by the destruction at Nasser and Gaza City's Al-Shifa hospital, the territory's two largest medical facilities, which were both previously raided by Zionist forces.

Demanding an "independent" probe, UN rights chief Volker Turk noted the "special protection" awarded to hospitals under international law. "The intentional killing of civilians, detainees and others who are hors de combat is a war crime," he said. Global opposition has mounted over the civilian toll of the Zionist entity's Gaza offensive which has turned vast areas into rubble and sparked fears of famine.

The United Nations says "multiple obstacles" con-

tinue to impede delivery of urgently needed aid for Gazans desperate for food, water, shelter and medicine. But Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to press on with a planned offensive on Rafah, the town on the border with Egypt where most of Gaza's 2.4 million population has sheltered.

Citing Egyptian officials briefed on the Zionist plans, the Wall Street Journal said the Zionist entity was planning to move civilians from Rafah to nearby Khan Yunis. The operation would last two to three weeks and be done in coordination with the United States, Egypt and other Arab countries including the United Arab Emirates, the Journal reported. The Zionist entity would then send troops into Rafah gradually, targeting areas where Hamas' leaders are thought to be hiding, in a military operation that would last six weeks, it added.

Foreign ministers of the G7 group of developed economies have said they oppose a "full-scale military operation in Rafah" because of the "catastrophic consequences" for civilians, fears shared by many aid groups. With Rafah also being the main entry point for humanitarian relief into Gaza, a Zionist invasion there "means cutting the aid system off from its lifeline", said Ahmed Bayram, media adviser for the Norwegian Refugee Council in the Middle East. — AFP

the breach, we asked for assistance from the NYPD. The police urged those on the plaza to leave peacefully, but ultimately made a number of arrests." The spokesman said the school continues to support freedom of expression and the safety of students.

But protests have grown large and disruptive enough — New York Police Department spokesmen have spoken of their officers facing violence when confronting protesters at NYU — to draw the attention of President Joe Biden and his administration. "Anti-Semitic hate on college campuses is unacceptable," US Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona posted on X on Tuesday, expressing concern about the unrest.

The protests began last week at Columbia University, also in New York, with a large group of demonstrators establishing a so-called "Gaza Solidarity Encampment" on school grounds. But more than 100 protesters were arrested after university authorities called the police onto Columbia's campus Thursday, a move that seemingly escalated tensions and sparked a greater turnout over the weekend. — AFP

Arrests at NYU campus as Gaza...

Continued from Page 1

and released after being issued with court summons, as protests also intensify at Yale, Columbia University and other campuses. As the holiday of Passover began Monday night, police began detaining demonstrators at an encampment at NYU who had earlier refused orders to disperse.

A New York University spokesman said the decision to call police came after additional protesters, many of whom were not thought to be affiliated with NYU, suddenly breached the barriers erected around the encampment. This "dramatically changed" the situation, the spokesman said in a statement on the school's website Monday, citing "disorderly, disruptive and antagonizing behavior" along with "intimidated chants and several antisemitic incidents."

"Given the foregoing and the safety issues raised by



TUNIS: Tunisian President Kais Saied hosts a Maghreb mini-summit alongside Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune and Chairman of the Tripoli-based Libyan Presidential Council Mohamed Al-Menfi on April 22, 2024. — AFP

Tunisia, Algeria, Libya eye new regional coalition

TUNIS: Tunisia held a "first advisory meeting" Monday in its capital Tunis with Algerian and Libyan leaders in the hope of establishing a new Maghreb regional coalition. No leaders from Morocco or Mauritania were present at the meeting, set to take place every three months. The coalition is aimed at furthering "security, stability and development throughout the region", Tunisian foreign minister Nabil Ammar read from a statement.

The meeting was decided on by Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, Libya's head of presidential council Mohamed Al-Menfi and Tunisian President Kais Saied when they met at an energy summit in Algeria last month. "This consultation must not be limited to political issues only, but rather include all areas of economic and

social developments for the peoples of the three countries," Ammar read from the statement.

When the meeting was announced last week, Moroccan media outlets said it had been part of Algeria's aim to form a "Maghreb alliance" against Morocco, its regional foe. Algerian President Tebboune had said earlier this month that the creation of the coalition was "not directed against any other state" and that the door was open to "our neighbor in the west", referring to Morocco.

His diplomacy chief, Ahmed Attaf, had also defended the initiative, saying it would fill the void left by the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), founded in 1989 in Morocco. The UMA was created with the aim of bringing the region's countries closer and furthering their shared political and economic interests.

But growing tensions between Algeria and Morocco sent the organization into a tailspin, particularly over disputed Western Sahara. The two countries cut diplomatic ties in 2021 after Morocco's normalization deal with the Zionist entity. The meeting Monday also pointed out the "danger of foreign interference in the Sahel and the Sahara desert", the statement said. — AFP

International

Taiwan hit by dozens of strong aftershocks from deadly quake

More buildings affected • Schools and offices closed

TAIPEI: Taiwan was shaken by dozens of earthquakes overnight and into Tuesday that left buildings swaying and some tilting, with the government saying they were aftershocks from a huge deadly quake that hit the island more than two weeks ago. The strongest, which the US Geological Survey measured at magnitude 6.1, hit around 2:30 am (1830 GMT) followed minutes later by a 6.0 tremor. Taipei's Central Weather Administration put them at 6.0 and 6.3, respectively.

Authorities said there were no casualties reported so far, but the non-stop shaking meant a restless night even for those in the capital Taipei about 150 km north, where walls and glass panels rattled in swaying homes. "I was too scared to move and stayed in bed," said office worker Kevin Lin, 53, in Taipei, who told AFP he was jolted awake by the intense quakes. Around 8:00 am, a 5.8-magnitude tremor shook the capital as commuters made their way to work.

The tremors started Monday around 5:00 pm and by about 10:30 am the next day the Central Weather Administration said it had recorded more than 200 quakes. All had originated from Hualien on the central east coast of Taiwan. The mountainous county was the epicenter of a magnitude-7.4 quake that hit April 3, which Taiwan said was the "strongest in 25 years", triggering landslides that blocked roads and severely damaged buildings around the main Hualien city.

At least 17 people were killed, with the latest body found in a quarry on April 13. A hotel building in Hualien that was previously damaged started tilting at an angle on Tuesday after the quakes, according to footage obtained by AFP. "Please come out for your safety. Let's evacuate first OK? Anyone still inside? Please come down," shouted a firefighter

to the residents of nearby buildings. Hsu-ho Lin told local news channel Formosa TV that he had immediately ran over to the hotel building because his grandma lives there and she "kept refusing to leave". "My grandmother insisted on staying and my grandfather could not persuade her," Lin said, adding that they were now evacuating from the building.

The first floor of a nearby residential building was flattened by Tuesday's quakes, its tilting frame precariously propped up by metal beams. Tenants had already evacuated from there after the April 3 quake, and the building was awaiting demolition. Hualien county government announced that schools and offices would be closed Tuesday due to the continuous aftershocks.

Withstanding quakes

Taiwan sees frequent earthquakes due to its location at the junction of two tectonic plates, and the April 3 quake was followed by more than 1,100 aftershocks — causing rockfalls and tremors around Hualien. A Taipei government seismologist said the latest "swarm" of tremors originated to the south of the main April quake, unlike the earlier ones which had been mainly to the north. Seismologists Judith Hubbard and Kyle Bradley agreed the activity appeared to have shifted to becoming more concentrated on the southern side of the April 3 rupture. "The new cluster of seismicity is not a typical main-shock-aftershock sequence," they wrote in their newsletter "Earthquake Insights".

The recent quakes appeared to have stepped up in magnitude over time, they said — counter to the usual pattern of a large one that gradually decays. It



HUALIEN, Taiwan: This picture shows the Full Hotel building, which had been previously damaged in the April 3 earthquake, tilting further to one side on April 23, 2024, after a series of earthquakes overnight. - AFP

remains unclear if this could trigger a large earthquake again, but "this swarm is a certainly good opportunity for people in the region to revisit their recently tested earthquake preparations", they said.

The April 3 tremor was the most serious in Taiwan since 1999, when a magnitude-7.6 quake hit the island. The death toll then was far higher, with 2,400 people killed in the deadliest natural disaster in the island's history. Stricter building regulations — including enhanced seismic requirements in its building codes —

and widespread public disaster awareness had staved off a more serious catastrophe in the April 3 quake.

In Taipei, Lin said news of the hotel tilting in Hualien had scared him. "I live in a 40-year-old apartment and it really worries me whether the apartment can withstand so many earthquakes," he told AFP. He added that while the Taiwanese public are taught what to do when a tremor hits, "it is only useful for a small quake". "For a big one, it doesn't really matter how much quake response you're taught." — AFP

Malaysia military helicopters crash, killing 10 crew

KUALA LUMPUR: Two Malaysian military helicopters collided and crashed during a training session on Tuesday, killing all 10 crew onboard, the country's rescue agency said. Footage shared online showed several helicopters flying low in formation over the Lumut naval base, located about 160 km from the capital Kuala Lumpur. The helicopters were participating in a flypast rehearsal ahead of Naval Day celebrations in May.

One chopper was seen clipping the rear rotor of another, causing both to go into a tailspin and crash. "The two helicopters collided during flight training," said Suhaimy Mohamad Suhail, senior operations commander from the fire and rescue department, adding that all 10 crew members on board were confirmed dead by medical officers.

The two aircraft involved were a Eurocopter AS-555SN Fennec and an AgustaWestland AW139, the rescue agency said. Photos showed the Eurocopter model heavily mangled in the wreckage on the naval base stadium track with rescue personnel surrounding it as well as various debris. The AgustaWestland helicopter crashed at the naval base's swimming pool area.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim sent his condolences to the families of the victims, saying "the nation mourns the heart-wrenching and soul-wrenching tragedy". "I was informed that an immediate investigation will be carried out by the Ministry of Defense, especially TLDM (Royal Malaysian Navy), to find the cause of the crash," he said. Malaysia's King Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar also shared condolences. "Queen Zarith and I feel very sad over the loss of national heroes in this tragedy," he said in a social media post. Helicopter crashes are not uncommon in the Southeast Asian nation. Last month, all four people onboard a Malaysian coastguard helicopter were rescued after it crashed in the Strait of Malacca. — AFP



LUMUT, Malaysia: Rescuers inspect the crash site after two military helicopters collided in Perak state on April 23, 2024. - AFP

He hippo turns out to be a she

TOKYO: Betrayed by its DNA and unmanly toilet habits, a hippopotamus in Japan thought for seven years to be a he is in fact a she, the zoo where the wallowing giant lives said Tuesday. The 12-year-old came to Osaka Tennoji Zoo in 2017 from the Africam Safari animal park in Mexico, where officials attested on customs documents that the then five-year-old was male.

But zookeepers long scratched their heads, a spokeswoman told AFP. In particular, Gen-chan did not display the typical male hippo behavior of splattering feces around while defecating — with a propeller-like tail motion — in order to mark territory. Nor did it make courtship calls to females and zookeepers were unable to visually identify any male genitalia, a dangerous task in such a large and potentially aggressive beast.



QINGYUAN, China: This aerial photograph taken on April 22, 2024 shows a flooded island after heavy rains in this city in southern Guangdong province. - AFP

Highest-level China rainstorm warning after deadly floods

BEIJING: More than 100,000 people have been evacuated due to heavy rain and fatal floods in southern China, with the government issuing its highest-level rainstorm warning for the affected area on Tuesday. Torrential rains have lashed Guangdong in recent days, swelling rivers and raising fears of severe flooding that state media said could be of the sort only "seen around once a century". On Tuesday, the megacity of Shenzhen was among the areas experiencing "heavy to very heavy downpours", the city's meteorological observatory said, adding the risk of flash floods was "very high". It later downgraded its weather warning as the storms weakened, but urged residents to remain vigilant against disasters.

Images from Qingyuan — a city in northern Guangdong that is part of the low-lying Pearl River Delta — showed a building almost completely submerged in a flooded park next to a river. Official media reported Sunday that more than 45,000 people had been evacuated from Qingyuan, which straddles the Bei River tributary. State news agency Xinhua said 110,000 residents across Guangdong had been relocated since the downpours started over the weekend. The floods have claimed the lives of four people so far and 10 are missing, according to state media.

Ship sinks

In Foshan, a city in the center of the province, a further four people were missing after a ship struck a bridge in an incident that "may have been... due to

the influence of flooding", Xinhua reported Tuesday, citing local authorities. The vessel, which was carrying nearly 5,000 tons of rolled steel, smacked into a pillar of the Jiujiang Bridge on Monday evening, catapulting several of its 11 crewmembers into the water. Seven people were rescued before the ship sank just before midnight. Xinhua said.

Aerial shots from Guangdong showed brown gashes in the side of a hill — the aftermath of landslides that had occurred behind a town on the banks of a swollen river. Soldiers could be seen operating excavators in an attempt to clear away the muddy debris produced by the downpour. Climate change driven by human-emitted greenhouse gases makes extreme weather events more frequent and intense, and China is the world's biggest emitter.

Parts of Guangdong have not seen such severe flooding so early in the year since records began in 1954, the state-run China National Radio reported. Yin Zhijie, the chief hydrology forecaster at the Ministry of Water Resources, told the broadcaster that "intensifying climate change" had raised the likelihood of the kind of heavy rains not typically seen until June or July. "In recent years, extreme weather events that overturn our traditional ways of thinking have occurred frequently, and the extremeness (and) abnormality... of floods and droughts have significantly increased," he was reported as saying.

Guangdong is China's manufacturing heartland, home to around 127 million people. "Please quickly take precautions and stay away from dangerous areas such as low-lying areas prone to flooding," authorities in Shenzhen said in issuing Tuesday's red alert. "Pay attention to heavy rains and resulting disasters such as waterlogging, flash floods, landslides, mudslides, and ground caving in." Heavy rain is expected to continue in Shenzhen for the next two to three hours, authorities said. — AFP

Musk lashes Aussie order demanding X remove stab videos

SYDNEY: Elon Musk on Tuesday vowed to challenge Australian demands that his social media platform X take down videos of a recent Sydney church stabbing. Australia's Federal Court on Monday gave the platform 24 hours to remove videos of an Assyrian bishop being slashed in the head during a recent attack. Australia's eSafety Commission had sought the court injunction saying X ignored earlier removal notices.

Musk lashed out at the watchdog Tuesday, saying the content had already been removed for users in Australia. "We have already censored the content in question for Australia, pending legal appeal, and it is stored only on servers in the USA." As the deadline approached, the videos were not available to users in

Kim oversees first 'nuclear trigger' drills

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has overseen the country's first-ever "nuclear trigger" drills, state-run KCNA news agency said Tuesday, which involved simulating a nuclear counterattack as a warning to enemies. The drills showcased North Korea's "nuclear trigger" management system for the first time, the official Korean Central News Agency reported, adding this was the country's combined control system for its nuclear weapons.

The drill took place on Monday, according to the report. Seoul's military had earlier announced that the North had fired several short-range ballistic missiles that day, with Tokyo also confirming the launch. Kim "guided a combined tactical drill simulating a nuclear counterattack involving super-large multiple rocket artillerymen," the report said.

The rockets "hit their island target" some 352 km away, it continued, saying Kim had expressed "great satisfaction" over the result, which boosted "the Korean-style tactical nuclear strike". The drill examined "the reliability of the system of command, management, control and operation of the whole nuclear force" and ensured the super-large multiple rocket units had "mastered" the ability to switch into nuclear counterattack mode, KCNA said.

KCNA said the drills were in response to a US-South Korean joint air drill, which runs from April 12 to April 26. The US and South Korean air forces said the annual exercises would serve for "demonstrating lethality in the air domain, and enhancing their ability to deter, defend, and defeat any adversary". Pyongyang claims it is "seriously threatened by the hostile forces' ceaseless military provocations," KCNA said Tuesday. As a result, the North needs to "more overwhelmingly and more rapidly bolster up the strongest military muscle," it added. — AFP



This picture taken on April 22, 2024 shows North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un observing "rocket artillery" being launched during a virtual nuclear counterattack training exercise at an undisclosed location in North Korea. - AFP

Australia, except for those using a VPN or other location-masking service.

Musk claimed Australia was trying to enforce a global ban. "Our concern is that if ANY country is allowed to censor content for ALL countries, which is what the Australian 'eSafety Commissar' is demanding, then what is to stop any country from controlling the entire Internet," the billionaire posted on X.

The matter will return to court this week, where a judge will decide whether to extend the interim injunction. A third hearing will follow where eSafety Commission lawyers will seek a permanent injunction and civil penalties against X, a spokesperson told AFP. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese lashed out at Musk, who he described as an "arrogant billionaire" who "thinks he's above the law". "The idea that someone would go to court for the right to put up violent content on a platform shows how out-of-touch Mr Musk is," Albanese told public broadcaster ABC. Tasmanian senator Jacqui Lambie called for Musk to be thrown in prison, saying he had "no conscience" and his behavior was "absolutely disgusting". — AFP



OSAKA: This undated handout image shows "Gen-chan", a 12-year-old hippopotamus, at Tennoji Zoo. — AFP

Business

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024

NBK reports KD 146.6m profits

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has announced its financial results for the three-month period ended 31 March 2024. The Bank reported a net profit of KD 146.6 million (\$476.8 million), compared to KD 134.2 million (\$436.6 million) for the corresponding period in 2023, improving by 9.2 percent year-on-year. Total assets as of the end of March 2024 grew by 5.1 percent year-on-year to reach KD 38.3 billion (\$124.7 billion), whereas total loans and advances increased by 5.7 percent year-on-year to KD 22.4 billion (\$72.8 billion), while shareholders' equity reached KD 3.8 billion (\$12.3 billion), growing by 7.9 percent year-on-year.

Commenting on the Bank's Q1 2024 financial results, Hamad Al-Bahar, NBK Group Chairman, said: "In the first quarter of 2024, we recorded robust profits, showcasing our commitment to delivering long-term sustainable value to our customers, community, and shareholders." "As we continue to capitalize on our strategic investments in technology and talent, we remain confident in our ability to achieve further successes in meeting the needs of our customers," Al-Bahar confirmed.

Al-Bahar emphasized that NBK's ongoing success is built upon solid foundations underpinned by diversification, a key pillar of its strategy. He underscored that strategically diversifying the Bank's portfolio and services across different geographic regions not only mitigates risks but also capitalizes on favorable prospects. This underscores NBK's commitment to adaptability, resilience, and ensuring enduring stability over the long term.

"Kuwait's economy displays resilience and stability, firmly rooted in robust foundations. We expect an uptick in activity within Kuwait's operational scene throughout 2024, resulting in increased project awards and reinforcing trust in the country's business landscape," Al-Bahar added. "In spite of the recent escalation in geopolitical tensions in the region, we continue to focus on advancing our operations in the markets we serve while closely monitoring the repercussions on the operating environment in the region," Al-Bahar explained.

He emphasized that in 2024, NBK maintained its dedication to executing a multitude of impactful initiatives, further solidifying its position as a frontrunner in community development within Kuwait. Simultaneously, these endeavors upheld responsible business



Hamad Al-Bahar



Isam J Al-Sager

practices and played a role in fostering the sustainable advancement of the local economy. Meanwhile, Isam J Al-Sager, NBK Group Vice Chairman and CEO, said: "We have had a strong beginning to 2024, with our business segments maintaining momentum throughout the quarter. This underscores the benefits of our strategic investments and diversified business portfolio."

Al-Sager highlighted the Bank's robust performance, citing strong revenue and profit growth. He noted that the operational mo-

mentum from 2023 carried forward into the current period, resulting in another quarter of strong profits fueled by growth across all business sectors. "The Group's net operating income increased by 11.2 percent year-on-year, reaching KD 309.0 million (\$1.0 billion).

This increase was fueled by improved revenues across various business sectors, reflecting the diverse and multiple sources of income within the Group," Al-Sager added. Al-Sager stressed that the domestic political environment witnessed some recent in-

stability in the form of changes in parliament and government. This is likely to result in the postponement of the long-awaited investment opportunities in Kuwait. He expressed his hopes of an improved and more stable political landscape going forward; which should positively reflect on the business environment domestically.

Sustainable growth

Al-Sager highlighted that NBK's results underscore the success of its strategy in achieving sustainable growth while also delivering long-term value to its shareholders. He emphasized that the bank, buoyed by the robustness of its balance sheet and its diversified business model, achieved business volume growth by prioritizing customer-centric approaches and delivering innovative banking experiences.

"We are seeing considerable momentum in both attracting and developing relationships with our clients. This is further supported by our strong position in terms of credit quality and capitalization, providing us with a solid foundation. This positions us well to continue advancing throughout 2024. Our growth strategy and diversified business mix highlight our resilience and stability amid a challenging macroeconomic landscape," Al-Sager noted.

Al-Sager emphasized the importance of prudent risk management, alongside adequate liquidity, and robust capitalization, which enabled the bank to maintain its support for customers and achieve a strong performance in the quarter. He emphasized that financial prudence, combined with ongoing investment in innovation and development, reflects the Bank's commitment to supporting customers and the community, especially in challenging times.

He underscored that in 2024, NBK will capitalize on its robust position to advance its goal of extending its brand presence across diverse sectors, notably in wealth management. This encompasses the launch of "NBK Wealth", aimed at pioneering innovative and advanced solutions in private banking, wealth management, financial planning, investment management, and advisory services through a global network of operations. Al-Sager also emphasized the significant strides the Bank has made in its digital transformation journey, focusing on enhanc-

ing the banking experience to meet the actual needs and aspirations of its customers. This has been achieved through the design and implementation of a range of digital services and products.

Regional leadership

"In the first quarter of the year, NBK's regional leadership in sustainability was acknowledged, culminating in receiving the Best Bank in the Middle East for ESG-Related Loans Award 2024 by Global Finance. This accolade underscores our dedication to sustainable business practices and strengthens our aspiration to serve as the key partner for our clients in sustainable financing endeavors," Al-Sager noted.

Al-Sager also stated that NBK has received a score of "C" in the categories of Climate Change and Forests 2023, as announced by CDP, a globally recognized non-profit organization overseeing the leading environmental disclosure, noting that NBK stands out as the sole bank in Kuwait to be rated by CDP, establishing its position among the leading financial institutions in the GCC engaged in the initiative.

Al-Sager underscored that in 2024, NBK will continue strengthening its position through investing in its people. The bank will also prioritize offering the best products and services tailored to its customers' needs, expanding its presence in existing markets, and further developing its innovative businesses to better serve its customers and community.

Key financial indicators

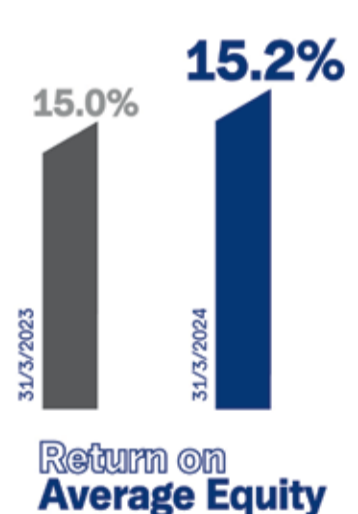
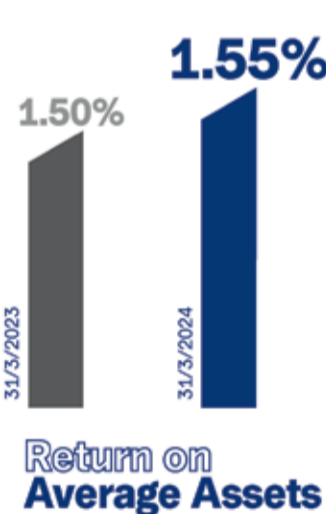
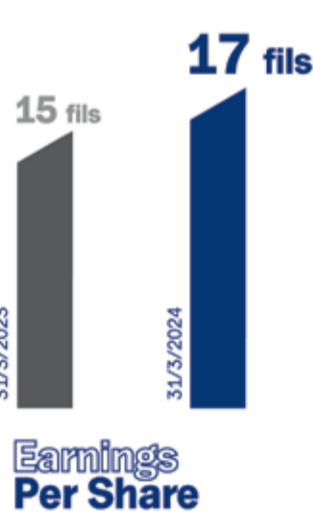
- Net operating income of KD 309.0 million (\$1.0 billion), up 11.2 percent year-on-year
- Total assets increased by 5.1 percent year-on-year, at KD 38.3 billion (\$124.7 billion)
- Total loans and advances grew by 5.7 percent year-on-year to KD 22.4 billion (\$72.8 billion)
- Customer deposits increased by 9.0 percent by the end of March 2024 to KD 22.3 billion (\$72.4 billion)
- Shareholders' equity amounted to KD 3.8 billion (\$12.3 billion), registering an annual growth of 7.9 percent.
- Strong asset quality metrics, with NPL/gross loans ratio at 1.51 percent and an NPL coverage ratio of 248 percent.
- Robust Capital Adequacy Ratio of 17.2 percent, comfortably in excess of regulatory requirements.



Financial Highlights 1st Quarter 2024



Net Profit
+9.2%



Total Assets
+5.1%



Shareholders' Equity
+7.9%



Customer Loans & Advances
+5.7%



Customer Deposits
+9.0%



Net Interest Income
+12.4%



Net Operating Income
+11.2%



Business

Zain spearheads digital innovation to foster sustainable growth, development

Company sponsors The Business Year's Kuwait Innovation Forum

KUWAIT: Zain has sponsored the Kuwait Innovation Forum, organized by The Business Year media group in collaboration with the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA). The event featured insightful discussions and expert panels to celebrate the spirit of innovation in Kuwait's vibrant business sector.



Waleed Al Khashti highlighted Zain's role to foster digital innovation in the local market.

The forum was attended by Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr. Anwar Al-Mudhaf, KDIPA Director General Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis, Kuwait Banking Association Chairman Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Al Sabah, Zain Kuwait Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al Khashti, as well as executives, leaders, and experts from the public and private sectors, along with entrepreneurs and startup owners.

preneurs and startup owners.

During the event, Zain expressed its delight to continue partnering with The Business Year to bring insightful gatherings like this one to life. The company strongly believes in the powerful role such platforms play in promoting dialogue, exchanging ideas, and fostering innovation across industries in the market. Zain also recognized the efforts of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), which continues its mission to enhance Kuwait's economic diversification and position it as a global investment hub. Zain, as a national institution representing the vibrant private sector, will remain a key partner to this mission towards a 'New Kuwait'.

The forum celebrated the spirit of innovation in Kuwait's business sector, a topic that resonates with every company and institution. Zain believes that without truly embracing innovation, there can be no growth. And this is especially true in highly competitive industries like the ICT sector, where digital transformation plays a decisive role. Innovation is the engine that powers growth and prosperity. By harnessing creativity, exploring untapped opportunities, and even taking risks, companies can create real-world value and bring about positive change that not only affects them as organizations, but the community as a whole.

Today more than ever, technology plays a significant role in the innovation ecosystem. It serves as a catalyst for innovation by providing the means to create value in ways that were previously unimaginable. This is evident in innovations like AI that are reshaping the way we communicate, work, and interact with everything around us.

Zain no longer considers itself a traditional telecom operator, but a digital enabler, taking the lead to empower companies and government institutions to enhance their operations, improve their efficiency and workflows, and find new opportunities to grow. The company achieves this by harnessing the power of innovations like 5G, AI, drones, cloud computing, and more to help organizations achieve true digital transformation. Zain takes pride in its own digital transformation journey and how it contributed to Kuwait's business landscape throughout the years. Despite challenges, the company embraced digital innovation, putting it at the heart of everything it does.

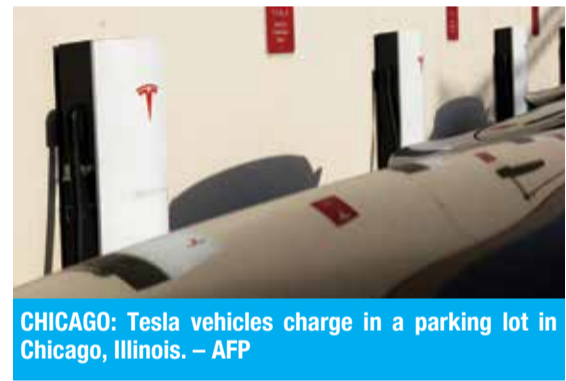


Minister of Finance Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf, Sheikh Ahmad Al Duaij and Waleed Al Khashti at the event.

And together with its partners from the world's biggest technology players, Zain became the number one choice for the public and private sectors to achieve digitization aspirations and plans. The company affirmed that, to truly embrace innovation, the public and private sectors must work together to empower a vibrant ecosystem for entrepreneurship and startups in the

market. Zain is proud of the fact that Kuwait is home for so many success stories, some of whom joined the forum to share their journeys and experiences with the attendees.

For over 14 years, Zain worked hard to create a comprehensive ecosystem for entrepreneurs and aspiring business owners through its award-winning accelerator program, Zain Great Idea. Throughout the years, ZGI helped accelerate hundreds of startups, embrace thousands of ambitious minds, and create countless job opportunities in Kuwait and beyond. In the past 24 months alone, startups that joined ZGI raised over \$17.6 million of investments, and many of them have already expanded beyond the local market.



CHICAGO: Tesla vehicles charge in a parking lot in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

Tesla earnings a 'moment of truth' for Musk

NEW YORK: Tesla CEO Elon Musk faces heightened pressure with Tuesday's earnings report to reassure investors that recent stumbles are simply unexpected speed bumps - and not indications of a road to decline. The electric car maker, which enjoyed scorching growth for most of 2022 and 2023, has experienced setbacks that analysts say have raised the stakes for the first-quarter report. Tuesday's earnings and conference call are a "moment of truth" for Tesla and Musk, constituting "one of the most important moments in the company's history in our view," said a note from Wedbush. Heading into 2024, Tesla watchers were already girding for a tougher path, with Musk's once-dominant leadership in EVs facing more competition from rivals, resulting in a series of price cuts. But things have been bumpier than expected.

After disclosing on April 2 a disappointing 8.5 percent drop in first-quarter deliveries, Tesla last week announced plans to lay off more than 10 percent of its staff. That news was quickly followed by Tesla's plan to revive a \$56 billion compensation package for Musk after a court struck it down. Then, late last week, Tesla announced a recall of its Cybertruck due to an acceleration problem. Musk has also been beset by speculation that the company is shelving plans for the "Model 2," the unofficial name of what is expected to be a mass-marketed, lower-priced vehicle.

On the positive side, Musk has said the company will this summer unveil a "Robotaxi." Yet analysts have noted that safety questions are clouding the timeframe for the vehicle. "There's a lot of confusion about what direction are they going," said Stephanie Valdez Streaty, director of industry insights at Cox, who pointed to a more than 40 percent drop in Tesla's share price in 2024 as an indicator of unease. Investors want "more clarity about what their strategy is," she said. "We could walk away with a lot of unanswered questions."

Rising skepticism

Musk has endured other difficult periods with Tesla, such as when the company struggled to ramp up production on the Model 3 vehicle in 2018 while Musk sparred with US securities regulators over a brief flirtation with taking the company private. Wall Street has grown accustomed to Musk's mercurial style and loose deadlines on targets for autonomous driving and other breakthroughs, cheering as Tesla turned in a string of strong results based on ever-rising revenues. But with the financial picture less rosy, analysts are becoming more loudly skeptical. Recent notes from JPMorgan Chase analysts dismissed Tesla's explanations for its disappointing deliveries, which had blamed factors such as shipping diversions amid conflict in the Red Sea and a suspected arson attack at its German factory. JPMorgan "assigned little credence" to these explanations, even though markets largely appeared to accept them, the investment bank said in a note. "The sweeping layoffs announced yesterday, amounting to a reduction in crewed production capacity, should now leave no doubt that the decline in deliveries has been a function of lower demand and not supply." — AFP

LuLu Hypermarket marks 22nd anniversary with biggest sale promotion

KUWAIT: LuLu Hypermarket celebrated its 22nd anniversary in Kuwait with a never-before sales promotion that offered up to 70 percent discount on items across all categories. LuLu Hypermarket, the leading retail brand in the region, celebrated its more than two decades of operations in Kuwait with a week-long shopping extravaganza across all its outlets in Kuwait, from 24 - 30 April.

Shoppers across the country flocked to LuLu outlets to take advantage of jaw-dropping deals on a massive selection of products. Customers were treated to amazing discounts of up to 70 percent on items across all categories. From groceries and home essentials to electronics, fashion, and everything in between. In addition to incredible offers on clothing, toys, homeware, and everything needed to spruce up one's home, the 22nd anniversary sale promotion provided amazing and unbeatable deals in pantry staples, fresh produce, beauty products and other everyday essentials.

The latest gadgets, appliances, and IT essentials were also available at steeply discounted prices, allowing IT buffs to buy all their bucket-list gadgets at never-before prices. Additionally, the hypermarket



offered a variety of special promotions to elevate the shopping experience. While a selection of items was available at a flat 50 percent discount during the sale period, LuLu also provided 22 products daily from different categories at unimaginable discounts, creating a treasure hunt for shoppers.

Shoppers were able to find their favorite name brands at unbelievable prices, making it the perfect opportunity to snag dream items. All outlets also hosted exciting in-store activities and entertainment that helped create an enjoyable festive shopping atmosphere. Throughout the week-long 22nd anniversary celebration, the emphasis was on thanking customers for their more than 20 years of support to the brand, and on ensuring that everyone had a wonderful time shopping at LuLu Hypermarket.



LONDON: Pedestrians walk in the winter sunshine down Oxford Street in central London. — AFP

London stock market strikes record as sentiment lifts globally

LONDON: London's FTSE 100 stocks index hit record highs Tuesday, catching up with major global peers that have struck all-time peaks this year as inflation cools. Sentiment was upbeat across major world indices thanks to easing Middle East worries and hopes of interest-rate cuts, while traders are keenly awaiting the release this week of more major earnings and key US inflation data. European stocks rose "for a second day, following the trend registered in Asia overnight, amid growing risk appetite ahead of tech earnings this week", noted Pierre Veyret, analyst at ActivTrades.

London's FTSE 100 reached 8,076.52 points shortly after the open, surpassing a record 8,047.06 struck in February last year. The index has in recent weeks been lifted by weakening of the pound, particularly against the dollar, as markets anticipate cuts to UK interest rates in the coming months thanks to slowing price rises. Sterling fell against the US unit and euro Tuesday, benefitting FTSE-listed British

multinationals that make big earnings in foreign currencies. The Paris and Frankfurt stock markets won a lift from news of an improvement to business activity in the euro-zone this month.

The apparent easing of Iran-Zionist tensions after the rivals launched missile attacks against each other continued to weigh on oil prices. Investors are a little more upbeat after last week's struggles fuelled by dimming hopes for US interest rate cuts and concerns the Middle East crisis could escalate into a regional war. "Crude has unwound the Zionist-Iran risk premium but could slip into a holding pattern," said Vandana Hari at Vanda Insights. "It's hard to see a correction from current levels unless there's a breakthrough on the Gaza front."

Focus is on the corporate reports from Wall Street titans including Amazon, Apple, Netflix and Tesla, with observers saying that traders are keen to see strong earnings as well as positive outlooks. However, there is a worry that equities could take a hit if the results disappoint, with the surge in markets in recent months partly helped by bets on firms providing bumper returns. Ahead of the Wall Street open, General Motors reported higher profits thanks to continued strength in North America that offset a loss in its China business, enabling the carmaker to lift its forecast. — AFP

Electric car sales expected to break another record

PARIS: Sales of electric cars are surging and expected to break another record in 2024, the International Energy Agency said on Tuesday, with China a big market for that growing demand. In its annual report on the sector, the Paris-based IEA said the world's electric car fleet continued to "grow strongly" although momentum was greater in some markets than others. "Rather than tapering off, the global EV revolution appears to be gearing up for a new phase of growth," said IEA director Fatih Birol. "The wave of investment in battery manufacturing suggests the EV supply chain is advancing to meet automakers' ambitious plans for expansion. As a result, the share of EVs on the roads is expected to continue to climb rapidly."

Lower profit margins, volatile prices for battery raw materials, high inflation, and the end of subsidy programs for EV purchases in some countries had fuelled concern about the sector's growth. This weaker outlook was mainly in Europe, the IEA said, although noting that electric cars were still forecast to represent about one in four vehicles sold there in 2024. China remained the world's leading market for electric car sales, with 10 million new vehicles expected to hit the road in 2024. In the first quarter of 2024, electric car sales increased globally by another 25 percent compared with the same period in 2023.

Last year set a new record with 14 million electric cars sold. "Growth expectations for 2024 build on a record year," the IEA said. "Electric car sales keep rising and could reach around 17 million in 2024, accounting for more than one in five cars sold worldwide." In 2024 sales of electric vehicles are expected to account for 45 percent of all cars sold in China, 25 percent in Europe and 11 percent in the United States, the report said. Competition between manufacturers, the fall in battery and car prices, and government subsidies are driving the trend, it added.

In China, electric models are already often cheaper than their non-electric equivalents, and prices are falling as well elsewhere. The second-hand market is also growing rapidly, lowering the cost of access to electric technology. The IEA said that nearly one in three vehicles driving in China should be electric in 2030, and one in five in Europe and the United States. "This shift will have major ramifications for both the auto industry and the energy sector," Birol said. This boom has particularly benefited Chinese manufacturers, who produce more than half the electric cars sold worldwide, yet only 10 percent of non-electric models. — AFP



ORANIENBURG: A customer uses a charging station for electric cars of the city's municipal energy supplier in Oranienburg, north of Berlin, Germany. — AFP

Boubyan Bank records net profit of KD 25m for the first quarter

KUWAIT: Boubyan Bank has announced KD 31.7 million in operating profits for the first quarter of this year as the bank recorded KD 25 million in net profits at a growth rate of 21 percent compared with last year, while the earnings per share amounts to 5.2 fils. Boubyan Bank's Vice-Chairman & Group Chief Executive Officer, Adel Al-Majed, stated: "Our positive financial results during Q1, 2024 is a testament to Boubyan's outstanding position in the local financial and banking sector. Customers of the bank can rest assure that the management will continue its efforts towards leadership and sustained growth across all the bank's areas."

Al-Majed highlighted the most significant numbers recorded by the bank during Q1, as the bank's assets grew to KD 8.7 billion at a growth rate of 8 percent compared with last year, while the bank's financing portfolio grew by 8 percent to reach KD 6.5 billion thus increasing the bank's market share of local financing to 11.6 percent and operating income grew by 17 percent to KD 61.6 million.

He added: "The results achieved during this quarter have been closely associated with an effective strategy that enhanced the financial and operating performance of the Group as a whole. With steady steps, the bank will be launching a new 5-year strategy to continue boosting growth, positive performance, and upgrade of our digital infrastructure, in addition to increasing our market shares, while moving forward towards accelerating overall improvements."

Excellence in customer service

Al-Majed highlighted: "Boubyan Bank's management is always working to improve the quality of services and products to improve and enrich a banking experience that meets the needs of customers and becomes part of their daily life, which led the bank to be in the lead for customer service in Kuwait as it has been named the "Best Islamic Bank in Customer Service" for the 14th year in a row since 2010, in addition to being ranked among the top three in Customer Service across all economic sectors in Kuwait for the year 2023 by Service Hero, the consumer-driven customer satisfaction index.

"Boubyan managed to become a leading franchise by following a tailored path that reinforces customer satisfaction levels, leading to receiving a 96 percent customer-satisfaction score among all Islamic and conventional local banks. The bank's market share and its ongoing growth reflect the high levels in customer service and digital excellence, which are the fruit of the bank's clear strategy, professional executive team, and continued investment in our human resources with special focus on our national cadres", he added.

He elaborated: "The bank's sustained growth was the result of a well-studied approach towards investing in various business sectors, thus leading to significant growth in our consumer banking and corporate banking businesses, thanks to our focus on creativity and innovation despite the fierce competition in the banking sector."

Nomo - accelerating growth

During the past period, Nomo Bank, the digital arm of the Bank of London and the Middle East "BLME", a subsidiary of Boubyan Bank Group, launched unique products and services that put it on par with top financial institutions. This aligns with its strategy that focuses on enhancing and improving its core digital business in order to ensure offering the best banking experience to individual customers so as to provide easier, more convenient, and secure digital payment solutions.

Moreover, Nomo Bank has recently hosted Barratt London, a UK property developer, with the attendance of some of the bank's customers, along with Great Portland, and a group of individuals and investors who were interested in exploring exclusive Sharia-compliant real estate and investment opportunities with competitive advantages in order to benefit



Adel Al-Majed:

- Our third 5-year strategy focuses on boosting growth
- Nomo is on track to penetrate into GCC markets with steady steps towards further expansion
- Maintaining our leadership in customer service for 14 consecutive years highlights our commitment to offer the best services to customers

Why is Boubyan the best?

Boubyan's choice by Service Hero relied on a group of criteria including a survey that extended over one year among consumers, who evaluated companies on a scale of 10 against their service-level expectations, their experience and satisfaction following the customer-service experience. The evaluation relied on many elements such as staff's attitude, location of the bank, speed of service, confidence in the product, quality of service or product, value for money, the contact center, and the website of the bank. Service Hero's survey implements a strict protocol to confirm the identity of consumers who take part in the survey.

Boubyan's contributions during Ramadan

- More than 4,500 participants walked 168 million steps as a part of Boubyan Steps Campaign.
- More than 1,000 participants in the 10th "Recite with Boubyan" Competition, and recognizing 30 winners who memorized the Glorious Quran by heart.
- Distribution of more than 25,000 iftar meals to the visitors of the Grand Mosque and various areas of Kuwait.
- Distribution of more than 3,000 food baskets as a part of "Neamaty" initiative.
- More than 250,000 users of Kuwait's App for the Glorious Quran with the 10 Recitations.
- Offered hospitality services to worshippers at more than 50 mosques across Kuwait's governorates as a part of our Mosques Hospitality Program in the Holy Month of Ramadan.
- More than 800,000 participants in the "Minute Challenge" throughout the Holy Month.
- 10 new initiatives in collaboration with Bu Jarrah, the known leader of community initiatives. Moreover, we offered instant and valuable prizes to anyone who made a mark and led to a significant change in a specific neighborhood in Kuwait.
- Participation of more than 8,000 customers for a chance to be winners in "Your Ghabga Is on Us" initiative.
- Attendance of more than 1,500 persons in "Boubyan Girgian" at Al Shaheed Park.



Boubyan Bank's Key Financial Indicators during Q1 - 2024.

from the best possible investment value, coupled with the best property finance solutions that cope with the accelerating growth in the UK's property investment.

Prominent digital achievements
Boubyan Bank's digital transformation strategy gained a significant momentum, being a real example for succeeding in be-

ing highly competitive regionally in digital services, and in changing the lives of our customers through our services and products. Our digital services' journey is very exceptional. It has seen us excel and climb to the top of the pyramid amid tough competition in the market for digital banking services which is growing rapidly.

During Q1, Boubyan offered a group of innovative services, products, and digital solutions, which added value to customers and maintained the bank's leadership in innovation to ensure enriching their banking experience, and making things easier, especially amid the competition across various business sectors. This reflects the bank's ongoing approach to develop the digital infrastructure and to offer the best services in the field of digital payments.

Boubyan continued supporting its human resources and recruiting national cadres, and was able to reach the highest percentage of national manpower across the private sector, which now exceeds 81%, and continued its enablement ap-

proach for women, who now account for 30% of the bank's employees, with many of them occupying leadership positions.

The bank's human resources proved themselves to be one of the key pillars of the bank's ongoing success, as they embrace and adopt Boubyan's future vision, which greatly contributes to the introduction of innovative and creative ideas and deliverables, while reiterating the bank's commitment to providing all that is necessary to support our human resources' leadership role in a real and sustained manner to have a positive effect on the future job market and achieve the desired results in terms of increasing our productivity and the profitability rates of the bank.

CSR and Ramadan

During the same period, Boubyan successfully concluded a complete program of initiatives and social contributions during the Holy Month of Ramadan, which aimed at daily engagement with various segments of the society to reinforce our leadership role in CSR and sustainable development, being among the key drivers of Boubyan's strategy.

Through this program, the bank managed to make a unique social mark that aimed at reinforcing the meanings of giving, volunteering, and committing to an unprecedented social engagement throughout the Holy Month, thanks to the efforts of our Boubyan Team of Volunteers that comprised of a group of our employees from various departments, with the participation of our customers out of their keenness on sharing the reward of good deeds.

For the fourth consecutive year, the bank supports CBK and KBA's Be Aware Campaign "Diraya" to spread awareness about many banking matters among citizens and residents. This comes in line with the bank's CSR efforts.



World's largest private firms fail to set climate targets: Report

PARIS: Only 40 of the world's 100 largest private firms have set net-zero carbon emissions targets to fight climate change, according to a report released Monday, lagging far behind public companies. But for the world to meet the 2015 Paris Agreement to limit global warming 1.5 degree Celsius, all companies need to reduce their planet-heating emissions, the report by the group Net Zero Tracker noted. The lack of market and reputational pressures on private firms compared to those publicly-listed, along with an absence of regulation are to blame for their slow uptake of climate commitments, John Lange of Net Zero Tracker told AFP. "I think things are changing on all three of those fronts," he added.

The report compared 200 of the world's largest

public and private companies based on their reported emissions reductions strategies and net-zero targets. It found that only 40 of the 100 private firms assessed had net zero targets, compared to 70 of 100 publicly-listed companies. Of the private companies that have set targets, just eight have published plans on how they will meet them. "A pledge without a plan is not a pledge, it is a naked PR stunt," the report said.

Regulations coming

Only two firms - furnishing giant Ikea and US engineering giant Bechtel - ruled out using controversial carbon credits to achieve their net-zero goals, the report said. Carbon credits allow businesses to offset their emissions by directing money toward a project that reduces or avoids emissions, such as protecting forests, but critics say they allow companies to keep polluting. Meanwhile, none of the eight fossil fuel companies included in the report was found to have a net-zero target, compared with 76 percent of the sector's largest public firms. There was also little improvement in the figures compared with a previous analysis

done in 2022, "despite a massive uptick in regulation around the world", Lang said. Several jurisdictions including the United Kingdom have adopted climate disclosure regulations.

Others have regulations on the horizon, with business hubs of California and Singapore requiring greenhouse gas emissions reporting from 2027. The European Union also introduced two climate regulations - the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) - which will soon require thousands of large companies to report their climate impacts and emissions, and to take action to curtail them. "We're trying to get private firms to understand what's coming for them," Lang said.

"Trickledown effect"

The EU policies will have far-reaching effects in particular, targeting firms not only based in the bloc but those that may be headquartered elsewhere with branches or subsidiaries within the member states. Yet two European private firms, including French hyper-

market chain E.Leclerc, were singled out in the report for having set any emissions reduction targets.

E.Leclerc told AFP that the company has made efforts toward more sustainable practices like eliminating the use of single-use plastic bags, and is "committed to setting near-term company-wide emissions reduction targets". But with the enforcement of EU regulations looming, firms will not be able to "dodge" climate targets much longer, Sybrig Smit of the NewClimate Institute told AFP. "It's actually quite watertight. If companies want to do business in Europe, they are going to have to face the consequences," she said.

The firms analyzed account for roughly 23 percent of the global economy, with the majority based in either China, the United States or EU states - the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases, Lang said. Any changes the firms make to meet new regulations will have substantial benefits for the environment. "They have such a trickledown effect. Whenever such a big company is implementing something real, it will have a huge effect on the rest of the sector that they operate in," Smit said. — AFP

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024



A person sits inside a sweathouse sauna at Baginbun beach.



The fire burns inside a sweathouse sauna at Baginbun beach.



A sweathouse sauna is pictured at Baginbun beach.



People look out from inside a sweathouse sauna at Baginbun beach.

A 'healthy addiction'

Sea saunas make waves in Ireland

For Sharon Fidgeon, a regular visitor to Ireland's increasingly popular beach saunas, her weekend sessions "have become a healthy addiction" that tap into a centuries-old Irish tradition of toning up by getting sweaty. On sandy Clonea beach on Ireland's wind-battered Atlantic coast, the 52-year-old artist told AFP that alternating between the sauna and freezing seawater makes her feel "so incredibly alive".

"Once you get down in the sea up to your neck, it really sets off the endorphins in your body," said Fidgeon after a dunk in the two-kilometer-long (1.2 mile-long) bay near Dungarvan in County Waterford. "And having the sauna here lets me stay in the sea that bit longer," she said, putting on a dry robe and sandals before briskly stepping into the barrel-shaped structure on wheels above the beach. In Ireland the COVID-19 pandemic launched a surge in sea-swimming as a bracing escape from lockdowns.

Mobile saunas became a post-COVID "add-on", according to Deirdre Flavin, who operates several along the Waterford coast, towing them to beaches by car. "The market is growing and steadily increasing, awareness is spreading, and people are

enjoying the experience and coming back for more," she told AFP as she fired up one of her saunas. Aside from their health benefits, Flavin, 40, said the cosy boltholes are ideal havens in Ireland's wild and often wet and chilly weather. "People can more comfortably sea-swim all-year-round now as they can warm their body cores up after the dip," she said while packing wooden logs into the sauna's stove.

Less alcohol, more wellness

Further along the southern coast in County Cork, customers at another sauna lauded the activity for stress relief as well as aiding recovery after strenuous sports. "A lot of the lads in the hurling team would like to get into the water and the sauna, it's become a thing to do for teams," said 20-year-old student Rory O'Callaghan, referring to the combative Irish field sport played with sticks. Sauna owner Bronwyn Connolly suffers from arthritis and when indoor public spaces were shuttered during the pandemic she bought a small barrel sauna and towed it to Garrettstown beach.

"I was struggling a lot with pain, and the sauna and the cold water just eased it, a plunge in the sea after building up a sweat just seems to wash away all the worries," she told AFP. As sports teams



A sweathouse sauna is pictured at Baginbun beach, near Wexford, on the south-east coast of Ireland. — AFP photos

and corporate groups began showing more interest she set about designing a bigger one, relying on books and YouTube videos for know-how.

With a large window on one side and gently curved tiered seating with a fire, a group sat chatting and marveling at the view of ocean waves crashing below on the beach. "It's really becoming a social thing, where friends or even strangers can meet. Irish people are shifting to less alcohol-driven things and more wellness-driven things," Connolly told AFP. Back in 2021 her first mobile sauna was one of the first in the country but now "they are on every beach in Cork", she said.

'Sweathouse'

According to the new wave of operators, the trend harks back to an ancient Irish sauna culture dating from the 1600s that went out of fashion early in the last century: the "sweathouse". Remains of hundreds of sweathouses — igloo-shaped stone structures heated by turf fires and used for sweating out colds and fevers, and battling rheumatism and arthritic pain — are dotted around the Irish countryside. Yoga instructor Carol Ni Stasaigh and her husband Dara Kissane, an exercise physiologist, called their sea sauna on the County Wexford coast "Sweathouse" in a nod to the old ways.

"In ancient times people would have

gone in for medicinal, religious purposes, or even hallucinogenic reasons," Ni Stasaigh told AFP on Baginbun beach. "We don't guarantee any hallucinogenic things in our sauna, just hot and cold therapy and the release of endorphins," she laughed. Back in Waterford, toweeling down at the end of her session, Sharon Fidgeon told AFP the link to the past was an important element of her sauna bathing experience. "It's an old Irish tradition. It's really lovely to be part of something that is old and Irish. It's magical and quite close to my heart," she said. — AFP

Kebab chef joins German president on tricky Turkey visit

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier begins a delicate visit to Turkey on Monday, taking a Berlin kebab chef with him as a show of close personal ties between the two nations despite differences with his Turkish counterpart. Steinmeier, who is visiting Turkey for the first time since becoming president, has had a difficult relationship with Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The German head of state has been quick to call out Erdogan's approach towards the Zionist entity and has previously raised concerns about the erosion of democratic norms in Turkey.

The fact that he is not starting the trip in the capital Ankara "is a signal," said a source in the German presidency who asked not to be named. Instead, Steinmeier's first stop will be Istanbul, where he will meet civil society activists, as well as the city's mayor, opposition figure Ekrem Imamoglu. Voters' decision to return Imamoglu as mayor in recent local elections dealt a blow to Erdogan and his ruling party.

On Tuesday, Steinmeier will meet survivors of the devastating 2023 earthquake in Gaziantep near the Syrian border. Talks with Erdogan in Ankara will wait until Wednesday. Instead of flattering the president, Steinmeier is



Arif Keles, a third generation barbecue snack bar owner poses next to the doner kebab meat skewer at his restaurant at Berlin's Yorckstraße S-Bahn station.

hoping to put the emphasis on the links between people in the two countries.

Doner diplomacy

In particular, the German president hopes to highlight the contribution made by generations of Turkish migrants, who since the 1960s have come to work in Germany. Among those to establish themselves in Germany was the grandfather of Arif Keles, a Berlin kebab shop owner invited on the trip by Steinmeier. The grilled meat artisan will serve doner kebab to guests at a dinner in Istanbul on Monday night. "The spit is travelling

with us in the presidential plane," Keles told AFP ahead of the journey.

The dish of thinly sliced meat cooked on a vertical rotisserie was introduced to Germany by Turkish migrants. Packed with chopped vegetables and doused with mayonnaise, the doner kebab has gained iconic status. The snack has become "a kind of German national food", one of Steinmeier's advisors said in a briefing. Local sales of the kebab total an estimated seven billion euros (\$7.5 billion) - an immigrant success story the German presidency wants to celebrate.

Doner dealer Keles is the third generation to manage the family business in southwest Berlin. His grandfather moved to Germany and worked for years in a factory before opening his own restaurant in 1986. "Now the president is taking me as a grandson to the home of my ancestors," Keles said. "I see it as a great honor that I am allowed to go on this visit."

Immigrant stories

Steinmeier's trip was meant to underline that "the personal stories and achievements of four generations of Turkish immigrants" are part of Germany's history, the presidential office said. Around three million people with Turkish heritage live in Germany, but his

presence has often been the subject of a fraught debate over split loyalties. Only last year did Germany agree to significantly ease citizenship rules to allow more dual nationals, a relief to many Turkish people who have lived in Germany for decades.

Perceived backing for Erdogan in the Turkish diaspora has also caused irritation in Germany, while officials in Berlin have had a strained relationship with Ankara. Erdogan's support for Hamas has troubled Berlin, which solidly backs the Zionist entity in the war against the Palestinian militant group. Erdogan traded barbs with Steinmeier on a visit to Germany in November last year, shortly after the October 7 attack by Hamas on the Zionist entity that triggered the war.

The disagreement has added to tensions over sharp German criticism of authoritarian moves that German officials see as threatening democracy in Turkey. Berlin has criticized Erdogan's clampdown on domestic dissent while recognizing that getting regional power Turkey onside was necessary to tackle thorny issues. Despite having served seven years as president, this is Steinmeier's first visit to Turkey as head of state. — AFP



French singer Kendji Girac arrives for the screening of the film "Armageddon Time" during the 75th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France, on May 19, 2022. — AFP

French singer hospitalized with bullet wound

A former winner of France's version of The Voice was in hospital on Monday after being shot in the chest, sources familiar with the case told AFP. Singer Kendji Girac was found wounded after police were called to a traveler site in Biscarrosse on France's southwestern coast around 5:30 am (0330 GMT). Girac was admitted to hospital in Bordeaux but the injuries were not life threatening, the sources, who asked not to be named, told AFP. The 27-year-old told first responders that he had accidentally shot himself while tinkering with a Colt 45 automatic pistol he had bought at a junk shop, one source said. Another source close to the investigation said police were not ruling anything out in their probe and had not yet questioned Girac.

Police locked down the scene of the shooting throughout Monday morning but left in the early afternoon, an AFP journalist saw. "This isn't a gangland shooting. It's an accident. He was playing with the thing and 'bam!'", a man called Emilio, who said he was Girac's uncle, told AFP at the camp. "We were quietly playing the guitar... An accident can happen at any time," said Emilio, who declined to give his surname. Members of Girac's family went to Bordeaux's Haut-Leveque hospital but declined to speak to media. A source close to the investigation and emergency services said the singer had never been in danger of dying from his wound, as had initially been reported, and that he was conscious when first responders arrived. — AFP



Arif Keles, a third generation barbecue snack bar owner poses outside his restaurant at Berlin's Yorckstraße S-Bahn station. — AFP photos



Arif Keles, a third generation barbecue snack bar owner poses at his restaurant at Berlin's Yorckstraße S-Bahn station.



A butterfly is seen in the protected Amazon rainforest of Cuyabeno, Ecuador.

In Ecuadoran Amazon, butterflies provide a gauge of climate change



Butterflies are seen in the protected Amazon rainforest of Cuyabeno, Ecuador.



Biologist Maria Fernanda Checa holds an embalmed butterfly.



Biologist Maria Fernanda Checa holds an embalmed butterfly.



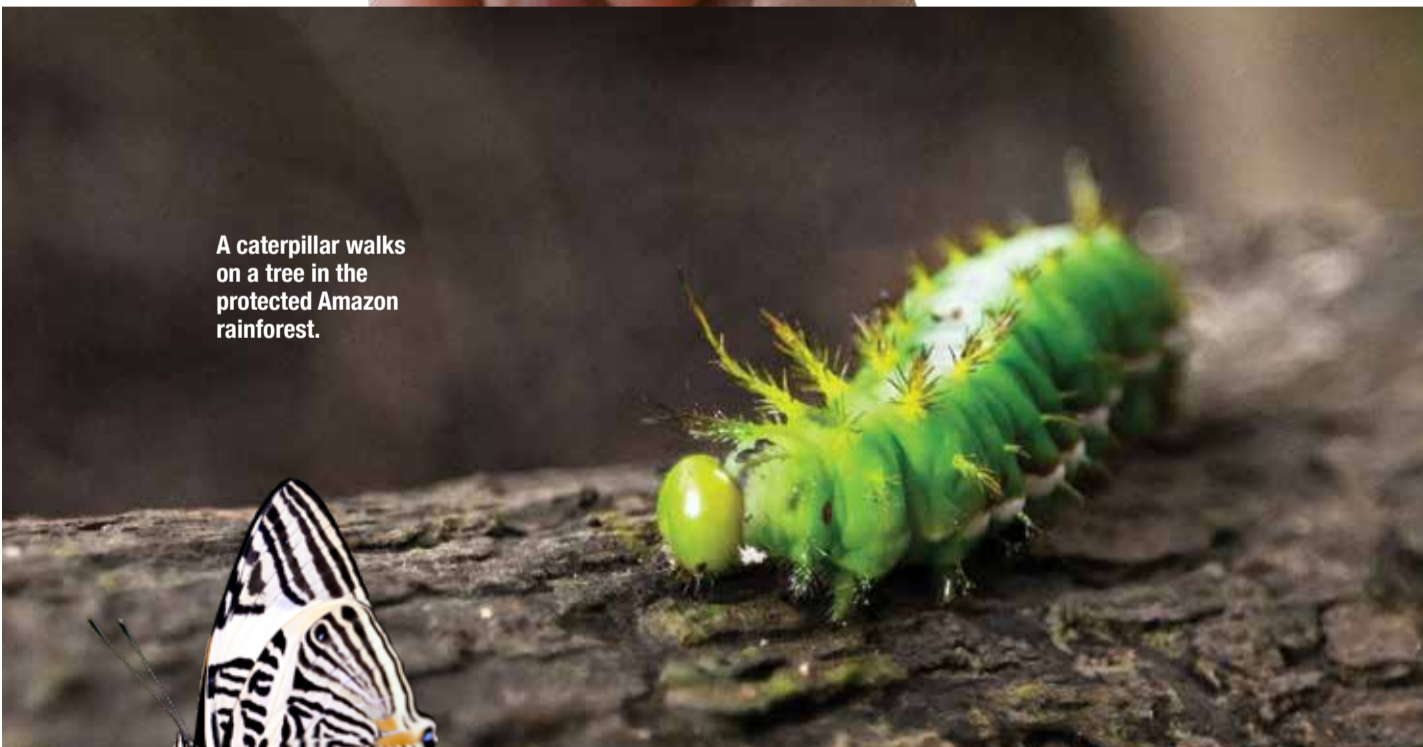
B iologists on a trail in the Ecuadoran Amazon hold their breath as they distribute a foul-smelling delicacy to lure butterflies, critical pollinators increasingly threatened by climate change. A team has hung 32 traps made of green nets, each baited with rotting fish and fermented bananas. They are meant to blend in with the forest canopy. Their pungent odor clearly does not. Since last August, a team of biologists and park rangers has been monitoring butterfly numbers in the Cuyabeno Wildlife Re-

serve, a park famed for its abundant flora and fauna. They catch and document the colorful insects, releasing most with an identifying mark on their wings. Some of them, possibly from previously unknown species, are kept for further study. The results of the team's work, however, have been discouraging. Butterflies are

"bioindicators," living organisms whose well-being provides a measure of the health of their surrounding ecosystem, and their numbers are decreasing, biologist Maria Fernanda Checa told AFP. While the number of species may not have declined by more than 10 percent, in terms of absolute butterfly numbers "the decrease is very significant... maybe 40/50 percent," she said. "It is something that alarms us."



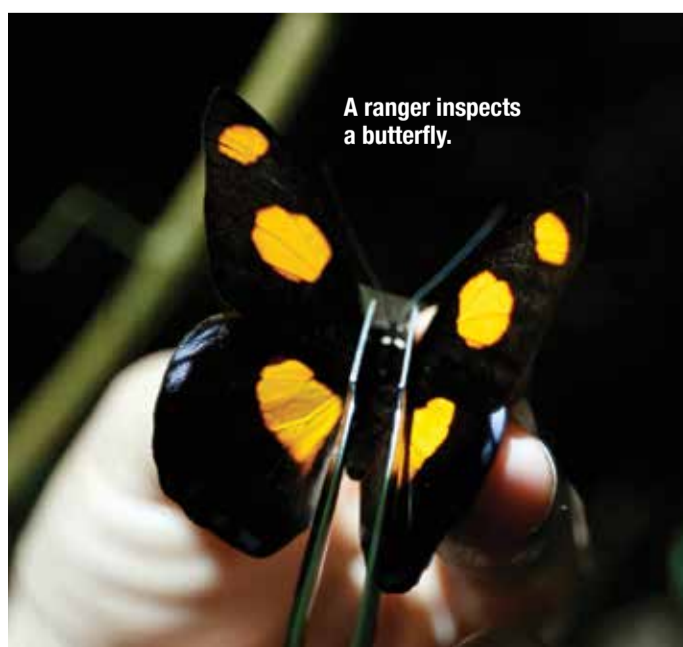
Biologist Maria Fernanda Checa holds an embalmed butterfly.



A caterpillar walks on a tree in the protected Amazon rainforest.



A butterfly is seen in the protected Amazon rainforest of Cuyabeno, Ecuador.



A ranger inspects a butterfly.

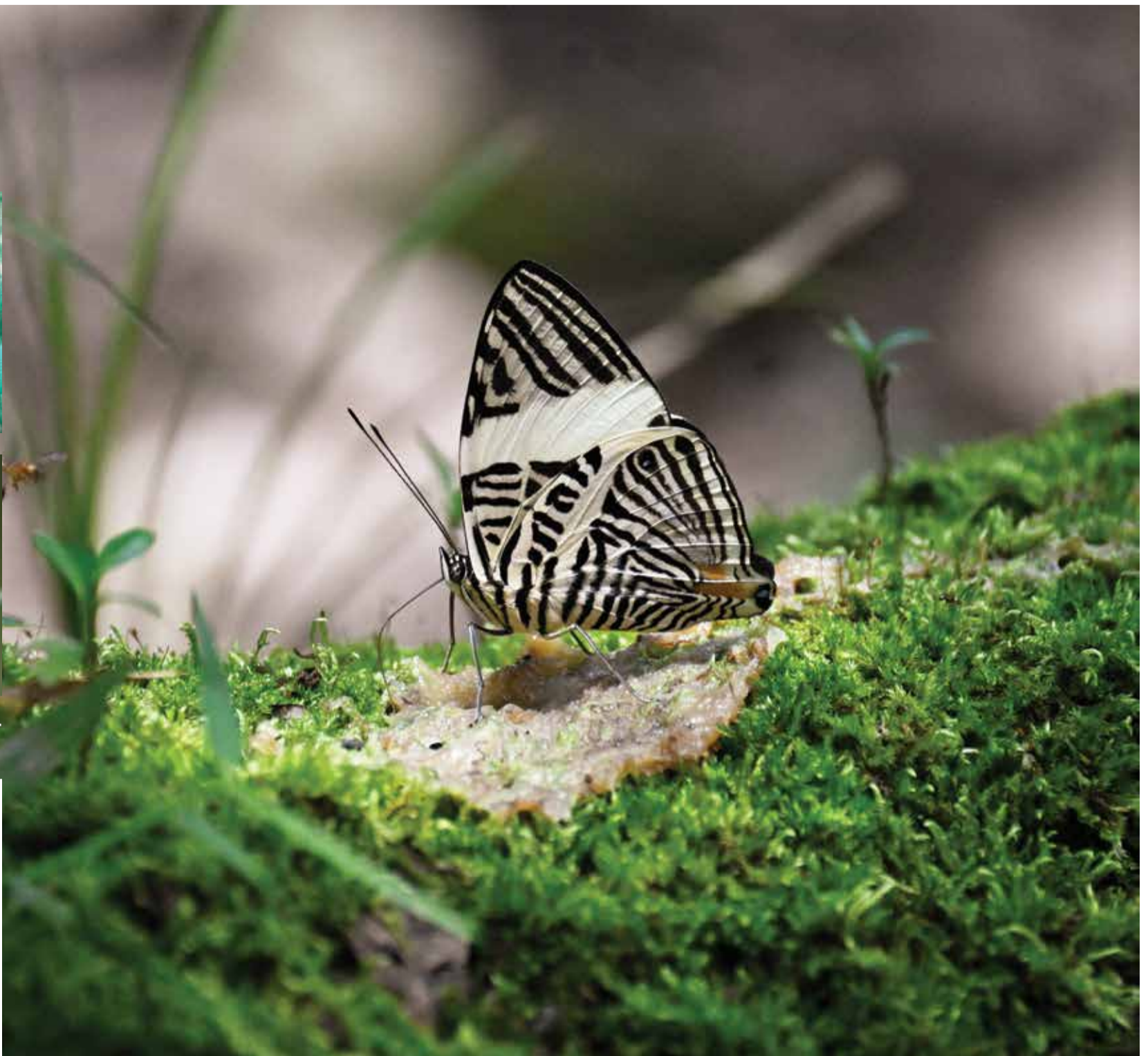


Butterflies are seen in the protected Amazon rainforest of Cuyabeno, Ecuador.

Bioindicators

Under expedition leader Elisa Levy, a team checks the nets for captured butterflies. They hold the insects delicately by their tiny abdomens and manipulate their legs and wings with tweezers. Some are bright red and blue, others have what resemble zebra stripes. Some are see-through, like glass. About three-quarters of fruit- or seed-producing crops for human consumption depend on pollinators, which provide a free service worth billions of dollars. The UN has warned that 40 percent of invertebrate pollinators -- particularly bees and butterflies -- risk global extinction, posing certain risks to humanity itself.

Butterflies, said Checa, are "very sensitive, even to small changes in the ecosystem" throughout their short lifespan from egg to caterpillar to reproductive adult. Levy explained that tropical plants -- unlike ones in regions with distinct seasons -- are not accustomed to extreme weather variations. If they do not adapt to a fast-changing climate, these plants could be lost, along with the butterfly larvae that feed on them. Ecuador, relatively small but extremely biodiverse, hosts about 4,000 butterfly species -- nearly as many as its much larger neighbors Peru and Colombia. Yet in places like the Yasuni National Park, which neighbors Cuyabeno, "the rate of species discovery is slower than the rate of extinction," said Checa. —AFP



Biologist Maria Fernanda Checa carries a box with embalmed butterflies.



Biologist Elisa Levy (right), Biology student Mikaela Pavon (second right) and rangers Nilo Riofrio (left) and Florencio Guatatoaca look at a butterfly trap.



A ranger inspects a butterfly.



Biologist Maria Fernanda Checa holds an embalmed butterfly.



Aerial view of Laguna Grande in the protected Amazon rainforest of Cuyabeno, Ecuador.



A butterfly is seen in the protected Amazon rainforest of Cuyabeno, Ecuador



A moth is seen in the protected Amazon rainforest.



Biologist Elisa Levy and her team analyze data from collected butterflies in the protected Amazon rainforest.



Butterflies are seen in the protected Amazon rainforest of Cuyabeno, Ecuador.



A ranger collects a butterfly.

Sports

Warner says mammoth IPL scores won't be replicated at World Cup

Narine rules out West Indies return for home T20 World Cup

NEW DELHI: Australia's David Warner says the T20 World Cup in the United States and West Indies will not see the same mammoth scores built on flat pitches in this year's Indian Premier League. The current edition of the world's richest cricket tournament has seen monumental totals, including Sunrisers Hyderabad twice breaking IPL records with 277 and 287. Warner's Delhi Capitals were at the receiving end of another run-fest when Hyderabad posted 266-7 at the weekend, courtesy of a 32-ball 89 by fellow Australian Travis Head. But veteran opening batsman Warner said the pitches in the West Indies will have something for the bowlers when T20's showpiece global event begins on June 1.

"They can be slower and they're gonna turn a bit," Warner, 37, told reporters, leaning on his experience in the Caribbean Premier League. "The wickets tend to get a little bit lower and slower."

Australian batters Head and up-and-coming Jake Fraser-McGurk have scored at strike-rates of 216 and up to pummel the opposition IPL bowlers.

Warner has not been at his best with 167 runs for the season so far at a strike-rate of 135.77, but he said the anchor role will be key in the West Indies.

"Even when we played there in the 2010 World Cup, the pitches weren't high-scoring," he said. "That's when you did need an anchor, someone like Mike Hussey came out and scored runs for us. He had to come and sort of knock it around."

Warner added: "It's gonna be completely different there. Add the natural elements as well. They're going to be predominantly day games, I think, because of the timings. So that plays a big factor."

Hyderabad, who won the IPL in 2016 under Warner, and their batsmen have redefined T20 scoring with their ability to hit nearly every ball out of the park. Twice this year the team have hit a match-record 22 sixes and at Delhi's Feroz Shah Kotla ground they hammered an IPL-record 125 runs in the first six overs. "The wickets have been very good. They've been very flat, very compact and very high-scoring," said Warner. "And when you've got small boundaries, you're going to see very high scores. "Back in the day there used to be turn and you couldn't get those scores," he added.

"Also, the lacquer on the ball is staying longer and hence it's not getting chewed up, and hence very little turn on offer." Meanwhile, Sunil Narine says the "door is closed" on his West Indies career after his sparkling IPL form prompted calls for him to come out of international retirement for their home T20 World Cup.

The bowling all-rounder has starred for Kolkata Knight Riders as an opening batsman, with 286 runs including a century and a half-ton in the current IPL.

He has taken nine wickets with his mystery spin and stifled opposition run flow with an economy of 7.10 in a high-scoring season. West Indies captain Royman Powell had urged the 35-year-old to make a comeback for the World Cup in June, which the West Indies will



KOLKATA: Kolkata Knight Riders' Sunil Narine plays a shot during the Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on April 21, 2024. — AFP

co-host with the United States. "I'm truly flattered and humbled that my performances recently have moved many people to publicly express their wish for me to come out of retirement and play in the upcoming T20 World Cup," Narine wrote on social media.

"I have made peace with that decision and whilst I never wish to disappoint, that door is now closed and

I will be supporting the guys who take the field in June for West Indies." Narine announced his international retirement in 2023, four years after he last played a T20 for the West Indies. He added in his post: "Guys who have worked hard for the past few months and deserve to show our wonderful fans that they are capable of winning another title, I wish you all the best." — AFP



Ali-Sane (R) and Awadh Al-Harby.

Ping Pong team returns from Jordan with four medals

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Disabled Ping Pong team arrived back home with four medals after participating in the 15th "Alwatani" club international championship in Amman, Jordan.

The team's bronze medals were won by Ali Al-Sane who won two medals while Bader Al-Nema and Awadh Al-Harby won one medal each. Head of the delegation Duaij Al-Hajiri said the team's participation was positive as far as performance and results are concerned, considering the competition with 90 outstanding players from 12 countries. He said "the players were able to compete for top places and win medals". He said the team will participate in another international tournament to be held in September in Saudi Arabia, adding that we will work on raising the technical readiness of players in hopes of winning the largest possible number of medals.

Al-Hajiri lauded the support of the Public Authority for Sport and its officials keenness to facilitate the participation of the team.

WADA reject cover-up charge, China labels reports 'fake news'

MIAMI: The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on Monday rejected accusations of a cover-up during their investigation into Chinese swimmers testing positive for a prescription heart drug and said they would take "whatever action necessary" in response to the allegations. Reports at the weekend that 23 Chinese swimmers tested positive for trimetazidine (TMZ) -- which can enhance performance—ahead of the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 led to a strong attack from the head of the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), Travis Tygart.

Tygart said that WADA and the Chinese anti-doping body had "secretly, until now, swept these positives under the carpet" and called the situation a "potential cover-up". The swimmers were allowed to compete after world governing bodies accepted China's findings that they had ingested it unwittingly from food during a meet in late 2020 and early 2021.

Several went on to win medals, including gold, and many are in line to compete at the Paris Olympics this summer. "What I can say right now is that at every stage, WADA followed the whole due process and diligently investigated every line of inquiry in this matter," WADA president Witold Banka told an online news conference. "If we had to do it over

Jaiswal ton powers Rajasthan to big IPL win

JAIPUR: Yashasvi Jaiswal struck form with an unbeaten 104 as Rajasthan Royals consolidated their position at the top of the IPL table with a nine-wicket thrashing of Mumbai Indians on Monday. Medium-pace bowler Sandeep Sharma took 5-18 to help restrict Mumbai to 179-9 after Yuzvendra Chahal claimed an IPL first of 200 wickets at Rajasthan's home ground in Jaipur.

Jaiswal, a left-handed opener whose previous best this season was 39, steered the team home in 18.4 overs in an innings interrupted by rain. "I really enjoyed from the start and I made sure I was watching the ball properly and playing proper cricketing shots," said Jaiswal.

"I'm trying to do what I am doing well, some days it comes good and some days it doesn't, I'm not thinking much." Rajasthan, who won the inaugural IPL in 2008 under late Australian hero Shane Warne, registered their seventh win in eight matches.

Jaiswal struck his second IPL hundred — both versus Mumbai — as he smashed nine fours and seven sixes in his 60-ball knock and put on 109 runs with

skipper Sanju Samson, who made 38. Sharma set up victory his first ever five-wicket haul in T20 cricket as he took the spotlight away from Chahal's remarkable feat and was named man of the match.

Chahal sent back Mohammad Nabi caught and bowled for 23 with his leg-spin as he celebrated the achievement with hugs from teammates. But Chahal was taken for 48 runs in four overs and Sharma stood out after he took three wickets in the 20th over including Tilak Varma, who top-scored with 65, and Tim David, who made three.

Chahal was substituted with Jos Buttler coming in as impact player and he began with two boundaries in the opening over by skipper Hardik Pandya, who played his landmark 100th IPL match. Pandya has endured a tough time this season after he replaced veteran Rohit Sharma as skipper only to be booed by the fans across venues.

"After the game, it's not the right time to go to the players, everyone is professional, they know their roles," said Pandya. "What we can do is learn from this game and the mistakes which we have made, rectify it and make sure that we don't repeat it."

The left-handed Jaiswal joined in the charge as he hit South African speedster Gerald Coetzee for a six and two fours to get the chase underway. Rajasthan raced to 61-0 in six overs when rain stopped play and action resumed after 45 minutes.

Piyush Chawla bowled Buttler for 35 after the break but Jaiswal stood firm and in the company of Samson made the chase a cakewalk. — AFP



JAIPUR: Rajasthan Royals' Yashasvi Jaiswal celebrates after scoring a century (100 runs) during the Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Rajasthan Royals and Mumbai Indians at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur. — AFP

again now, we would do exactly the same thing." Banka said "no credible evidence of wrongdoing was provided by any source who came forward on this file, so the threshold for WADA intelligence and investigations to open an investigation was not met."

One of the options that WADA had would have been to take the case to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) and challenge the Chinese anti-doping body (CHINADA) decision. WADA has made such moves in the past but Banka said that was not an option in this case. He said the body had "no credible way to disprove the contamination theory that was accepted by CHINADA, a position that was also accepted by World Aquatics." "In short, if we had taken such an appeal and challenged the contamination explanation, we would certainly have lost," he said.

WADA's general counsel, Ross Wenzel, said such an appeal's chances of success at CAS would have been "close to zero". Banka questioned Tygart's motives for his criticism of WADA. "I have to say that from our perspective, look(ing) at the comments on social media and the official statements from USADA, it is obvious that most of the comments are politically motivated and without any evidence that there was something, on our side, wrong," he said.

The WADA president said there was no question of his body being overly lenient on Chinese athletes. "It is worth pointing out that at the same time as our experts were reviewing this case in 2021, we are also vigorously pursuing justice in the case of another swimmer from China, Sun Yang," he said.

Three-time Olympic champion Sun is about to finish a second doping ban. His first, in 2014, was for

taking TMZ. Wenzel said WADA was going through comments made by USADA and others in media reports and a documentary by German broadcaster ARD with a "fine tooth comb" and that the body would "take whatever action is necessary".

'Fake news'

Beijing on Monday called reports about the case "fake news". "The relevant reports are fake news and not factual," said foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin. "I believe you will also have noted that the World Anti-Doping Agency has put out a very clear response," Wang said.

Wang said China's anti-doping center conducted an "in-depth and detailed" probe into the incident, which found the athletes had ingested the drug via contamination "without their knowledge." "The Chinese swimmers involved were neither at fault nor guilty of negligence, and their behavior did not constitute a doping violation," he told a regular press conference in Beijing.

"After an investigation, WADA affirmed the findings of the China anti-doping center," Wang said the Chinese government "consistently upholds a resolutely zero-tolerance position when it comes to doping," adding China upholds "fair competition" in sport.

Dr Rahul Gupta, US National Drug Control Policy director, told The New York Times on Monday that an independent investigation into the Chinese swim doping tests and WADA's handling of the matter was needed. "There must be rigorous, independent investigations to look into any incident of potential wrongdoing," he said. — AFP

News in brief

NHL Sabres re-hire Ruff as head coach

NEW YORK: Lindy Ruff, the fifth-winningest coach in NHL history, was hired Monday for a second stint as head coach of the Buffalo Sabres, who have not reached the playoffs in 13 seasons. The 64-year-old Canadian, whose 12 NHL seasons as a player included a decade with the Sabres, takes over from Don Granato, who was fired last week after the Sabres' NHL record playoff drought was extended. Ruff ranks second among active NHL coaches and fifth overall with 864 career regular-season triumphs as a coach for the Sabres, Dallas Stars and New Jersey Devils. "This is a team ready to take the next step," Ruff said. "I'm both humbled and honored to be trusted to help this team win now. It is not a job that I take lightly. "It's my goal to ensure that players believe in each other, play for each other and love being a Buffalo Sabre. There is no doubt that we all need to embrace the challenge ahead of us. The work starts today and I could not be more excited." Ruff first coached the Sabres from 1997 to 2013, guiding them to the 1999 Stanley Cup Finals where they lost to Dallas and seven other playoff berths before being fired 17 games into the 2012-13 season. — AFP

Ex-Falcons quarterback Ryan retires from NFL

WASHINGTON: Matt Ryan, the former Atlanta Falcons and Indianapolis Colts quarterback who was the 2016 NFL Most Valuable Player, officially announced his retirement on Monday. Ryan, who made the announcement in a video posted to social media by the Falcons, called his 16-year NFL career "a helluva ride." "I'm honored to retire as a Falcon," said Ryan, who was drafted third overall by the Falcons in 2008 and played for Atlanta through the 2021 season. "You have no control in this profession in where you start. I am so lucky that my start and my finish was here in Atlanta," he added. Ryan didn't play last season but signed a one-day deal with the Falcons in order to retire with the team. "Thank you to all the Falcons fans for your continued support," he said. "Through the highs and the lows, I always felt your energy and passion. I want you to know that every day I felt the responsibility to give you the best version of myself." He retires as the winningest quarterback in Falcons history. He took the team to the NFL playoffs six times and is one of two quarterbacks, along with Chris Chandler in 1998, to take the Falcons to the Super Bowl. — AFP

Crusaders call to sack coach Penney

CHRISTCHURCH: Canterbury Crusaders' chief executive rejected Tuesday "childish" calls to sack coach Rob Penney with the defending champions languishing at the bottom of the Super Rugby table. The New Zealand club have dominated Super Rugby over the past decade, winning seven titles in a row. But under new coach Penney, brought in this season to replace All Blacks-bound Scott Robertson, the Crusaders have only one win from their opening eight games. Chief executive Colin Mansbridge said that firing Penney, who was sacked from his previous Super Rugby coaching role with the New South Wales Waratahs in 2021, did not make sense. "When you think logically about it, what are your options? That's not a very clever option, no matter how bad things get," he told local broadcaster Newstalk ZB. Mansbridge said he accepted criticism from fans "because they are emotionally invested. "But from commentators, I think it's childish, frankly. — AFP

Inter Milan seal Scudetto in derby thriller with AC Milan

First league title as a manager for Simone Inzaghi



MILAN: Inter Milan players and team members celebrate winning the 2024 Scudetto championship title on April 22, 2024, following the Italian Serie A football match between AC Milan and Inter Milan at the San Siro Stadium in Milan. — AFP

MILAN: Inter Milan sealed the Serie A title on Monday after beating AC Milan 2-1 and creating an unassailable lead at the top of the league with their sixth straight derby victory. Goals from Francesco Acerbi and Marcus Thuram gave Inter a 17-point advantage over closest challengers Milan and secured their 20th league crown with five matches of the season remaining.

Inter last won Serie A in 2021, followed by AC Milan in 2022 and Napoli last year. For Simone Inzaghi it was the first league title as a manager and on a cold, soaking wet evening at the San Siro he strode proudly in front of a clutch of Inter's "away" fans in the 75,000 crowd as they roared in delight and fired fireworks from the stands at the final whistle.

Milan made a fight of it in the final moments after Fikayo Tomori pulled one back with 10 minutes remaining but Inter held out to kick off a title party after a stormy ending to the match which featured three red cards.

"I feel like crying because we worked so hard, we deserve this joy," said tearful captain Lautaro Martinez. "It's been wonderful but we have to keep going because we've already won a lot of trophies

and we want to win many more." Inter have become the second team to win 20 Italian league titles, and will have a second star stitched onto their jersey, after Juventus who are way out in the lead with 36 league crowns.

In style

Inzaghi's team did it style, laying waste to the rest of the division and becoming the first team to claim the title by winning the Milan derby and leaving his opposite number Pioli on the verge of the sack. "He was struggling 14 months ago according to the media and look what he has achieved since. I am happy here, I work well and I think the team has margin for improvement," insisted 2022 Scudetto winner Pioli. With outgoing champions Napoli crashing and burning early in the campaign and Milan falling away in the autumn Inter raced off into the distance at the turn of the year.

Juve looked like putting up a fight but they collapsed in February just as Inter strung together a run of 13 wins which also gave them hope of repeating a deep run in the Champions League. Inter failed in that mission as they were knocked out of

the Champions League by Atletico Madrid in mid-March, but by that time the domestic damage had already been done.

The future looks bright too as Inzaghi, Martinez and Italy midfielder Nicolò Barella are all set to renew their contracts while smart work in the transfer market and increased revenue have helped mitigate significant financial harm wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Piotr Zielinski and Mehdi Taremi will arrive from Napoli and Porto as free agents in the close season while big stars like Thuram should stay. "Crazy feeling, crazy game. We wanted to do it for our fans and we did it. It's my first league title and I'm very proud of it," said Thuram. The nominal away side on Monday, Inter were on their way to a title party in the 18th minute when Acerbi was left completely free to head home Benjamin Pavard's flick-on.

Stormy finish

Inter should have been two ahead seven minutes later through Lautaro Martinez who lost his footing when Federico Dimarco's perfect cut-back fell to the Argentina striker. And his strike partner Thuram

was equally at fault for Inter not increasing their lead seven minutes before the break as he shot a great chance just wide after being set up by Nicolò Barella.

But shortly after half-time Thuram made up for that miss with a brilliant individual goal which took his tally for his debut Serie A season to 12. France forward Thuram collected Alessandro Bastoni's long pass on the left and eventually cut inside before drilling home at Mike Maignan's near post.

Yann Sommer did well to keep out Theo Hernandez's well-struck shot as Milan fans let go a barrage of flares in the stands. The resulting smoke mixed with the persistent rain to create a misty atmosphere around the San Siro, and just as Inter looked set to see the match out Tomori made sure it would be a grandstand finish when he headed home on the rebound.

However instead of levelling the match Milan lost their heads, with both Theo Hernandez and Davide Calabria receiving straight red cards in stoppage time. Inter's Denzel Dumfries was also sent off in the closing minutes, but that will matter less to his team who danced and bounced in front of joyous fans. —AFP



MADRID: Serbian tennis player Novak Djokovic poses with the Laureus World Sportsman of the Year award during the 25th Laureus World Sports Awards gala in Madrid. — AFP photos



MADRID: Spanish footballer Aitana Bonmati poses with her Laureus World Sportswoman of the Year award during the 25th Laureus World Sports Awards gala in Madrid.

Djokovic, Bonmati crowned at Laureus Awards

MADRID: Novak Djokovic was named World Sportsman of the Year for a record-equalling fifth time at the Laureus Awards ceremony on Monday, while Spanish footballer Aitana Bonmati won individual and team awards.

Tennis great Djokovic, a record 24-time Grand Slam champion, equalled his former rival Roger Federer's tally at the prestigious ceremony in Madrid. Djokovic, 36, won three Grand Slams last year along with the ATP Finals.

"I am incredibly honoured to have won my fifth," said Djokovic. "I think back to 2012, when I won it for the first time as a 24-year-old. I am very proud to be here 12 years later, reflecting on a year that brought

me and my fans a lot of excitement and success."

Bonmati won the Sportsman of the Year award, becoming the first footballer to do so, and was also rewarded along with her Spain team-mates for winning the Women's World Cup last summer. La Roja earned the World Team of the Year award for winning the competition for the first time in their history.

"Our national team is a group like no other—our strength comes from every challenge we have faced, both on and off the field of play," said Bonmati, who also won the Champions League with her club Barcelona. Bonmati and her team-mates were praised for helping to combat sexism in the Spanish football federation by protesting after disgraced former president Luis Rubiales forcibly kissed player Jenni Hermoso.

England international Jude Bellingham was given the World Breakthrough of the Year award for his stunning start to life at Real Madrid, a day after he scored the Clasico winner against Barcelona. Bellingham is Los Blancos' top goalscorer with 21 goals across all competitions in his first season at the club. — AFP

Murray lifts Nuggets over Lakers, Knicks stun Philadelphia 76ers

LOS ANGELES: Jamal Murray fired the game-winner at the buzzer as the NBA champion Denver Nuggets erased a 20-point deficit to beat the Los Angeles Lakers 101-99 on Monday and take a 2-0 lead in their Western Conference playoff series.

The drama in Denver followed a scintillating comeback by the New York Knicks, who scored eight points in the final half-minute to stun the Philadelphia 76ers 104-101 for a 2-0 lead in their best-of-seven Eastern Conference set.

Nikola Jokic delivered a triple-double of 27 points, 20 rebounds and 10 assists for Denver and Murray broke out of his shooting doldrums, with 14 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter. The Nuggets notched their 10th straight win over LeBron James and the Lakers, a run of dominance that includes Denver's sweep in last season's Western Conference finals.

The Lakers, led by the 32 points and 11 rebounds of Anthony Davis, were in control for most of the night, pushing a 59-44 halftime lead to 20 points early in the third quarter. James scored 26 points and handed out 12 assists, but the Nuggets kept chipping away and tied it at 95-95 on Michael Porter Jr's basket with 1:15 remaining.

James put the Lakers up 99-97 with a driving layup but Murray tied it again with a step-back jumper with 30 seconds remaining. After James missed a three-point attempt, Murray rose over Davis and connected on a fall-away jumper with four-tenths of a second left.

"I told my teammates when I was struggling, I'm gonna look for y'all," Murray told broadcaster TNT. "And every single one of them told me to keep shooting, keep shooting. They just told me to stay aggressive and keep looking for it, keep hunting it. I had the ball with a few seconds left and I knew once I made a couple, the next one should go down as well."

"I just beat him to my spot and elevated, went

through my shot," he said. "I'm thankful enough that that was one of the few that went down for me."

Crushing defeat

It was a similar story in New York, where the Knicks took the lead over the Sixers for the first time in the third quarter. Philadelphia's NBA Most Valuable Player Joel Embiid was clearly hindered late by pain in his surgically repaired left knee, but the Sixers appeared to have regained control when Tyrese Maxey, fed by Embiid, made a three-pointer with 1:09 to play that put the Sixers up 100-96.

But Jalen Brunson's three-pointer with 27.4 seconds left pulled the Knicks within two points and after Josh Hart came up with a steal, Donte DiVincenzo capped a chaotic possession with a three-pointer—after missing his first attempt—to put the Knicks up 102-101.

OG Anunoby sealed it at an ecstatic Madison Square Garden with a pair of free throws. It was a crushing defeat for Philadelphia, who were up by five with less than a minute to play. The 76ers were furious that officials failed to respond to their calls for a time-out in the critical seconds, Embiid adding a jab over missed foul calls.

"That's unacceptable to put us in that situation," Embiid said. "Everybody on the floor was trying to call time-out... but they didn't give it to us. But forget about the time-out, there's a bunch of fouls... that's unacceptable." Embiid was dejected but defiant, telling reporters: "We should be 2-0." "We're going to win this series," he added. "We're the better team and we're going to keep fighting." Brunson finished with 24 points despite connecting on just eight of 29 shots from the field. He added eight rebounds and six assists and Hart added 21 points and 15 rebounds for New York.

The series shifts to Philadelphia on Thursday. Maxey, who skipped the Sixers' morning shoot-around because of illness, finished with 35 points, nine rebounds and 10 assists. Embiid added 34 points and 10 rebounds but missed a three-pointer at the final buzzer. In Cleveland, the Cavaliers cruised to a 96-86 victory over the Orlando Magic, their second straight wire-to-wire victory giving them a 2-0 series lead. — AFP