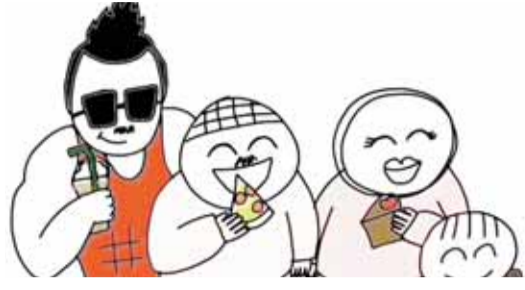




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16 Moutaraji strikes twice as Wydad become African champions



Kuwait's ambassador to US feted at Memorial Day parade

Sheikh Salem lauds American sacrifices in liberation of Kuwait



WASHINGTON: (Left) Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah poses with the Founder and President of the American Veterans Center James Roberts. (Right) Kuwait's float at the National Memorial Day Parade Society. — KUNA photos

WASHINGTON: Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah was honored Monday for his "steadfast and generous support" of the annual National Memorial Day parade since its inception in 2005, support that has been "crucial to the parade's survival and growth". James Roberts, Founder and President of the American Veterans Center, which hosts the annual National Memorial Day Parade, said during remarks at the parade that since the parade began in 2005, Kuwait has been one of the first sponsors "and they've been with us ever since".

Roberts added every year Sheikh Salem attends the parade, "expressing the gratitude that the people of Kuwait have to the people in the United States for the liberation of their country." He noted that "in the early years, survival of this parade was very, very tenuous from year to year and I frankly don't know whether we would be here today have it not been for the steadfast support of the people of Kuwait."

Continued on Page 6

News in brief

4 women appointed to Municipal Council

KUWAIT: The Cabinet ratified on Tuesday a decree appointing six members to the Municipal Council, including four women - Ismael Behbehani, Sharifa Al-Shalfan, Alyaa Al-Farsi, Abdullatif Al-Deai, Munira Al-Amir and Farah Al-Roumi. The Cabinet conveyed the decree to HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, wishing all members success in fulfilling their duties towards their country. — KUNA (See Page 3)

India growth slows on inflation, oil

NEW DELHI: India's growth slowed further in the first three months of 2022, the National Statistics Office said Tuesday, with inflation and higher oil prices denting a post-pandemic recovery. Asia's third-largest economy grew 4.1 percent, year-on-year, in the last quarter, NSO data showed. Annual growth for the 12 months to the end of March stood at 8.7 percent. Rising global commodity prices have sparked concern among policymakers, while the country of 1.4 billion people imports more than 80 percent of its crude oil. — AFP (See Page 8)

Real Housewives lands in Dubai

DUBAI: The Real Housewives reality television franchise is landing in Dubai, to mixed reactions among residents of the emirate long known as a playground for the rich. Six women, only one of whom is Emirati, star in Bravo TV's "The Real Housewives of Dubai", which premieres on Wednesday, amid criticism that the show does not reflect reality on the ground in the emirate. Much like the Real Housewives series, the show will follow the lives of affluent women in Dubai, offering an inside look into their glamorous — and often dramatic — world. (See Page 11)

i24NEWS opens Morocco bureaus

JERUSALEM: International news channel i24NEWS announced it had opened bureaus in Rabat and Casablanca Tuesday, the first Zionist entity-based outlet to do so in Morocco, following the restoration of ties in 2020. The channel, which broadcasts in Arabic, English and French from its headquarters in Jaffa, already has a Dubai bureau opened after the Zionist entity normalized relations with the UAE the same year. — AFP

Lebanon reelects Berri as speaker for seventh term

BEIRUT: Lebanese lawmakers reelected Nabih Berri as parliament speaker Tuesday for a seventh consecutive term, cementing his reputation as an immovable centerpiece of the country's political landscape. Berri's candidacy went largely unchallenged but the 84-year-old clinched only the bare minimum number of votes needed for a win - one of his lowest counts since he first rose to the helm of parliament 30 years ago.

Some lawmakers spoil their ballots by writing slo-

gans blaming the ruling class that Berri embodies for the successive crises that have hit Lebanon, from the 2020 Beirut port explosion to political assassinations and an ongoing economic meltdown. "I will put the insults behind me... and approach blank ballots with a blank heart," Berri said after his victory, in one of his trademark quips.

He said he would extend his hand to all lawmakers so that, together, they can streamline overdue reforms and facilitate the appointment of a prime minister and a new president. "The Lebanese, and the rest of world, are looking to you as a beacon of hope, possibly the only one," Berri told lawmakers. "We all live if Lebanon lives." Aged 84, the warlord-turned-politician is one of the longest-serving chiefs of any parliament in the world.

Continued on Page 6



BEIRUT: Lebanon's parliament speaker Nabih Berri presides over the first session of the newly-elected assembly at its headquarters on May 31, 2022. — AFP

Zionist entity signs UAE free trade deal

DUBAI: The Zionist entity signed a free trade deal with the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday, its first with an Arab country, building on their US-brokered normalization of diplomatic relations in 2020. The Zionist entity's ambassador to the oil-rich UAE,

Amir Hayek, tweeted "mabruk" - congratulations in Arabic - with a photo of Emirati and Zionist officials holding documents at a signing ceremony in Dubai.

The Emirati envoy to the Zionist entity, Mohamed Al-Khaja, hailed as an "unprecedented achievement" the deal that, according to the Zionist side, scraps customs duties on 96 percent of all products traded. "Businesses in both countries will benefit from faster access to markets and lower tariffs as our nations work together to increase trade, create jobs, promote new skills and deepen cooperation," Khaja tweeted.

The 2020 deal was part of the US-brokered

Abraham Accords that also saw the Zionist entity establish diplomatic ties with Bahrain and Morocco. Two-way trade between the Zionist entity and the UAE last year totaled some \$900 million, according to Zionist figures. UAE-Zionist Business Council president Dorian Barak predicted that trade would soon multiply between the regional powerhouse economies.

"UAE-(Zionist) trade will exceed \$2 billion in 2022, rising to around \$5 billion in five years, bolstered by collaboration in renewables, consumer goods, tourism and the life sciences sectors," he

Continued on Page 6

New cache of ancient artifacts found in Egypt

SAQQARA, Egypt: Egypt on Monday unveiled a cache of sarcophagi and bronze statuettes - including one of pioneering architect Imhotep - at the Saqqara archaeological site south of Cairo. They were the latest in a series of discoveries made in the area. Saqqara is a vast necropolis of the ancient Egyptian capital Memphis, a UNESCO World Heritage site home to more than a dozen pyramids, animal burial sites and ancient Coptic Christian monasteries.

Among the 150 bronze statuettes unearthed in the latest findings is one of Imhotep, who "revolutionized architecture" in the ancient world, Mostafa Waziri, head of Egypt's Supreme

Council of Antiquities, told reporters. Imhotep, who lived in the third millennium BC, built the Djoser step pyramid, one of the earliest in ancient Egypt. He later became the god of medicine.

Waziri revealed a goal for the archaeological mission, which has so far undertaken four seasons of excavations in the area: "To find the tomb of Imhotep." Other unearthed statuettes depict various gods and goddesses including Bastet, Anubis, Osiris, Amunmeen, Isis, Nefertum and Hathor, according to a statement from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

The mission also unveiled "250 wooden sarcophagi with mummies inside, dating back to the Late Period," around the fifth century BC, Waziri said. Inside one sarcophagus, the team found an untouched and sealed papyrus, he said. It has been transferred to the laboratory of the Egyptian Museum in central Cairo for full restoration and study, Waziri said.

Continued on Page 6



SAQQARA, Egypt: Statuettes depicting Egyptian goddesses Isis and Nephthys and other sarcophaguses found in a cache dating to the Egyptian Late Period are displayed after their discovery at the Bubastian cemetery at the Saqqara necropolis on May 30, 2022. — AFP

Local

Kuwaiti Nutritionist sheds light on bad eating habits through art

Lack of entertainment places in Kuwait leads people to restaurants

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Social media is a rich source for boosting health awareness to reach out to a large number of people. Nutritionist Shaikhah Al-Mesbah decided to raise awareness about bad eating habits through Instagram, where she discusses diet culture and clarifies common misconceptions about weight loss through drawings and animated videos. "There are a lot of cultural bad eating habits and practices in the Kuwaiti society, which is why I created my account 'Diet Nerd' to discuss them and deliver a message on how to avoid them in the simplest way - which is through drawings," Mesbah told Kuwait Times.

Shaikhah got inspired by watching educational videos by Khan Academy. "During my studies in the US, I used to watch videos of Khan Academy, which explain scientific information through visual drawings. When I came to Kuwait, I wanted to do something different and unique, so I had the idea of 'Diet Nerd', which launched in 2019. I wanted to explain things by drawings to get people's attention, because most people are visual learners and can understand the delivered information better," she said.

Lack of willpower is not always the reason behind overeating and gaining weight. According to the nutritionist, bad habits people have developed without realizing can lead to a lot of weight gain. "My drawings are about a Kuwaiti traditional family, where Jassim is the son, Bu Jassim the father, and Um Jassim the mother, who suffer from bad eating habits that people have in a society, like eat-



Nutritionist Shaikhah Al-Mesbah

ing a lot of food from restaurants and consuming sweets. The kid Jassim always follows different diet trends," she said.

Eating 'for fun'

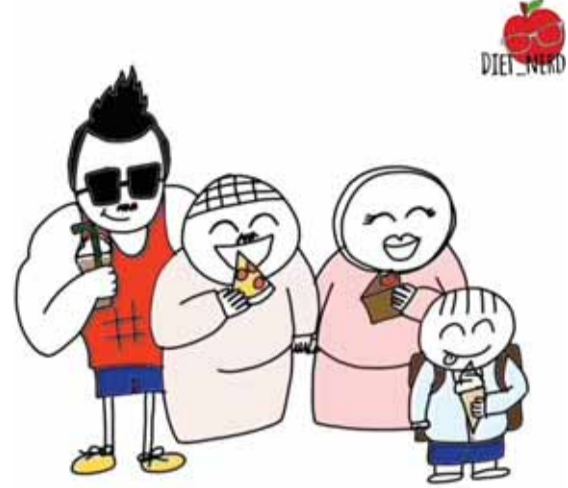
Mesbah explains the mistakes people make in the Kuwaiti society and tries to help them change and fix their habits, explaining there are a lot of bad eating habits in Kuwait, where restaurants are everywhere and people eat for fun due to not having entertainment places. "The environment in our culture is bad, wherein each house there is a table always full of sweets and pastries, along with gatherings that some people hold daily while serving unhealthy food. In addition to the hospitality, the more food you provide, the more generous you look. We have a habit to force people to eat, or they will be upset," she told Kuwait Times.

Mesbah pointed out that unhealthy food always leads to diseases, and people can control such an environment by telling others what they're going through. "I have a patient who has diabetes. She is struggling with people who offer her sweets. I told her to tell them about her case, otherwise she will be taking medications her entire life. The gathering is for a short period of time, but your health is for your whole life. When it comes to eating, many of us have developed bad habits. Even if you've had the same eating pattern for years, it's not too late to make improvements," she said.

Regarding trendy diets, Mesbah said: "We have diet trends every day. As a nutritionist, I cannot keep up with them. Most diets promise you to lose weight in a short time, but if your diet is not balanced and you consume foods that don't provide enough nutritional value, your nutrient levels will start to decline. There are many dangers of nutrient deficiency."

More harm than good

She added that many diets promote unhealthy eating habits and foster a negative relationship with food and in the long run, they can do more harm than good when it comes to your health. "I like people to follow a balanced diet, not miss any food groups and involve a variety of food options. Also, people must consult a doctor before following any diet. A balanced diet is a vital part of maintaining



The Jassim family.



"This is okay because my coffee is black."



"It's okay, those are 'diet chips'".



"I do not have time for exercise, but have time for Turkish soap operas."

good health and fuels the body's needs to work effectively. Without balanced nutrition, the body is more prone to illnesses," Mesbah said.

Mesbah's content on Instagram has received positive reactions and most of her followers have expressed their appreciation for showing them the right way in a fun, animated way. Her videos are also used by teachers to educate students and by other nutritionists to spread awareness among their patients.

Kuwait has witnessed a steady rise in the preva-

lence of obesity among children and adults. According to a Global Obesity Observatory study in 2022, Kuwait is the first in the Arab world and the 14th in the world in terms of obesity, with prevalence among adults reaching 34.28 percent in males and 47.08 percent in females, in addition to 25.35 percent in boys and 20.20 percent in girls. Obesity rates in Kuwait are attributed in particular to the unhealthy lifestyle that many people follow in the country, whether in terms of the quality of food they eat or the lack of exercise.

تری صونفیش!!



"Eating sweets like it's popcorn."

Social affairs ministry team to support food security

KUWAIT: Social Affairs Ministry Undersecretary Abdelaziz Shuaib said a team was formed at the ministry to support the food security system in the country. According to the decision issued by the ministry, the team was placed under the chairmanship of the undersecretary and includes the assistant undersecretary for cooperation affairs as deputy chairman and director of cooperative supervision and inspection, representatives from competition protection, representatives from the customs department and repre-



Abdelaziz Shuaib

sentatives from the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources as members. About the team's duties, Shuaib said it will monitor food reserves at cooperatives in coordination with government authorities and propose all possible arrangements to maintain reserves in order to achieve food security in the country, in addition to approve a quick documentary cycle to make possible for cooperative suppliers to get their financial dues faster. Shuaib said the ministry is keen on following the food situation in the country and take the necessary measures to protect it.

erupted in farms in Al-Sulaibiya. Kuwait Fire Force said in a statement that the blazes erupted among trees and agricultural crops, while strong winds resulted in scattering the flames to several spots in the farming area. However, the firemen contained the flames and extinguished the fire that caused no injuries, KFF added. Security forces took part in the efforts and medics were also present at the scene, it noted, adding that an investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire. —KUNA

Firemen put out Sulaibiya farms' blaze

KUWAIT: Seven fire squads backed by the fire brigade of the National Guard scrambled into action early on Tuesday to put out fire that



Kuwait's Family Affairs Council supports youth empowerment

AMMAN: The Secretary General of Kuwait Supreme Council for Family Affairs Khaled bin Shalfoot stressed on Monday Kuwait's keenness in the enabling and empowering youths in their respective societies. This came in remarks to the press on the sidelines of his participation in the First Arab Forum for Equality 2022 (AFE-2022), organized by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), themed "Towards inclusive youth employment in the Arab region". Kuwait is keen in protecting the family and thus the political leadership in the country issued a decree to establish the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, he affirmed.

Meanwhile, ESCWA Executive Secretary Rola Dashti said in her opening speech at the venue that the Arab region is one of the most parts of the world suffering from inequality, and of the great gap between poor and rich people. There are segments in the society facing are deprived from proper opportunities, including women, youth, people with disabilities, and displaced people due to armed conflicts and foreign occupations, she said. Unemployment is widely spread between youth, and is considered the highest in world with 26 percent, she said.



AMMAN: The Secretary General of Kuwait Supreme Council for Family Affairs Khaled bin Shalfoot attends the forum. — KUNA

The two-day forum participants looked into practical policies to reach solutions for inequality, as well as supporting the implementations of various initiatives serving that matter. The forum is held on May 30-31 2022 in Amman, Jordan. It was organized by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in collaboration with the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies hosted by the NYU Center on International Cooperation. The forum aimed to create a multi-stakeholder dialogue with global and Arab leaders and experts to discuss practical solutions to alleviate inequality in the region through increased youth participation in the labor market, and to examine the necessary frameworks to address structural barriers specific to the region. The Forum concluded with the launch of practical regional initiatives that will contribute to reducing inequality in the Arab region. —KUNA

Ministry checks chicken supplies



KUWAIT: Commerce and Industry Ministry continued inspection tours to check supplies of frozen chicken subsidized food branches (tamween) around Kuwait. The ministry said it is keen on supplying different types of chick-



en to allow the consumer to choose from the available types. The Ministry said it will continue to monitor the availability of chicken and basic foods through efforts by concerned departments.

Local

Kuwait follows up on global monkeypox developments

Cabinet ratifies decree on appointing Municipal Council members

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Cabinet on Tuesday said that the country has not seen any cases of monkeypox as of Tuesday, the Cabinet said, adding that stringent precautions are already in place to keep the illness at bay. Holding an extraordinary meeting to discuss the virus, Health Minister Dr Khaled Al-Saeed analyzed global statistics on the spread of monkeypox, which show that the virus has appeared in a growing number of countries. On national commitments towards Kuwait's food security, the Cabinet reviewed the objectives of an ad hoc ministerial committee tasked with looking into the matter, which include efforts to ensure the adequate availability of main commodities. The Cabinet went on to wish the newly elected Municipal Council success as the body seeks to bring the wishes and aspirations of Kuwaitis to fruition.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet ratified on Tuesday, in an extraordinary meeting at Seif Palace headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, a decree naming several members to be appointed to the Municipal Council. The official Twitter account of the Council of Ministers announced the names



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah (center) chairs the Cabinet's meeting on Tuesday. —KUNA

of the appointed members as follows: Ismael Bahbahani, Sharifa Al-Shalfan, Alyaa Al-Farsi, Abdullatif Al-Deai, Munira Al-Amir and Farah Al-Roumi. It added that the decree was con-

veyed to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, wishing all members success in fulfilling their duties towards their country. — KUNA

Kuwait airport 2nd worst in on-time performance, service quality, shops

KUWAIT: A travel website has ranked Kuwait's airport as the second worst worldwide in terms of on-time performance, service quality, and food and shops. AirHelp, a German-based website that releases an annual ranking of the world's major airports, bases its assessment on the three aforementioned metrics. Eight of the 10 worst airports in the world on this year's list are located in Europe.

"Kuwait International Airport served over 15 million people in 2019," Business Insider wrote in a report covering the index's results. "It also has a military airbase that is used by the Kuwait Air Force." "The airport has a 2/10 rating on Skytrax, with some passengers complaining about a horrible smell in the airport and 'unprofessional and slow boarding,'" it further pointed out.

The list ranks Lisbon Portela Airport in Portugal as the world's worst, saying that passengers have often complained about the long lines at immigra-



KUWAIT: This file photo shows people leaving Kuwait International Airport. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

tion, with some waiting for up to six hours to get through passport control. "The airport has an average rating of 3/10 on Skytrax, with one user saying it is 'the worst airport we have ever traveled from,'" the report reads.

Eindhoven Airport (Netherlands) is third on the list, followed by Henri Coanda International Airport (Romania), Malta International Airport (Malta),

Manchester Airport (United Kingdom), Paris Orly Airport (France), Porto Airport (Portugal), Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport (Canada) and London Gatwick Airport (United Kingdom).

DGCA gains ISO 9001 certificate for second time

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) gained the ISO 9001 certificate for aviation data monitoring division, at the air navigation sector affiliated to DGCA. This is the second time for DGCA to win this certificate for organizing quality systems, after implementing International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) requirement. DGCA added in a statement to the press on Tuesday. The data monitoring division

conducted wide updates of its devices and systems to organize flight plans and navigational maps provided to users by airlines' companies and aircraft operators by implementing a qualification plan that comes in accordance with quality department criteria, it said. DGCA vowed to continue developing the quality management department to guarantee and ensure the safety, regularity and efficiency of international air navigation in the country, it added. ISO 9001 Certified means an organization has met the requirements in ISO 9001, which defines an ISO 9001 Quality Management System (QMS). ISO 9001 evaluates whether your Quality Management System is appropriate and effective, while forcing you to identify and implement improvements. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Palm trees lined up on the side of a main road in Kuwait in this file photo. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

EPA acts to reduce dust storms in Kuwait

KUWAIT: The Environment Public Authority is coordinating with various organizations and authorities to minimize dust storms in Kuwait. Director General of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) and Chairman of the Board of Directors Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Hamoud Al-Sabah affirmed keenness on diminishing dust

storms via afforestation. Sheikh Abdullah affirmed in a workshop organized by EPA on Monday that the authority is cooperating with several bodies to develop a new system and find environmentally friendly solutions to stabilize the soil and reduce sprawling dust. He added that EPA's personnel are also working with the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources to plant trees in various areas to reduce dust occurring in Kuwait. Sheikh Abdullah noted that regarding the seasonal fish deaths in Kuwait Bay caused by oxygen depletion in the water, EPA is addressing the issue alongside the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Finance by developing ways for water treatment. — KUNA

News in brief

Crown Prince receives Sheikh Nasser, oil minister

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Tuesday His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. He also hosted Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dr Mohammad Abdulatif Al-Fares.

Speaker to Brussels for visa exemption vote

KUWAIT: Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem is leading a delegation of lawmakers for talks in Brussels with their European Union (EU) counterparts, aiming to finalize a deal on allowing Kuwaitis visa-free travel to Schengen countries. The lawmakers will join a vote in the Belgian capital along with members of the EU's legislative arm on whether to greenlight the move. The European Commission said last month that it would include Kuwait in its list of nations whose citizens are granted visa-free travel to the EU's Schengen zone.

NCCAL mourns Aziza Al-Bassam

KUWAIT: The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) mourned Monday Aziza Al-Bassam, who had an outstanding role in empowering women in cultural, social and educational actions. The deceased was the founder of the first public library for women in the State of Kuwait. In a press statement, Acting NCCAL secretary general Issa Al-Ansari pointed to Al-Bassam's books and documentation of the crimes of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as well as the establishment of libraries locally. She also had an active role in organizing the women's conference by the Women's Cultural and Social Society in 1975.

On the occasion of the



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Kuwait's April crude oil exports to Japan up 7.6%

TOKYO: Kuwait's crude oil exports to Japan in April increased 7.6 percent from a year earlier to 6.61 million barrels, or 220,000 barrels per day (bpd), up for the second straight month, government data showed Tuesday. Kuwait overtook Qatar to become Japan's third-biggest oil provider last month, supplying 7.6 percent of the Asian nation's total crude imports, the Japanese Natural Resources and Energy Agency said in a preliminary report. Japan's overall imports of crude oil grew 9.9 percent year-on-year to 2.92 million bpd, up for the ninth month in a row. Shipments from the Middle East accounted for 93.7 percent of the total, up 1.9 percentage points from the year before. Saudi Arabia returned to be Japan's No.1 oil supplier, with imports from the kingdom surging 43.9 percent from a year earlier to 1.28 million bpd, followed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with 934,000 bpd, down 10.5 percent. Qatar ranked fourth with 207,000 bpd and Russia fifth with 84,000 bpd, respectively. Japan is the world's-third biggest oil consumer after China and the US. — KUNA



Kuwait oil traded at \$121.62 pb

KUWAIT: Kuwait oil price edged a single cent upward reaching \$121.62 per barrel on Monday against \$121.61 pb Friday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation said on Tuesday. In international markets, forward contracts of the Brent crude rose by \$2.24 to settle at \$121.67 pb and identical deals of the intermediate West Texas crude climbed by \$1.99 to reach \$117.06 pb. Meanwhile, the price of the OPEC crudes went up by \$1.17 to settle at \$120.01 per barrel on Monday as opposed to \$118.84 pb last Friday, said the international oil cartel on Tuesday. According to the OPEC bulletin, the average oil price of the cartel basket in 2021 was at \$69.89 per barrel. The OPEC Reference Basket of Crudes (ORB) is made up of the following: Saharan Blend (Algeria), Girassol (Angola), Djeno (Congo), Zafiro (Equatorial Guinea), Rabi Light (Gabon), Iran Heavy (Islamic Republic of Iran), Basra Light (Iraq), Kuwait Export (Kuwait), Es Sider (Libya), Bonny Light (Nigeria), Arab Light (Saudi Arabia), Murban (UAE) and Meruy (Venezuela). — KUNA

Gulf Bank announces winners of 'Datathon' competition

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank successfully wrapped up the first "Datathon" competition for digital data and analytic enthusiasts in Kuwait. The event, which took place over two days, witnessed a large number of participants, including data specialists, university students and new employees who are interested in working in the fields of data and analytics.

The panel, consisting of professors from Kuwait University and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, announced the winning teams of this year's competition. The winning team in the "Data Modeling and Visualization" category received a prize of KD 1,000, with the winners in the "Data Visualization" and "Digital Analytics" categories taking home prizes of KD 500 each.

The Datathon's activities also included three training workshops that were broadcast live on YouTube. The workshops promoted a culture of data science and analytics, and were held under the supervision of three specialists from Gulf Bank: Mai Al-Owaish, Fouzan Al-Sumait and Haider Al-Mohri.

In honor of a successful launch of the Datathon, the Chief Data and Innovation Officer at Gulf Bank, Mai Al-Owaish, said: "We are very pleased to have witnessed such a large turnout at this year's Datathon, which attracted a wide variety of participants over the age of 18. The positive turnout not only demonstrates a

widespread interest in the data analytics field, but also is encouraging us to consider organizing the competition annually to build on this year's momentum and success. We are so proud to have seen such a diverse audience in the first edition, including a large number of local youth and women."

She added that Gulf Bank also chose the winning student teams based on who achieved the highest points in the field of data analysis and visualization. The winning teams will be receiving internships in the Bank's data and innovation unit during the summer, applying what they learned in the competition in real life, as part of the Bank's efforts to prepare local youth for the labor market. This year's winning students are: Dhaha Al-Yaseen, Arwa Al-Qatami, Fajer Al-Ahmad, Haider Hajieh, and Afnan Al-Ansari.

Owaish commented that the Datathon is set to promote a culture of data analytics in the local digital community, especially among data analysts, application developers, e-commerce professionals, web authors, and all types of digital content creators.

She also noted that Gulf Bank continues to contribute to Kuwait's digital transformation and Kuwait Vision 2035 through an active commitment to developing a local tech-savvy community - all as part of the Bank's ongoing digital transformation strategy. It is worth noting

that Gulf Bank's Datathon marks one of the first competitions for digital data enthusiasts in the country.

She stated that the Datathon is one of several initiatives aimed at providing society with a new set of skills and opportunities, helping future generations use data to achieve the Bank's sustainable development goals, strengthen the economy, and contribute to society's collective benefit. Owaish indicated that global demand for big data analysis tools and technology is increasing, especially from growing companies in the region. Data analysis tools assist businesses in running their operations effectively, increasing revenues, growth and profit - a phenomenon which has naturally led to a rise in demand for professionals with skills in big data analysis.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust sustainability program at the community, economic, and environmental levels through sustainability initiatives that are strategically selected to benefit both the country and the Bank. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Kuwait City's skyline is seen from the Arabian Gulf's beach in this file photo. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Zain awards most innovative teams of Company Program competition

Company part of the judges panel in INJAZ's annual event

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, awarded HAQIBATI (universities) and KHUTWA (high schools) teams with the Most Innovative Product award at the 16th annual INJAZ Company Program competition. The event, sponsored by Zain, was organized by INJAZ Kuwait with wide participation of students from across the nation's high schools and universities.

This year, the competition was organized in-person once again after being held virtually the past two years due to the pandemic. The event was hosted at Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), and Zain took part in the judges panel, which consisted of businesspeople and executives from private sector companies. The panel reviewed student presentations and selected the winners based on a number of certified academic standards.

INJAZ's annual Company Program provides university and high school students in Kuwait with a great training opportunity to learn how to establish and run their own real companies. Corporate volunteers from across the Kuwaiti private sector guide students through the most essential business skills, like developing a business idea, conducting feasibility studies, selling stocks, working as management teams, devising business plans, producing and selling products/services, and much more.

Zain's annual participation in this competition comes in line with the company's strategic partnership as an Innovation Partner of INJAZ Kuwait, and in line with its Corporate Sustainability and Innovation strategy, which aims at contributing to the development of the youth and education sectors. Zain continues its strategic partnership with INJAZ, through which the company seeks to support and inspire youth from across Kuwait's universities and schools. Through their partnership, Zain and INJAZ host a number of educational initiatives all year long to foster the energies of Kuwait's youth and support them to further develop and prosper.

INJAZ Kuwait was founded in 2005, as a non-profit, non-governmental organization, driven by Kuwait's private sector. Through strategic partnerships with Kuwait's business and education sectors, and with the help of qualified and dedicated volunteers, INJAZ delivers educational programs on entrepreneurial and leadership skills aimed at inspiring and educating future



KUWAIT: Zain awards one of the winning teams.



Zain takes part in the judges' panel.

generations. INJAZ Kuwait is operated by INJAZ Al-Arab. Since 2005, INJAZ-Kuwait reached over 70,000 students through over 6,000 volunteers at over 200

schools and universities in Kuwait to provide students with knowledge and experience that will assist them in their personal and career development.



KUWAIT: An educational workshop on Google Analytics by Mai Al-Owaish.



The Orientation day's audience.



Denmark votes on scrapping EU defence opt-out

China makes second largest Taiwan defence zone incursion

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BRUSSELS: European Council president Charles Michel (R) and Commission president Ursula von der Leyen address the closing press conference of an European Union summit on Ukraine, defence and energy, in Brussels on May 31, 2022. The 27-nation bloc leaders agreed to a sixth package of sanctions that will see the majority of Russian oil stopped, but exempted supplies by pipeline in a concession to hold-out Hungary. — AFP

Key Ukraine city 'divided in half'

Two Russian soldiers sentenced to more than 11 years in jail each

Trudeau announces handgun 'freeze'

OTTAWA, Canada: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced Monday a proposed freeze on handgun ownership in Canada that would effectively ban their importation and sale, following recent mass shootings in the United States. The bill must still be passed by Parliament, with the ruling Liberals holding only a minority of seats.

"We're introducing legislation to implement a national freeze on handgun ownership," Trudeau told a news conference, joined by dozens of families and friends of victims of gun violence. "What this means is that it will no longer be possible to buy, sell, transfer or import handguns anywhere in Canada," he said. "In other words, we're capping the market for handguns."



Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Days after Canada's worst mass shooting left 23 dead in rural Nova Scotia in April 2020, the government banned 1,500 types of military-grade or assault-style firearms. But Trudeau acknowledged Monday that gun violence continues to rise. The government statistical agency reported last week that firearms-related violent crimes account for less than three percent of all violent crimes in Canada. But since 2009 the per capita rate of guns being pointed at someone has nearly tripled, while the rate at which a gun was fired with an intent to kill or wound is up five-fold.

Almost two-thirds of gun crimes in urban areas involved handguns. Police often point to smuggling from the United States—which is reeling from recent shootings at a school in Texas and at a supermarket in New York state—as the main source of handguns. Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino estimated there are about one million handguns in this country-up significantly from a decade ago.

"People should be free to go to the supermarket, their school or their place of worship without fear," Trudeau said. "People should be free to go to the park or to a birthday party without worrying about what might happen from a stray bullet. "Gun violence is a complex problem," he said. "But at the end of the day, the math is really quite simple: The fewer the guns in our communities, the safer everyone will be." New Democratic public safety critic, MP Alistair MacGregor, indicated his party would be willing to work with the Liberals to get the proposed law passed.—AFP

KYIV: Russian forces have seized control of half of eastern Ukraine's key city of Severodonetsk, a senior official said Tuesday, hours after EU leaders struck a watered-down deal to ban more than two-thirds of Moscow's oil imports. In central Ukraine, two Russian soldiers were sentenced to more than 11 years in jail each after a court found them guilty of firing artillery at civilian areas soon after Moscow's February 24 invasion.



EU oil embargo agreed

Severodonetsk is one of several industrial hubs that lie on Russia's path to capturing the Donbas's Lugansk region, where Moscow has shifted the bulk of its firepower since failing to capture Kyiv in the war's early stages. "Unfortunately, the front line divides the city in half. But the city is still defending itself, the city is still Ukrainian, our soldiers are defending it," said Oleksandr Stryuk, head of Severodonetsk's military and civil administration. Lugansk regional governor Sergiy Gaiday earlier described the situation as "extremely complicated", conceding that parts of the city were controlled by Russian forces. But as Russian troops edged closer to the Severodonetsk city centre, EU leaders at a summit in Brussels were tightening the economic screws on Moscow.

A compromise oil embargo deal reached

late Monday, meant to punish Russia for its invasion, cuts "a huge source of financing for its war machine," European Council chief Charles Michel tweeted. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, one of the key figures who blocked an agreement by the 27-nation bloc, hailed the deal for preserving Budapest's supply of cheap crude from Moscow. "Families can sleep peacefully tonight, we kept out the most hair-raising idea," Orban, whose country borders war-torn Ukraine to the west, said in a video message.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had urged Europe to forge their "independence" from Russian energy. The situation on the eastern front line in Donbas has become increasingly desperate, with Ukrainian towns facing near constant shelling by Russian forces. "We see some cars driving around with Ukrainian flags so we figure that means we are still part of Ukraine," said Yevgen Onyshchenko, a 42-year-old plumber in a powerless apartment in Severodonetsk's twin city Lysychansk. "But otherwise, we are in the dark." A French journalist, Frederic Leclerc-Imhoff, was killed while covering civilian evacuations in the area on Monday. An overnight rocket attack killed at least three people and wounded six in the city of Slovyansk, Donetsk regional governor Pavlo Kirilenko said Tuesday on Telegram. "I repeat once again that there are no safe places in the Donetsk region, so I call again: evacuate-save your lives," he said. In the southern region of Kherson, the country's military leadership said Ukrainian forces have pushed back, as prosecutors pressed ahead with prosecutions of captured Russian soldiers.—AFP

All 22 bodies retrieved from Nepal plane crash

POKHARA, Nepal: Nepali rescuers have retrieved all 22 bodies from a plane that crashed in the Himalayas, authorities said Tuesday. Air traffic control lost contact with the Twin Otter shortly after it took off from Pokhara in western Nepal on Sunday morning and headed for Jomsom, a popular trekking destination.

Its wreckage was found a day later, strewn across a mountainside at an altitude of around 14,500 feet (4,400 metres). "All 22 bodies have been carried to Kathmandu by Nepal Army's (Mi-17) helicopter," Tribhuvan International Airport spokesman Teknath Sitoula told AFP. "After postmortem, they will hand over the dead bodies to their family members." About 60 people were involved in



KATHMANDU: Nepal's security personnel carry the bodies of victims of a crash of a Twin Otter aircraft operated by Tara Air that crashed earlier in the Himalayas with 22 people on board, brought to Kathmandu on an army helicopter at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu. — AFP

French ex-chambermaid Keke runs for MP after labour battle

PARIS: Former chambermaid Rachel Keke took on her employers and won a gruelling battle for better working conditions in the Paris hotel where she cleaned. Now she's running to be an MP. Keke, 48, will run on a ticket for a new left-wing alliance in France's parliamentary polls in June.

She faces French President Emmanuel Macron's former sports minister, Roxana Maracineanu, in the fight for a seat in the southeastern Paris suburbs. "I will beat her. She doesn't live here. She's not from the working-class suburbs," Keke told AFP as she campaigned in the district of Chevilly-Larue on the outskirts of the capital.

"What are you coming here for?," Keke said, as if addressing her rival. "We are the ones who live in deprived areas and do key jobs. We are the ones who are held in contempt and are exploited. So let us defend ourselves in parliament." Centrist Macron is seeking a legislative majority to push through his domestic agenda following his re-election in April. The left-wing alliance, made up of new faces such as Keke's, threatens to block his programme.

Keke was one of around 20 chambermaids-most originally from sub-Saharan Africa-who defied their employers at an Ibis hotel in northwestern Paris to demand better pay and working conditions. Nearly two years later, in May

2021, the fight against global hotel giant Accor, which owns the Ibis brand, ended in victory. They won a pay increase of between 250 and 500 euros (\$270-540) per month.



PARIS: Nupes leader Jean-Luc Melenchon of the LFI leftist party delivers a speech during the launching of the Parliament of the left-wing electoral coalition Nouvelle Union Populaire Ecologique et Sociale (New Popular Ecological and Social Union - Nupes) in Paris. — AFP

MPs from the far-left France Unbowed (LFI) party supported the women throughout the campaign, leading Keke to campaign for them during the presidential election. But running for MP was not part of her plans, until local LFI official Hadi Issahane suggested it to her. "We're not far from her being a symbol of our political struggle-quite literally. She naturally embodies it," Issahane told AFP.—AFP

CONSUMER PROTECTION DEPARTMENT

RECALL INFORMATION

ML (164 Platform) GL (164 Platform) R-Class (251 Platform) R-Class (251 Platform)

Mercedes-Benz
Model: ML/GL (164 Platform) / R-Class (251 Platform)
Model year: 2004 - 2016

RECALL REASON

Mercedes-Benz AG has determined that on certain ML, GL (164 platform) and R-Class (251 platform) vehicles the function of the brake booster might be affected due to advanced corrosion in the joint area of its housing. This corrosion might lead to a leakage of the brake booster; thus, the brake force support might be reduced, leading to an increase in the brake pedal forces required to decelerate the vehicle and/or to potentially increased stopping distance. Thus, the risk of a crash or injury would be increased.

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As a precautionary measure, Mercedes-Benz AG, via its Mercedes-Benz service partners, will check the brake booster on the affected vehicles and - depending on the result of this inspection - replace the brake booster, where necessary. The required work will certainly be carried out free of charge.

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International

Denmark votes on scrapping EU defence opt-out after Russia's invasion of Ukraine

‘NATO is the guarantor of Denmark's security’

COPENHAGEN: After staying out of the European Union's common defence policy for 30 years, Denmark votes Wednesday in a referendum on whether to overturn its opt-out after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

More than 65 percent of the country's 4.3 million eligible voters are expected to vote in favour of dropping the exemption, the latest opinion poll published on Sunday suggested. Analysts' predictions have however been cautious, given the low voter turnout expected in a country that has often said "no" to further EU integration, most recently in 2015.



‘We must always cast our ballots’

“We must always cast our ballots when there is a vote”, Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen urged Danes in the final televised debate of the campaign on Sunday. “I believe with all my heart that we have to vote yes. At a time when we need to fight for security in Europe, we need to be more united with our neighbours”, she said. Denmark has been an EU member since 1973, but it put the brakes on transferring more power to Brussels in 1992 when 50.7 percent of Danes rejected the Maastricht Treaty, the EU's founding treaty. It needed to be ratified by all member states to enter into force. In order to persuade Danes to approve the treaty, Copenhagen negotiated a series of exemptions and Danes finally approved it the following year. Since then, Denmark has remained outside the European single currency, the euro — which it reject-



COPENHAGEN: Political spokeswoman of The Red-Green Alliance Mai Villadsen (R) hands out flyers during her party's "NO" campaign at Noerreport Station in Copenhagen, Denmark. — AFP

ed in a 2000 referendum — as well as the bloc's common policies on justice and home affairs, and defence.

‘Ukraine the major reason’

The defence opt-out means that the Scandinavian country, a founding member of NATO, does not participate in EU foreign policy where defence is concerned and does not contribute troops to EU military missions. Denmark is the only country to have negotiated a defence opt-out, though Malta remains de facto outside as well. Copenhagen has exercised its opt-out 235 times in 29 years, according to a tally by the Europa think tank.

Danish PM Frederiksen called the referendum just two weeks after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and after having reached an agreement with a majority of parties in Denmark's parliament, the Folketing.

At the same time, she also announced plans to increase defence spending to two percent of GDP, in line with NATO membership requirements, by 2033.

“It was a big surprise”, said the director of the Europa think tank, Lykke Friis. “For the past many years, nobody thought that the government would put the defence opt-out to a national referendum”, she said. “There's no doubt that Ukraine was the major reason for calling the referendum.”

Iran: IAEA report on undeclared sites ‘not fair’

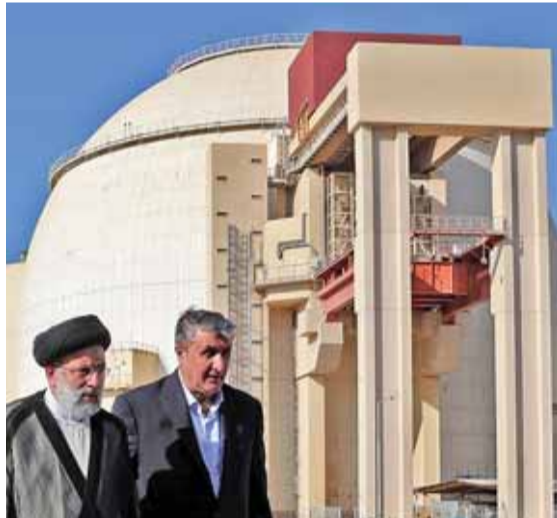
TEHRAN: Iran condemned as “not fair” Tuesday a report by the UN nuclear watchdog on traces of nuclear material found at three undeclared sites, as talks on reviving a 2015 deal remain deadlocked. “Unfortunately, this report does not reflect the reality of the negotiations between Iran and the IAEA,” foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told reporters, referring to the Monday report by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

“It's not a fair and balanced report,” he said, adding: “We expect this path to be corrected.” The IAEA's report came as talks to restore the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and major powers have seen no major developments since March. In the report, the watchdog said it still had questions which were “not clarified” regarding nuclear material previously found at three sites—Marivan, Varamin and Turqzabad—which had not been declared by Iran as having hosted nuclear activities. It said its long-running efforts to get Iranian officials to explain the presence of nuclear material had failed to provide answers to its questions. Iran and the IAEA agreed in March on an approach for resolving the issue of the sites, one of the remaining obstacles to reviving the 2015 deal.

Under the agreement, IAEA chief Rafael Grossi is due to “report his conclusions” to the watchdog's board of governors at a meeting scheduled for next week. While most of the activities concerned are thought to date back to the early 2000s, sources say

that one of the sites, in the Turqzabad district of Tehran, may have been used for storing uranium as recently as 2018. Iran saw an Israeli hand in the IAEA's latest findings. “It is feared that the political pressure exerted by the Zionist regime and some other actors has caused the normal path of the agency's reports to change from technical to political,” Khatibzadeh said. Earlier, Iran's representative to the IAEA, Mohammad Reza Ghaebi, said the report “does not reflect Iran's extensive cooperation with the agency”.

“Iran considers this approach unconstructive to the current close relations and cooperation between the



BUSHEHR, Iran: File picture shows Iran's president Ebrahim Raisi (R) accompanied by chief of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran Mohammad Eslami, visiting the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, southeast of the city of the same name. — AFP

country and the IAEA,” he said, adding: “The agency should be aware of the destructive consequences of publishing such one-sided reports.”

Accelerated enrichment

In a separate report published Monday, the IAEA estimated that Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium had grown to more than 18 times the limit agreed in the 2015 deal. The agency “estimated that, as of May 15, 2022, Iran's total enriched stockpile was 3,809.3 kilograms.” The limit in the 2015 deal was set at 300 kg (660 pounds) of a specific compound, the equivalent of 202.8 kg of uranium. The agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, gave Iran relief from crippling economic sanctions in exchange for curbs on its nuclear activities.

But the pact was left hanging by a thread when US president Donald Trump unilaterally pulled out in 2018 and reimposed biting sanctions, prompting Iran to begin rolling back on its own commitments. One of those commitments was that Iran should not enrich uranium to levels higher than 3.67 percent.

Iran's stockpile of uranium enriched up to 20 percent is now estimated to be 238.4 kg, up 56.3 kg since the last report in March, while the amount enriched to 60 percent stands at 43.1 kg, an increase of 9.9 kg, the report said.

Enrichment levels of around 90 percent are required for development of a nuclear warhead, something Iran has consistently denied it has any ambition to do. Khatibzadeh said Iran was determined to see the lifting of all US sanctions on its economy. “The issues being discussed between Iran and the US are related to the economic benefits to Iran and removing all the elements of the maximum pressure by the US,” he said. “The pause in the negotiations is due to the US not giving an answer to the initiatives proposed by Iran and Europe.” — AFP

Berlin's announcement that it was reversing decades of defence policy by massively hiking its military spending also played a key role in the Danish decision, Friis said. Germany is Denmark's closest ally, along with the United States. “The very fact that they stepped up their game put Denmark in a position where we could not hide behind Germany any more”.

‘NATO is enough’

Eleven of Denmark's 14 parties have urged voters to say “yes” to dropping the opt-out, representing more than three-quarters of seats in parliament. Two far-right eurosceptic parties — the Danish People's Party and The New Right — as well as the far-left Unity List, have meanwhile called for Danes to say “no”.

One of their main arguments is that the emergence of a joint European defence would come at the expense of NATO, which has been the cornerstone of Denmark's defence since its creation in 1949.

“NATO is the guarantor of Denmark's security. It would be totally different if it were decided in Brussels,” the head of the Danish People's Party Morten Messerschmidt argued during Sunday's debate.

After Finland and Sweden recently reversed decades of military non-alignment to apply for membership in NATO, and the Danish referendum, the three Nordic neighbours could all suddenly find themselves doubled up on European defence policy and NATO membership. The results of the referendum are expected around 11:00 pm (2100 GMT) on Wednesday. Denmark's autonomous territories of Greenland — which is not in the EU — and the Faroe Islands are not participating in the referendum. In December 2015, Danes voted “no” to strengthening their cooperation with the European Union on police and security matters for fear of losing their sovereignty over immigration. — AFP

Ex-Tory leader predicts Johnson to face confidence vote

LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson could face a vote among his own MPs to end his tenure in power as soon as next week, former Conservative leader William Hague said on Tuesday. The prediction came after more Tory lawmakers, including two former cabinet ministers, expressed doubts about Johnson's continued leadership in the wake of the “Partygate” scandal.

Dozens of his MPs have now publicly criticised their embattled leader over the numerous lockdown-breaching parties held in Downing Street in 2020 and last year under his watch. If 54 of them write a letter of no-confidence in Johnson to a powerful backbench committee of Tory MPs, that will trigger a vote of all 359 Conservative lawmakers on whether he should continue as leader and thereby prime minister.

Nearly 30 MPs are publicly known to have submitted such a letter but the process is shrouded in secrecy and the real tally is impossible to gauge.

Parliament is not sitting this week and with four days of celebrations for Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee beginning on Thursday, any announcement about a possible vote would not come until next week at the earliest.

The latest heavyweight Tories to express doubts about Johnson include former attorney general Jeremy Wright, who on Monday urged him to resign, and ex-cabinet minister Andrea Leadsom. Hague said Leadsom's intervention a letter to her constituents on Tuesday in which she criticised “unacceptable failings of leadership” over “Partygate” — had lit a “slow fuse” on a no-confidence vote. — AFP

Zionist entity signs UAE free...

Continued from Page 1

said in a statement. “Dubai is fast becoming a hub for (Zionist) companies that look to South Asia, the Middle East and the Far East as markets for their goods and services.” Nearly 1,000 Zionist companies will be working in and through the UAE by year's end, he said.

The UAE was the first Gulf country to normalize ties with the Zionist entity and only the third Arab nation to do so after Egypt and Jordan. Talks for a free trade agreement began in November and concluded after four rounds of negotiations. The latest was held in March in Egypt between Zionist Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, who became president this month after the death of his half-brother Sheikh Khalifa.

The Zionist entity had in March hosted a meet-

ing of the top diplomats from the United States, UAE, Bahrain and Morocco. Sudan in 2020 also agreed to normalize ties with the Zionist entity, but the strife-torn northeast African country has yet to finalize a deal. The Zionist entity has already struck free trade agreements with other countries and blocs, including the United States, European Union, Canada and Mexico. In February, the Zionist entity signed a trade deal with Rabat to designate special industrial zones in Morocco.

The Abraham Accords broke with long-standing pan-Arab policy to isolate the Zionist entity until it withdraws from the occupied territories and accepts Palestinian statehood. Palestinians condemned the agreements struck under then US president Donald Trump, and the conflict continues to inflame tensions, including between the Zionist entity and the UAE.

Tuesday's signing came two days after thousands of flag-waving Zionists marched through Jerusalem's Old City during a nationalist procession marking the Zionist entity's 1967 capture of east Jerusalem. The Zionist entity annexed east Jerusalem in 1980, a move never recognized by the international community. — AFP

forget what America did for us 32 years ago”. “Our gratitude to what you did and your sacrifices to us will always be engraved in our hearts and always in our minds and we're teaching our younger generations what America stands for and what America did for us,” he said.

“I stand in front of you today as an ambassador of a free, independent and sovereign country, because of what you did for us, because of your sacrifice. So we're here to say thank you. We will always remember and we will always be part of this parade and we will be a proud supporter and participant in this parade as we move forward,” Sheikh Salem added. Kuwait participated in the parade, which is the largest Memorial Day event in the nation, with a float that passed on Constitution Avenue to convey “deep appreciation for those who served and those who fell” in the fight to liberate the country. — KUNA

Kuwait's ambassador to...

Continued from Page 1

Sheikh Salem was presented at the parade with a plaque in recognition of his generous support. “Ambassador Al-Sabah has personified the fraternal ties of friendship that bind our two nations, and his steadfast support of the American Veterans Center and the military services of the United States will never be forgotten,” Roberts said.

Sheikh Salem said in his remarks at the parade, which was attended by thousands of people from across the nation and broadcast on television, that “I'm here today to tell you that Kuwait will never

New cache of ancient artifacts...

Continued from Page 1

He added the papyrus - estimated at nine meters long - likely contains chapters of the Book of the Dead, collections of funerary texts composed of spells that Egyptian used to guide the dead through the underworld. The sarcophagi will be moved to the Grand Egyptian Museum, which authorities hope to inaugurate near Cairo's Giza

pyramids later this year after repeated delays.

Hopes are high that the new museum, in addition to archaeological discoveries of recent years, will help revive the country's vital tourism industry. The sector has been battered by successive blows, including the 2011 revolution and ensuing unrest, the coronavirus pandemic, and now a halt of Russian and Ukrainian tourists, who accounted for a large portion of the country's visitors.

Among other findings at Saqqara, Egypt in March unveiled five ancient Pharaonic tombs, and in January last year announced the discovery of more than 50 wooden sarcophagi dating from the New Kingdom which ended in the 11th century BC. — AFP

Lebanon reelects Berri as speaker...

Continued from Page 1

An ally of the powerful Shiite militant group Hezbollah, Berri has weathered decades of turbulence and shifting political tides, including the current economic crisis and a 2019 protest movement demanding wholesale political reform. Even after parliamentary elections in May yielded modest but unprecedented gains for independent candidates, Berri's position remained largely unchallenged.

He clinched a new four-year term during parliament's opening session on Tuesday with the votes of just 65 of parliament's 128 members. That was down from the 98 votes he secured in 2018. Opponents spoil their ballots with a variety of political slogans. “Justice for the victims of the Beirut blast,” read one ballot, referring to a 2020 explosion at the capital's port that killed more than 200 people.

“Lokman Slim,” read several ballots, referring to a Hezbollah critic who was found murdered in his car last year. Berri will preside over a deeply fragmented parliament prone to the kind of deadlock that has paralyzed Lebanese politics for decades.

Lawmakers will be called upon to push through long-overdue reforms to stem a financial crisis that has plunged most Lebanese into poverty.

Berri's Amal Movement and Hezbollah hold all 27 Shiite-allocated seats in parliament but lack an overall parliamentary majority. Berri's re-election Tuesday was largely expected and held within legal deadlines but intense political horse-trading is expected in the coming months. Observers have warned of protracted deadlocks during consultations to name a new prime minister and in the run-up to an election later this year to replace President Michel Aoun.

Ahead of Tuesday's session, independent lawmakers born out of the 2019 protest movement joined relatives of the victims of the Beirut port blast in a symbolic march from the docks to parliament. They chanted “revolution” as they passed by Martyrs' Square - the focal point of the 2019 protests. “This square will be our reference,” said independent lawmaker Firas Hamdan, who stepped into parliament for the first time on Tuesday.

A lawyer by training, Berri won power as a militia leader during the 1975-1990 civil war and transitioned to politics as the war ended. He was named minister several times between 1984 and 1992. That year, in the first polls after the war ended, Berri was simultaneously elected a member and speaker of parliament - the highest post for a Shiite in the country's sectarian political system. — AFP

International

Graveyard sheds light on Kim Jong Un's South Korean heritage

North saw Korean-Japanese community as a strategic battleground

JEJU, South Korea: North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un has threatened Seoul with fiery destruction, but as a remote graveyard on a resort island shows, he has closer links to the South than he might like to admit. At a cemetery in a hard-to-find corner of South Korea's Jeju island, there are 13 tombstones bearing the Ko family name—Kim's relatives through his mother, Ko Yong Hui.

Jong Un is the third member of the Kim family to rule North Korea, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather—what official hagiography calls the "Paektu bloodline". But the Jeju graves tell a wider story.

Kim's mother was born in Osaka in 1952 to a native Jeju islander who emigrated to Japan in 1929, when the Korean peninsula was under Tokyo's colonial rule. Many of her family, including Kim's maternal great-grandfather, are buried on Jeju, their overgrown graves a stark contrast to Pyongyang's Kumsusan Palace of the Sun, where the embalmed bodies of Kim's father and grandfather Kim Il Sung lie in state.

After Kim came to power in 2011 following the death of his father Kim Jong Il, many experts highlighted his mother's South Korean and Japanese heritage. Pyongyang has never confirmed it. The regime "must have feared confirmation would undermine its legitimacy", Cheong Seong-chang of the Center for North Korea Studies at the Sejong Institute, told AFP.

The Kim dynasty bases its claim to power on Kim Il Sung's role as a guerrilla fighter driving out Japan and winning Korea its independence in 1945. "Korea-Japan heritage runs directly counter to the North Korean myth of its leadership," Cheong said.

Kim's mother

Kim's mother grew up in the Japanese port city of Osaka, but her family moved to North Korea in the 1960s as part of a decades-long repatriation programme by Pyongyang. The scheme urged ethnic Koreans living in Japan to move to North Korea, part of a drive to "claim supremacy" over the South, said Park Chul-hyun, a novelist and columnist in Tokyo. "The North saw the Korean-Japanese community as a strategic battleground," he said, and managed to convince nearly 100,000 ethnic Koreans to relocate to the "socialist

paradise". The Ko family answered the call, and lived a relatively normal life in the North until their eldest daughter caught the eye of the country's heir apparent. Experts believe that Ko, who was a performer with the Mansudae Art Troupe of musicians and dancers, first met Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang in 1972. She would become his partner in 1975, experts say, and although there is no official record of their marriage the pair had three children. She died in 2004. "There has been nothing about Ko Yong Hui in offi-

cial state media," said Rachel Minyoung Lee, a non-resident fellow with the 38 North Program at the Washington-based Stimson Center.

There is not much in state media about Kim Jong Un's background and heritage generally beyond attempts to show he is the legitimate heir to the Mount Paektu legacy, she added.



JEJU: Aerial photo shows a tombstone of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's maternal great grandfather that translates as 'Ko Yong-ok, Born in 1876 and laid to rest in 1945 in Jeju', near other tombstones also bearing the Ko family name, relatives of North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un through his mother, Ko Yong Hui, at a remote area on the resort island of Jeju. —AFP

South Korean media discovered the Ko family graves on Jeju in 2014 — one of the first real confirmations of Kim Jong Un's South Korean ancestry. At that time, there was a plaque-known as an "empty grave" in the South-honouring Kim's maternal grandfather Ko Gyong Taek, even though he died and was buried in the North. —AFP

Thousands mourn murdered rapper

AMRITSAR: Thousands of mourners gathered Tuesday for the cremation of Indian hip hop star Sidhu Moose Wala, whose murder at the weekend shocked fans at home and in Punjabi communities from Canada to Britain. Moose Wala—whose real name is Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu—was shot dead in his car by unidentified assailants in the northern state of Punjab on Sunday. He was 28.

Police said the murder was linked to inter-gang rivalry, and that a Canada-based gangster known as Goldy Brar had claimed responsibility. Crowds thronged Moose Wala's hearse as it reached the rapper's palatial house in his native village of Moosa in Punjab.

Thousands then lined the roads as his body was taken for cremation on a trolley decorated with flowers and pulled by a tractor—reportedly the singer's favourite one.

'Trailblazer'

Moose Wala rose to fame with catchy songs that attacked rival rappers and politicians, portraying him as a man who fought for his community's pride, delivered justice and gunned down enemies. Moose Wala was a big star not just in India but also

abroad, especially in Canada and Britain—home to large Punjabi-origin communities.

Bollywood actors and Indian politicians paid tribute, as did Canadian hip hop superstar Drake, who posted a photo of Moose Wala and his mother with the message "RIP Moose". In Canada, rapper Gursewak Dhillon said Moose Wala had "revolutionised Punjabi music" in the country. "Before Sidhu, people used to look to India and the UK for the freshest Punjabi music. After his rise, Canada became the centre of the industry," Dhillon told The Globe and Mail newspaper. "There are many young kids in Canada for whom he is a trailblazer."

Dark underbelly

But Moose Wala was also a controversial figure. He was often criticised for promoting gun culture through his music videos, in which he regularly posed with firearms. Moose Wala had police cases registered against him for his songs titled "Panj Golian" ("Five bullets") and "Sanju", The Hindustan Times reported.

"Sanju" was inspired by Bollywood bad-boy superstar Sanjay Dutt, who was jailed for the illegal possession of an assault rifle. Moose Wala's final song, "The Last Ride", included the line: "The glow on the man's face tells you that he'll die young." That song was a homage to American rapper Tupac Shakur, who was shot dead in his car in 1996 at the age of 25.

southwestern corner of the ADIZ before looping back out again.

'Increasingly provocative'

The United States last week accused Beijing of raising tensions over the island, with Secretary of State Antony Blinken specifically mentioning aircraft incursions as an example of "increasingly provocative rhetoric and activity".

Blinken's remarks came after US President Joe Biden appeared to break decades of US policy when, in response to a question on a visit to Japan, he said Washington would defend Taiwan militarily if it is attacked by China.

But the White House has since insisted its policy of "strategic ambiguity" over whether or not it would intervene has not changed. There is growing bipartisan discussion in Washington over whether to switch to "strategic clarity" given Beijing's increasingly aggressive approach to cross-strait relations, epitomised by the air incursions.

US senators have made multiple trips to the island in a show of support—a group led by Republican Lindsey Graham visited in April, and Democrat Tammy Duckworth landed in Taipei on Monday. Duckworth was one of the main sponsors of the Taiwan Partnership Act, which aims to deepen security ties between Taipei and Washington. It has yet to be voted on or become law.

But after a meeting with Duckworth on Tuesday,

what it characterised as Beijing's "unilateral imposition of a three-and-a-half-month fishing moratorium" near the disputed Spratly Islands.

Manila and Beijing have long been locked in a dispute over areas of the South China Sea, almost all of which China insists it has exclusive rights to, rejecting a 2016 Hague ruling that its historical claims were without basis. The foreign affairs department said that on April 13 it "summoned a senior official of the Chinese Embassy in Manila to protest the harassment... on RV Legend, which had been conducting an authorised marine scientific research".

Its statement also said the department was reviewing reports on the "presence of foreign coast guard vessels around Reed Bank" near where Philippine firms are conducting oil exploration. The incidents, it added, "are clear violations of Philippine maritime jurisdiction".

The Chinese embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In a



Indian hip hop star Sidhu Moose Wala

Moose Wala's murder has also put the spotlight on the dark underbelly of Punjab, a major transit route for drugs entering India from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Many observers link the narcotics trade—mostly heroin and opium—to an uptick in gang-related violence and the use of illegal arms in the state.

According to media reports, some of the dozens of gangs active in Punjab have been demanding protection money from rappers and even buying into music companies. —AFP

Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen suggested that some form of link-up was already happening. "As a result (of the Act), the US Department of Defence is now actively planning cooperation between the National Guard and Taiwan's defence forces," Tsai said in a statement, without explaining further.

Constant alert

Last year, Taiwan recorded 969 incursions by Chinese warplanes into its ADIZ, according to an AFP database—more than double the roughly 380 carried out in 2020. The most number of aircraft China has sent in a single day was 56 on October 4, 2021. That month saw a record 196 incursions, mostly around China's annual national day celebrations.

So far in 2022 Taiwan has reported 465 incursions, a near 50 percent increase on the same period last year. The sheer number of sorties has put the air force under immense pressure, and it has suffered a string of fatal accidents in recent years.

On Tuesday local media reported that a pilot had died after crashing a trainer jet in southern Kaohsiung. It is not the first deadly crash this year—in January one of Taiwan's most advanced fighter jets, an F-16V, plunged into the sea.

Last March, Taiwan grounded all military aircraft after a pilot was killed and another went missing when their fighters collided mid-air in the third fatal crash in less than six months. —AFP

separate statement on Tuesday, the department said it had renewed its "protest of China's annual practice of declaring a fishing ban over areas that extend far beyond China's legitimate maritime entitlements".

An Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI) report last week said the RV Legend had been tailed at close distance by the coast guard vessel northwest of the main Philippine island of Luzon. On two other occasions last month Chinese vessels harassed commercial and research vessels, AMTI said, including one near the Philippines-garrisoned Second Thomas Shoal.

The think tank said the Chinese actions were creating "a high risk of collisions at sea". The foreign affairs department on Tuesday said unspecified "illegal activities" around the Second Thomas Shoal were also the "subject of diplomatic protests", and that Chinese ships had also surrounded a Philippine coast guard vessel in the area. —AFP

News in brief

Iraqi torture compensation

COPENHAGEN: Denmark's supreme court on Tuesday overturned a lower court ruling ordering the government to compensate 18 civilians tortured during the Iraq war in a joint operation by Iraqi forces and a Danish battalion. A total of 23 Iraqi plaintiffs had sued Denmark after they were arrested and subjected to "torture and inhumane treatment" in 2004 during operation "Green Desert" near Iraq's main port city of Basra. The supreme court ruled that since the Danish troops neither took part in nor were aware of the torture, the defence ministry was not obliged to pay compensation. An appeals court in Copenhagen had ruled in 2018 that although the Danish soldiers did not join in the torture, they failed to prevent the abuse. It said they were aware the prisoners faced a "real risk" of being physically abused by the Iraqi security forces, and ordered the Danish state to pay 18 of them 30,000 Danish kroner (\$4,300, 4,000 euros) in damages. But the supreme court instead found "the Danish forces had no command over the Iraqi military and police forces, that the operation was Iraqi-led, and that the Danish forces' participation in and conduct of the operation was in accordance with the mandate they were sent under". —AFP

5 killed in 'anti-terror' operation

DUSHANBE: Tajikistan's authoritarian government said that five people had been killed Tuesday in an "anti-terror operation" in a troubled region bordering Afghanistan and China. The five "members of an organised criminal and terrorist group were neutralised" after "armed resistance", the state information service said, citing the interior ministry. The statement said that the operation was carried out on Tuesday morning and that the men resisted calls to surrender. Tajikistan announced an "anti-terror operation" earlier this month after protests in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region that it has long struggled to control. The new casualties bring the official death toll from the operation up to 14, with just one military death, although unofficial accounts suggest a higher figure. The sudden hostilities in the mountainous region prompted concern from Western governments and Human Rights Watch, which has highlighted a communications blackout imposed on the region. —AFP

Australia names junior minister

SYDNEY: Australia's centre-left Prime Minister Anthony Albanese named his cabinet on Tuesday including an "assistant minister for the republic", despite the country being a constitutional monarchy. As the United Kingdom's 96-year-old Queen Elizabeth II prepares to celebrate her platinum jubilee, her recently-elected government in Australia took a symbolic step toward her ouster. Albanese announced that Sydney member of parliament Matt Thistlethwaite would be assistant minister for the republic, in addition to other duties. Previous Labor leaders have promised a referendum on removing the Queen as Australia's head of state, but Albanese—a long-time republican—did not make the promise a feature of his election campaign. The move was welcomed by the Australian Republic Movement, which campaigns for an Australian head of state. "WE ARE ON OUR WAY!" tweeted prominent republican and author Peter FitzSimons. "Let the record show, for the first time in the history of the Commonwealth, Australia has a member of the Govt singularly devoted to removing the Crown, and helping Australia become a Republic." he added. —AFP

China makes second largest Taiwan defence zone incursion

RAIPEI: China has made the second largest incursion into Taiwan's air defence zone this year with Taipei reporting 30 jets entering the area, including more than 20 fighters. Taiwan's defence ministry said late Monday it had scrambled its own aircraft and deployed air defence missile systems to monitor the latest Chinese activity.

In recent years, Beijing has begun sending large sorties into Taiwan's defence zone to signal dissatisfaction, and to keep Taipei's ageing fighter fleet regularly stressed. Self-ruled democratic Taiwan lives under the constant threat of invasion by China, which views the island as its territory and has vowed to one day seize it, by force if necessary.

Monday's incursion was the largest since January 23, when 39 planes entered the air defence identification zone, or ADIZ. The ADIZ is not the same as Taiwan's territorial airspace but includes a far greater area that overlaps with part of China's own air defence identification zone and even includes some of the mainland.

A flight map provided by the Taiwanese defence ministry showed the planes entering the

Philippines summons Beijing envoy over Sea 'harassment'

MANILA: Manila revealed on Tuesday that it had summoned a senior Beijing diplomat to protest the alleged harassment of a marine research vessel by a Chinese coast guard ship in Philippine territorial waters.

The Department of Foreign Affairs said it was also reviewing reports on the "presence of foreign coast guard vessels around Reed Bank", site of the 2019 sinking of a Filipino fishing vessel that sparked domestic outrage.

The revelation came the same day Manila said it had issued a separate diplomatic protest over

Business

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2022

Bankrupt Sri Lanka hikes taxes

Sri Lanka port switches to pedal power after fuel shortages



COLOMBO: Students from the faculty of medicine and sciences take part in an anti-government demonstration demanding the resignation of Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa over the country's crippling economic crisis, in Colombo. — AFP

COLOMBO: Cash-strapped Sri Lanka on Tuesday announced steep, across-the-board tax hikes to shore up revenue as the country suffers its worst economic downturn and seeks an IMF bailout. The value-added tax (VAT) applied on almost all goods and services was raised from 8.0 percent to 12 percent with immediate effect, while corporate taxes were also increased from 24 to 30 percent.

The personal income tax exemption threshold was lowered from 3.0 million rupees (\$8,330) a year to 1.8 million rupees. The increases were a rollback of the generous cuts ordered by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa soon after he won the November 2019 elections.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, who is also the finance minister, said Rajapaksa's tax cuts cost the state some 800 billion rupees (\$2.22 billion) annually and widened the budget deficit sharply. International rating agencies, as well as independent economists, have pointed to Rajapaksa's fiscal policy as having fuelled the current financial crisis.

Wickremesinghe, an opposition legislator, was made prime minister this month. His predecessor and the president's elder brother Mahinda stepped down after months of anti-government protests turned deadly. The South Asian nation is in talks



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) chairman Prasantha Jayamanna speaks during a press conference in Colombo on May 31, 2022. — AFP

with the International Monetary Fund for a bailout after running out of dollars to pay even for the most essential imports such as oil, food and medicines.

Sri Lanka has also defaulted on its \$51 billion foreign debt. Wickremesinghe said he was also removing several tax breaks granted to companies in recent years.

The government did not say how much it will raise from the new tax measures. However, the prime minister had said they had run out of rupees to pay the salaries of 1.5 million civil servants and would have to "print money". That would in turn fuel inflation, which is already at a record 33.8 percent.

Meanwhile, cash-strapped Sri Lanka's main seaport unveiled a free bicycle service on Tuesday, allowing workers to navigate the facility without petrol-powered vehicles, as the island nation struggles with unprecedented fuel shortages. The island nation is experiencing its worst financial meltdown since independence, leaving authorities struggling to pay for adequate supplies of vital imports.

Motorists around the South Asian country are forced to spend hours or even days waiting for rationed fuel at gas stations. The bicycle initiative was aimed at conserving petrol in the Colombo deep-sea container port, Sri Lanka Ports Authority chairman Prasantha Jayamanna said.

"We have built a cycle track along a disused railway line for those who come to the port to use cycles instead of other vehicles," he told reporters. The port in Sri Lanka's capital sits on 469 hectares (1,160 acres) of land, with its longest road stretching four kilometers (2.5 miles) through the facility.

Shipping lines operating through the port-locat-

ed in the Indian Ocean, along the world's busiest east-west maritime trade route-donated 100 bikes to kick off the initiative, Jayamanna said. Despite Tuesday's announcement, Jayamanna said the port was "insulated from the economic troubles" plaguing Sri Lanka, and was offering petrol from its own reserves to dock workers who were struggling to source fuel elsewhere.

"We are carrying out our work as usual as we have our buffer stocks of fuel," he added. Sri Lanka's economic crisis was sparked by a crunch on foreign currency reserves that also left importers unable to source food, fuel and other goods. Rampant inflation, frequent blackouts and long queues for essentials have made life a misery for the island's 22 million people. The government is seeking urgent assistance from the International Monetary Fund and has also defaulted on Sri Lanka's \$51 billion foreign debt.

Weeks of public protests have called on President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to resign, with police firing tear gas to disperse a huge demonstration outside the leader's home on Sunday.

Jayamanna said the crisis had not disrupted operations at the port, which generates much of its revenue in dollars and still plans to pay for a \$500 million expansion. — AFP

India growth slows on inflation, higher oil prices

NEW DELHI: India's growth slowed further in the first three months of 2022, the National Statistics Office said Tuesday, with inflation and higher oil prices denting a post-pandemic recovery. Asia's third-largest economy grew 4.1 percent, year-on-year, in the last quarter, NSO data showed.

Annual growth for the 12 months to the end of March stood at 8.7 percent. Rising global commodity prices have sparked concern among policymakers, with India's central bank announcing its first interest rate hike in nearly four years this month. The country of 1.4 billion people imports more than 80 percent of its crude oil and the cost of meeting domestic fuel demand has soared since Russia invaded Ukraine in February.

India is also the world's largest importer of edible oils, prices of which are at record highs since the conflict began. "The pandemic may be receding, but growth has not returned," economist Mihir Swarup Sharma of the New Delhi-based Observer Research Foundation told AFP.

"Instead, imports as a proportion of GDP-driven by higher prices for food, fuel, and other commodities-are rising."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government this month announced tax breaks to offset higher food and petrol costs. Higher-than-expected revenues could give New Delhi some "headroom" to cushion consumers from inflation, Sharma said. But the \$26 billion cost of the scheme will likely blow out the government's budget deficit beyond its target for 2022-23, which it put at 6.4 percent of GDP.

Consumer inflation hit 6.95 percent in March, according to the Reserve Bank of India, which slashed its own growth forecast to 7.2 percent for the year ending March 2022.

"Alarming, persistent and spreading inflationary pressures are becoming more acute with every passing day," Reserve Bank of India governor Shaktikanta Das said this month. — AFP

China's factory activity shrinks

BEIJING: The contraction gripping China's manufacturing sector slowed in May, data showed Tuesday, as some factories gradually resumed work after officials eased some COVID lockdown measures.

The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) — a key gauge of manufacturing activity — edged up to 49.6, officials said, from April's 47.4, which was the worst reading since early 2020. However, the reading remained stuck below the 50-point mark separating growth from contraction.

The figures come as Beijing's zero-COVID policy aimed at stamping out infections with lockdowns and mass testing is challenged by a surge in the fast-spreading Omicron variant. Dozens of cities, including economic powerhouses Shanghai and Shenzhen, have been either fully or partially sealed off in recent months, prompting warnings of the gouge to growth being made by zero-

COVID. "The recent epidemic situation and changes in the international situation" hit economic activity, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) statistician Zhao Qinghe said in a statement. But production of synthetic fibers, rubber and plastic products rebounded in May, as well as auto production, according to the statement. Zhao noted the price indexes for raw materials were lower than the previous month. While factory production and demand have improved "the recovery momentum still needs to be strengthened", Zhao added.

China is the last major economy welded to a policy of mass testing and hard lockdowns to eliminate virus clusters, but the strict curbs have battered businesses.

COVID cases have trended downward in recent weeks and local governments have gradually allowed some firms to resume operations. The official non-manufacturing PMI rose to 47.8 from April's 41.9, as retail and transport rebounded. Financial hub Shanghai has said it will lift most restrictions on June 1 after two months of lockdown, while Beijing has eased some curbs.

The government last week said it



BINZHOU, China: A worker produces fiber netting at a factory in Binzhou in China's eastern Shandong province on May 31, 2022. — AFP

would offer tax relief and a bond drive to help industries, as President Xi Jinping called for an "all-out" infrastructure push. The measures to prop up the economy also include increasing government procurement from smaller business as well as delaying some deadlines for social security payments by employers, according to details released on Tuesday. But analysts cautioned that growth will remain weak until China

eases its rigid virus controls.

Moody's on Monday lowered its annual growth forecast for the world's number two economy from 5.2 percent to 4.5 percent. "Recovery is likely to remain tepid amid weak external demand and labour market strains," Capital Economics economist Sheana Yue said in a note on Tuesday, adding that "there continue to be signs of supply chain disruptions." — AFP

EU leaders agree ban on most Russian oil imports

BRUSSELS: EU leaders on Monday backed a ban on most Russian oil imports, after a compromise deal with Hungary to punish Moscow for the war in Ukraine. The 27-nation bloc has spent weeks haggling over a proposed total embargo on Russian oil but came up against stubborn resistance from Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. EU leaders meeting in Brussels hatched a compromise deal to exempt deliveries arriving in Europe by pipeline from the ban, after Budapest warned halting supplies would wreck its economy.

"Agreement to ban export of Russian oil to the EU. This immediately covers more than two thirds of oil imports from Russia, cutting a huge source of financing for its war machine," European Council chief Charles Michel tweeted during the summit. "Maximum pressure on Russia to end the war."

The head of the EU's executive, Ursula von der Leyen, said the move "will effectively cut around 90 percent of oil imports from Russia to the EU by the end of the year" as Germany and Poland had committed to renounce deliveries via a pipeline to their territory.

"Russia has chosen to continue its war in Ukraine. Tonight, as Europeans, united and in solidarity with the Ukrainian people, we are taking new decisive sanctions," French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted, echoing the figure of 90 percent by the end of 2022. The wrangling over the sixth package of sanctions has rocked European unity in the face of the Kremlin's attack on Ukraine after five waves of unprecedented

economic punishment on Russia. The compromise excluded the Druzhba pipeline from the oil embargo and only imposed sanctions on crude shipped to the EU by tanker vessel.

Despite the gap in the embargo left by Hungary's opposition, the latest round of sanctions represents some of the most damaging measures taken by the EU so far. The EU imports some 26 percent of its oil from Russia and has been criticized for keeping money flowing to Moscow's coffers at the same time as it seeks to halt the Kremlin's war.

Michel said the sanctions package also involved disconnecting Russia's biggest bank Sberbank from the global SWIFT system, banning three state broadcasters and blacklisting individuals blamed for war crimes. He also said that the EU had agreed to send Ukraine nine billion euros (\$9.7 billion) to support Kyiv's "immediate liquidity needs" as it grapples with Russia's invasion. — AFP

Business

Eurozone inflation soars to new record over Ukraine war

War stokes energy and food prices, threatens to flatline economy

BRUSSELS: Eurozone inflation accelerated to another record high in May, data showed Tuesday, as the war in Ukraine stoked energy and food prices and threatened to flatline the economy. The EU's Eurostat data agency said that the increase in consumer prices in the 19 countries that use the euro reached 8.1 percent compared to the year before, up from 7.4 percent in April.

The uninterrupted rise in prices heaped pressure on the European Central Bank to speed up interest rate rises for the first time in over a decade. The ECB has said it plans to hike interest rates in July in order to cool the pressure on prices and is expected to officially end its bond-buying stimulus policies as early as next week.

By raising rates, the ECB would be playing catch-up with other major central banks that have already made moves to tame inflation that has spread globally. The US Federal Reserve raised rates by an unusually large 50 basis points at the beginning of May, while the Bank of England sealed its fourth consecutive hike. The chief economist of the European Central Bank, Philip Lane, indicated on Monday that interest rates in the eurozone will rise more cautiously, going up by 0.25 percent in July and again in September.

This would lift the ECB's bank deposit rate out of negative territory, meaning lenders would no longer pay to park their excess cash at the central bank. The ECB had previously argued that sharp leaps in consumer prices, driven also by the waning effect of COVID-19 pandemic, were likely to let up, downplaying the inflationary threat.

Russia's war in Ukraine disrupted that view, worsening already disrupted supply chains and throwing up new shortages in essential material from wheat to metals. This remained that case in May with energy prices spiking by a hair-raising 39.2 percent from a year ear-



The EU's Eurostat data agency said that the increase in consumer prices in the 19 countries that use the euro reached 8.1 percent compared to the year before, up from 7.4 percent in April.

lier. Food prices went up by 7.5 percent.

Energy crunch

Western economies including Germany—the eurozone's biggest—are scrambling to wean themselves off Russian energy, which will also have its effects on inflation. The EU on Monday agreed to ban two-thirds of its oil dependency by the end of the year and German and Polish pledges to voluntarily forgo pipeline deliveries could push the cut to 90 percent—which could put still more upward pressure on prices. The ban on Russian oil swiftly hit the market price for oil which means “that risks (to inflation) are skewed once again to the upside”, said Oxford Economics in a note.

“We think headline inflation will peak in the second

quarter but will slow only gradually throughout 2022,” it added. Policymakers will also be keeping an especially close eye on wages for fear pay increases to help workers meet high prices could stoke inflation further.

Despite the challenges, Lane on Monday stood by the ECB's assessment that inflation in the eurozone would find its way back to its two percent target in the medium term.

Meanwhile, fears of negative or zero growth in Europe will be fuelled by data showing the French economy contracted 0.2 percent in the first quarter from the previous three months, in a downward revision. The European Commission this month sharply cut its eurozone growth forecast for 2022 to 2.7 percent, but warned the outlook was highly uncertain because of the war in Ukraine. —AFP

Lincoln Alghanim wins first place in CVP rankings

KUWAIT: Lincoln Alghanim, the home of Lincoln vehicles in Kuwait, secured the number one spot in the Lincoln Customer Satisfaction Index (CVP) rankings for sales and service in 2021. Part of Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately-owned companies in the region, the company earned this sought-after title for achieving the highest global customer satisfaction rate for Lincoln clients, surpassing distributors across not only the region but the world.

Attaining this international milestone underscores the customer-focused approach cemented firmly at the core of operations in Alghanim Automotive. Adnan Aidan, Senior Brand Manager at Lincoln Alghanim, said: “This achievement is the culmination of our devotion to a brand that demands a level of commitment best fit for its globally renowned excellence. To see that same commitment translated from our customer's satisfaction into recognition by Lincoln's global team is an overwhelming win for Lincoln Alghanim. We are deeply proud to witness our efforts take form in the shape of Lincoln's growth in Kuwait, a reward our team will celebrate as we continue to strive for further success.”



Sami Malkawi, Managing Director, Lincoln Middle East, said, “At Lincoln, we don't limit luxury to our line of SUVs - it's something that is part of the entire client experience. Lincoln Alghanim's tireless dedication to client service, world-class customer interaction, personalized attention to detail and array of amenities on offer in a stunning showroom are just a few of the ingredients in a successful customer satisfaction recipe. I would like to congratulate the team at Lincoln Alghanim for securing this coveted title and look forward to seeing how they continue to evolve their offering.”

Lincoln Alghanim provides unmatched sales and service levels through a centralized approach to customer interaction. This strategy includes Lincoln Alghanim's digital front, with a robust website and a client-dedicated smartphone app, in addition to the company's facilities furnished with Lincoln's iconic interior design.

Reflecting the regal stylings of Lincoln vehicles, the bespoke design elements of the facility at Lincoln Alghanim embodies hospitality, luxury, and sanctuary. Customers visiting any Lincoln Alghanim facility can enjoy a variety of amenities in the lounge while waiting for their personalized private sales or service experience. Ensuring the utmost comfort for its customers, Lincoln Alghanim also offers an array of services that range from car customization to home delivery. Through hard work and dedication to implementing forward-thinking strategies that place customers at the heart of all its operations, Lincoln Alghanim is heading the region year-to-date in 2022.

space to Russian aircraft and many Western airlines have halted flights to Russia. The wider aviation industry is concerned as the export of aircraft, parts and equipment has been banned, as has maintenance work on Russian-registered Airbus and Boeing aircraft. Western insurers cannot provide coverage.

Trade

The EU sanctions include export bans on products such as cars and luxury watches, as well as semiconductors, chemicals and specialized catalysts to target Russia's technology and industrial sectors. The list of Russian products banned from the EU has been extended to include steel products, cement, rubber products and wood. Imports of Russian vodka and caviar have already been banned by the EU and the US. They have also deprived Russia and Belarus of their “most favoured nation” trade status, imposing punitive tariffs on their exports.

Financial sector

EU leaders agreed Monday that their sixth package of sanctions will include a measure to exclude Russia's Sberbank from the SWIFT financial messaging system. Sberbank, Russia's biggest bank, said it has not been affected by the measures, designed to make international payments difficult. “We are working as normal — the main restrictions are already in place,” the bank said, referring to earlier US and UK sanctions that have already isolated its financial system.

The US, EU and Britain have frozen foreign currency held by the Russian central bank and banned all transactions with the institution. US credit card giants Visa, Mastercard and American Express have blocked Russian banks from their payment networks. The US is also ending an exemption allowing Moscow to pay foreign debt held by American investors with funds held in Russia, a move that could push Vladimir Putin's country closer to default.—AFP

News in brief

Russia's Sberbank 'working as normal'

MOSCOW: Russia's largest bank Sberbank said Tuesday it was not affected by fresh EU sanctions over Ukraine that excluded the bank from the SWIFT financial messaging system. “We are working as normal—the main restrictions are already in place,” the company said in a statement on Telegram referring to earlier US and UK sanctions that have already isolated its financial system. It added that the cut-off from SWIFT “does not change the current situation for international transactions”, while transactions within Russia do not use the Belgium-based messaging platform. After President Vladimir Putin sent troops into Ukraine on February 24, Russia was hit with a barrage of sanctions that especially targeted its economy and financial institutions. —AFP

S&P downgrades Greenland

BEIJING: Ratings agency Standard & Poor's on Monday downgraded Chinese state-backed property developer Greenland over fears the company would default on a bond payment. Since a government drive to curb excessive debt in the property sector, China's developers have sagged under the weight of massive borrowing which funded their building spree. S&P said in a note on Monday that it was downgrading Greenland from B- to CC as it believed the developer was “vulnerable to nonpayment of its senior notes upon maturity”. Greenland, which counts the Shanghai municipal government among its shareholders, has asked for a one-year extension for a \$488 million note due on June 25, Bloomberg reported on Friday. —AFP

Singapore Airbnb host hit with \$845k fine

SINGAPORE: A Singaporean man has been fined \$845,000 for providing illegal short-term rentals on Airbnb and other platforms, authorities said Tuesday, a record penalty for the offence in the city-state. Housing is a sensitive issue in space-starved Singapore, where most live in apartments, and it is illegal to rent out accommodation for less than three consecutive months. Simon Chan, 57, reportedly leased 14 apartments and sublet them for short-term accommodation to local and foreign guests. The former property agent advertised the apartments on Airbnb, HomeAway and other platforms, local media reported. —AFP

GSK buys US vaccine firm for \$3.3bn

LONDON: British drugmaker GlaxoSmithKline on Tuesday snapped up US biopharmaceutical firm Affinivax for up to \$3.3 billion, expanding further into vaccines before the demerger of its consumer health care arm. The London-listed company has agreed to pay \$2.1 billion upfront and up to \$1.2 billion in potential development milestones for Affinivax. “GSK plc today announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Affinivax, Inc,” it said in a statement. “Affinivax is pioneering the development of a novel class of vaccines, the most advanced of which are next-generation pneumococcal vaccines,” it added. —AFP

Eurozone stocks sink as inflation accelerates

LONDON: Eurozone equity markets sank Tuesday on news that the region's inflation rate has spiked to another record high in May on fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The eurozone's increase in consumer prices hit 8.1 percent, up from 7.4 percent in April, official data showed Tuesday, with energy surging the fastest. Sentiment took another battering on fears of harsh economic fallout after the European Union reached a deal on a partial embargo of Russian oil imports in punishment for its assault on Ukraine.

The embargo also sent oil prices spiking to two-month peaks, in turn fuelling more inflationary fears and pressuring central banks to tighten monetary policy and prevent consumer prices rocketing even higher. However, the resurgent oil market lifted the London stock market because it boosts profits and revenues for energy majors BP and Shell.

“Inflation in the eurozone increased even further,” said Jonas Keck, economist at UK-based research group the Centre for Economics and Business Research. “As the EU reached an agreement on new sanctions targeting Russian oil supplies, energy prices may well soar even faster in the coming months.” Markets have been rocked this year as the Ukraine conflict has fuelled massive price gains for energy and food, translating into spiking inflation that threatens to derail the post-pandemic economic recovery. Red-hot eurozone inflation intensified calls for interest rate hikes from the European Central Bank (ECB), which has already flagged plans to hike borrowing costs in July.—AFP

From oil to assets, sanctions target Russian economy

MOSCOW: From oil embargoes to asset freezes and bans on new investment, the list of Western sanctions imposed on Russia's economy since it invaded Ukraine keeps growing.

Here is an overview:

Energy

European Union leaders agreed Monday to ban most Russian oil imports, following criticism for not acting sooner. They reached a deal that bans oil imports delivered by tankers but exempts pipeline deliveries — and allows Hungary to keep receiving Russian crude. European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said the accord will cut around 90 percent of the EU's Russian oil imports by the end of the year. The EU plans to cut imports of Russian gas by two thirds in the same period and ban European companies from making new investments in the sector. Purchases of Russian coal are set to stop from August. Another highly symbolic decision was the suspension of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which was due to increase Russian gas supplies to Germany. The United States and Canada have imposed their own embargoes of Russian oil and gas while Britain will phase them out by the end of the year.

Transportation

The EU has closed its ports to Russian ships, and Russian truckers are also banned from operating in the bloc. EU members as well as the United States, Canada, Switzerland, Norway and Iceland have closed their air-

Business

Starling bank's Anne Boden takes fintech out of London

In Cardiff, Starling carves out a niche in the competitive world of fintech

LONDON: Gazing out from the new offices of online bank Starling, Anne Boden sees the familiar, modest surroundings of the Welsh capital Cardiff rather than the skyscrapers of London's City financial district. "We have great universities in Cardiff, and we have great talents here, we're using that talent to create something that's really special for the customers," say Boden.

Boden is the head of Starling, which has just opened the Cardiff site, where about half of its 1,800 employees will be based. With almost three million customers and eight percent of UK business banking market share, Starling has managed to carve out a niche in the hugely competitive world of fintech, and, unlike many competitors, turn a profit.

Born into a modest family 42 miles (67 kilometers) from Cardiff in Swansea where she also studied, Boden calls the bank she started in 2014 "a force to be reckoned with".

The same description could apply to Boden who regularly describes herself as a "five-foot (1.5-metre) Welsh woman". In the very masculine world of finance, she defends the position of women business leaders and has been put in charge of a government study group on the matter.

"I'm not a typical banker," says Boden, who wants to offer her customers an experience differ-

ent from that of the traditional banks she worked for until 2013. But in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, the former Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) employee had to set herself apart from all the other entrepreneurs seeking to move on from the old world of finance.

Already aged over 50, Boden teamed up with Tom Blomfield, a young Oxford University graduate typical of the world of London startups. But in 2015, Blomfield jumped ship with much of Starling's management team just months before its launch to start rival bank Monzo.

Boden writes in her autobiography about her struggle to keep control of Starling and of her vision: a profitable but "responsible" online bank with top-notch customer service that respects the environment. Starling says it uses only renewable energy and recycled plastic.

The bank's market capitalization of £2 billion (\$2.5 billion, 2.3 billion euros) is far behind Revolut (\$33 billion) or Monzo (\$4.5 billion), but often beats its competitors for customer satisfaction.

'No crypto gimmicks'

"It's friendly rivalry, I think," Boden says of her relationship today with the big names of British fintech, while not shy of criticizing them and vaunting Starling's more prudent approach.

In her book, "Banking On It: How I Disrupted an Industry", she describes the tedious job of getting Starling a banking license—the Holy Grail that permits a bank to use customers' deposits to issue loans—to set Starling apart from some of its competitors in the UK. Fintech giant Revolut is in fact not recognized as a bank in the UK, although it does have that status in several other European countries, and the financial press regularly reports on its efforts to obtain a license.

Without the license, banking startups struggle to turn a profit. "Some of these new fintechs are trying to find ways of monetizing their customer base and are coming up with trading apps or crypto as a way of earning a revenue," she says. "We are not seeking gimmicks, we're all about providing what the customers really want." Although she won't answer questions about a possible stock market flotation initially planned for the end of the year or early 2023, Boden happily discusses the bank's future. "If I look forward to five years' time, people will be talking about Starling as being this global technology company that owns a very successful bank in the UK and it all started here in Cardiff," she says. "We go towards a future where tech is pervasive and things are happening all around you, banks have to respond," she says. "Instead of paying your insurance bill by the quar-



CARDIFF, UK: CEO of the British Starling bank Anne Boden poses for photographs at the bank's offices in Cardiff, Wales. —AFP

ter perhaps you'll pay by the minute. Perhaps you'll pay for your self-driving car as you self-drive down the road." —AFP

KIB main speaker at IDC Inaugural Kuwait CIO Summit 2022

KUWAIT: Upholding its leading position and presence within the financial and banking sector by taking part in international knowledge exchange forums and sharing its industry expertise, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently participated as a main panel speaker at the IDC Inaugural Kuwait CIO Summit 2022, hosted under the theme "Accelerating Your Journey to a Digital-First World". The event, which was held in Kuwait on May 25th, 2022 and organized by the International Data Corporation (IDC), explored as part of its activities Kuwait's changing technology landscape, along with the strategies presented by its organizations to help them evolve into digitally resilient enterprises and ensure their business continuity as they address the "Next Normal" - now and in the future.

Representing KIB, General Manager of the Financial Control and Planning Department and Chief Financial Officer of the Bank, Ajai Thomas, co-lead a discussion panel, under the umbrella of the Summit's main theme: "Accelerating your journey to a digital-first world", touching upon several topics, through which he mainly focused on finding and enhancing ways to achieve a successful alignment, collaboration, and co-innovation between CIOs and Line of Business (LOB) heads. During his session, Thomas was able to elaborate on how CIOs should maintain IT relevance and integration across functions by building alliances with LOB organizations and ecosystem partners that transcend transactional project-focused



Ajai Thomas

efforts, in order to establish a more advanced and highly efficient digital infrastructure.

Commenting on his participation at the IDC-CIO Summit 2022 as a KIB representative, Thomas affirmed the Bank's strong commitment towards finding the right opportunities through which it can showcase its digital expertise and play a more active role within the larger economic discussions taking place across its various sectors around the globe, noting that this comes as part of KIB's objectives aimed at advancing banking and financial literacy. "It is absolutely vital for the development of the sector that we, as one of its leading financial institutions, involve our business leaders and subject matter experts in educational platforms to further connect and exchange insights, views and practical experiences with industry peers to help foster growth and innovation. It is crucial that we keep pace with the ongoing technological changes within our sector that are happening faster than ever," added Thomas.

During his session, Thomas also discussed how business teams and IT teams are fusing together to deliver more advanced business capabilities. The panel also touched upon some of the biggest challenges that face IT working together with business executives to deliver goals set by the organization. They also spoke about CIOs successfully leveraging digital capabilities and capitalize on it, in order to help organizations transform into future enterprises, while striving to continuously adapt to evolving disruptions.

It serves to note that KIB has always been keen on partaking in such pioneering events and gatherings, as it strives to maintain a high standard and value for the public, strengthening its status among distinguished speakers within the financial and economic field. As part of this commitment, KIB participated in the inaugural IDC-CIO Summit in Kuwait, for all the important and interesting issues and topics it covered related to the developments in information technology, including digital leadership and the importance of information security.

Kamco Invest issues first sustainability report for 2021

KUWAIT: Kamco Invest, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse with one of the largest AUMs in the region, issued its first sustainability report showcasing the Company's continued commitment across environmental, social, economic, and governance aspects for the year ended 31 December 2021. Kamco Invest's sustainability report was established in line with multiple frameworks including Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the seven pillars of the UN's Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP), Bursa Kuwait ESG indicators, and the seven pillars of "New Kuwait" which fall under the Kuwait National Development Plan (KNDP).

Driven by the importance of sustaining a long-term business perspective, Kamco Invest strives to become one of the leading contributors to the social fabric of Kuwait. The actions taken by the Company within this aspect have assisted in the formulation of a sustainable business ecosystem that optimizes growth and adds value to all stakeholders in an increasingly globalized and dynamic world.

Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, Chief Executive Officer commented, "An integral part of Kamco Invest's value creation strategy lies in promoting and working towards a sustainable ecosystem. Sustainability has become a key business imperative, positively influencing how we operate and react towards the environment, society, and our employees. This report showcases the success of the sustainable mindset that we have been cultivating into our corporate strategy for years."

Lexus Design Award 2022 Grand Prix winner announced

KUWAIT: Lexus recently announced that "Rewind" by Poh Yun Ru has been selected by the judging panel as the Grand Prix winner of the 2022 Lexus Design Award, the award's tenth edition that attracted 1,726 entries from 57 countries.

The Lexus Design Award Award was established in 2013 with the mission of supporting and nurturing creators early in their careers to help shape a better future and create happiness for all through design, while articulating the Lexus brand's three core principles: Anticipate, Innovate, and Captivate. The Grand Prix winner "Rewind" contributes to a better tomorrow by using technology to help people stimulate their memories when their recall ability is challenged.

The six finalists selected this January spent three months developing their original proposals and creating prototypes under the enthusiastic and highly skilled guidance of Sam Baron, Joe Doucet, Yosuke Hayano and Sabine Marcelis. Mentoring by the world's leading creators was a once-in-a-lifetime learning experience for these young talents. This process facilitated the impressive evolution of the finalists' projects, not to mention that of the Grand Prix work, "Rewind."

Commenting on her win, Poh Yun Rusa said: "I feel immensely grateful that Rewind is now a step closer to improving the lives of more people. This couldn't have happened without the unwavering support of my mentors, my team of dedicated engineers, programmers, healthcare experts, and users. This opportunity from Lexus Design Award to turn a project into a real-world product felt nothing short of amazing, and I feel heartened to have met and learned from so many passionate designers from around the world. It has been such a rewarding and inspiring journey, and I am excited to continue designing for a better world and a better tomorrow for all."

In a new benefit for 2022, the finalists met one-on-one with the design world's elite panel of judges Paola Antonelli, Anupama Kundoo, Bruce Mau, and Simon Humphries following the 10th Lexus Design



Faisal Mansour Sarkhou

The Company's sustainability approach enabled Kamco Invest to better serve its stakeholders and generate a positive impact for the community. The 2021 Sustainability Report is an essential step in reinforcing the Company's sustainable considerations across economic, environmental, social and

governance factors, especially when formulating new strategies related to the business. This practice is evident to Kamco Invest's unwavering efforts to become a more transparent organization, an increasingly ethical business pioneer, and most importantly a long-term value creating entity for all its stakeholders.

As of recent years, Kamco Invest took major strides towards tackling environmental, social and governance issues through internal and external initiatives. The Company has been transforming into an environmentally conscious advocate by undergoing a massive digital transformation exercise, whereby it has introduced digital platforms that enhance both client experience and internal processes. From a social perspective, the Company has been increasingly contributing to the areas of health and wellbeing, youth and women empowerment, as well as education and financial literacy.

In terms of corporate governance, Kamco Invest has been persistent in implementing a strong framework that aligns its business fronts to best practices and ethical standards. This notion has ensured the adherence and compliance to applicable laws and regulations that impact the business. Additionally, through a diligent and ongoing review, the Company adheres to all new regulatory developments within minimal time.



Sarkhou added, "Throughout its history, Kamco Invest has contributed to numerous initiatives, making a lasting and impactful footprint in the community. These contributions include introducing new business opportunities, offering innovative financial solutions, disseminating valuable market insights, and playing a key role in the local and regional financial markets. In parallel, Kamco Invest applies an extensive corporate social responsibility program that aims to spread awareness, support, and give back to the community through various causes."

The sustainability report features a detailed overview of the Company's activities within ESG, acting as a baseline of the Company's current impact. This will allow Kamco Invest to evolve its sustainable growth strategy in the years to come. Kamco Invest will also be able to set measurable targets and key performance indicators to its sustainability goals and track the progress moving forward. It is worth noting that the report is available on the Company's website www.kamcoinvest.com/sustainability.

Sarkhou concluded by saying, "This is only the beginning as Kamco Invest will continue to build on its sustainable development program and evolve its sustainable business ecosystem under to pave the way for establishing the aspired modern state."



Six finalists

Award event. After the judging session, the finalists received not only direct feedback on their work, but also career advice and tips for improvement. This beta-feature of the 10th anniversary Lexus Design Award turned out to be an extraordinarily valuable experience.

Congratulating Poh Yun Ru's on her innovative creation, Kei Fujita, Chief Representative of Middle East & Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "The Lexus Design Award was created with the aim of fostering the growth of ideas that contribute to society by supporting designers and creators whose works can contribute to a better tomorrow. This year's winner - Poh Yun Ru's Rewind - is a work of tremendous imagination and creativity that captures the essence of what the Lexus Design Award stands for."

Fujita added, "Breaking conventions and going beyond the boundaries of imagination are at the heart of Lexus' approach to design, and the Lexus Design Award offers us all an opportunity to continue creating amazing new experiences that ignite the emotions. I would like to thank everyone who made this year's award possible, along with our customers from all across the world who have helped us create amazing experiences along the way."

The six Lexus Design Award 2022 finalists' projects will be shown at the Lexus exhibit during Milan Design Week 2022, the world's largest design event, to be held in June.

Al-Shemmeri wins Alfouz prize of KD 10,000

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced Mejbek Humod Al-Shemmeri as the winner of KD 10,000 in the Alfouz weekly draw. The winner was announced on 30 May, 2022. The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry

The Alfouz draw account offers ABK customers the chance to win life-changing rewards. With Alfouz, ABK customers will get a chance to win KD 10,000 in Kuwait's highest single weekly draw and the ultimate grand prize of KD 5,000 monthly additional income for 10 years. Both new and existing ABK customers can benefit from this opportunity, with a minimum account balance of KD 100 only. ABK encourages everyone to open Alfouz draw account and/or increase their balances to have more chances in winning in the upcoming draw which will happen on Monday, 6 June, 2022. The higher the deposits are, the higher the chances to win.



Queen honored with Stonehenge tribute ahead of Platinum Jubilee

This tribute to Queen Elizabeth II really rocks. The 96-year-old British monarch was honored with portraits of her projected onto Stonehenge, as part of the annual Platinum Jubilee, celebrating her 70 years on the throne. The stones feature eight portraits, including a photo from the queen's coronation in 1953, a picture of her riding a horse in the 1960s, an appearance at the Royal Windsor Horse Show in 2017 and more.

It is managed by English Heritage but the monument itself is owned by the Crown. The prehistoric site has roots archaeologists believe date back to 3000 BC - although many questions about its history remain unanswered - and it holds spiritual significance for many Pagans and Druids. — www.bristolpost.co.uk

Real Housewives TV franchise lands in Dubai

The Real Housewives reality television franchise is landing in Dubai, to mixed reactions among residents of the emirate long known as a playground for the rich. Six women, only one of whom is Emirati, star in Bravo TV's "The Real Housewives of Dubai", which premieres on Wednesday, amid criticism that the show does not reflect reality on the ground in the emirate.

Much like the Real Housewives series filmed in Beverly Hills, Atlanta and New Jersey, the show will follow the lives of affluent women in Dubai, offering an inside look into their glamorous and often dramatic world. A three-minute trailer reveals that themes like sex, money and fashion will continue on in the series' new iteration in Dubai, where foreigners make up the vast majority of the approximately three-million strong population.

And while the franchise has had a number of spinoffs outside the United States, "The Real Housewives of Dubai" will be Bravo's first original production in a non-US city. Executive producer Andy Cohen vowed that the show would bring "conversations that we haven't heard before in the Housewives universe", according to a Bravo TV statement earlier this month. "The rules of Dubai are different than the rules of Beverly Hills or



Salt Lake City, and you're gonna be fascinated to hear how people live there," he continued.

"There are goats, there are fashion shoots in the desert, there's plenty of shade, and there's a lot of money." While many have welcomed the new series, others in the emirate where the majority of the native population is Muslim took to social media to express their discontent. "The housewives of my country are our mothers, our sisters, our daughters. They are the backbone in helping give our children the proper upbringing," tweeted Emirati social media influencer

Majid Alamy.

"Yes, we are a tolerant country, but that does not mean that others can walk all over our morals and values. And that series does not represent the real housewives of Dubai." The wealthy United Arab Emirates-made up of seven emirates including Dubai has undertaken ambitious steps to boost its position as a trade, entertainment and tourism hub and to diversify its economy away from oil.—AFP

The Arctic's tricky quest for sustainable tourism

Home to polar bears, the midnight sun and the northern lights, a Norwegian archipelago perched high in the Arctic is trying to find a way to profit from its pristine wilderness without ruining it. The Svalbard archipelago, located 1,300 kilometers (800 miles) from the North Pole and reachable by commercial airline flights, offers visitors vast expanses of untouched nature, with majestic mountains, glaciers and frozen fjords. Or, the fjords used to be frozen. Svalbard is now on the frontline of climate change, with the Arctic warming three times faster than the planet.

The local coal mines—the original reason for human settlements here—have closed one after the other over the years, and tourism has become one of the main pillars of the local economy, along with scientific research. "It's always hard to defend because we know that tourism worldwide creates challenges to all the places people visit, but also in the bigger climate change perspective," acknowledged Ronny Brunvoll, the head of tourism board Visit Svalbard.

"But we can't stop people from traveling. We can't stop people from visiting each other, so we have to find solutions," he said. Around 140,000 people visit these latitudes each year, according to pre-pandemic data, where 65 percent of the land is protected. Like the 3,000 local residents, visitors must follow strict rules that bar them from disturbing the animals—tracking a polar bear can lead to a big fine—or picking flowers in an ecosystem almost devoid of vegetation.

"You are really confronted with nature.



This file photo shows a general view of Longyearbyen, located on Spitsbergen island, Svalbard Archipelago, northern Norway. — AFP photos

There are not a lot of places like this left," said Frederique Barraja, a French photographer on one of her frequent trips to the region. "It attracts people, like all rare places. But these places remain fragile, so you have to be respectful when you visit them."

Ultra-polluting heavy fuel, commonly used by large cruise ships, has been banned in the archipelago since the start of the year, ahead of a ban to be progressively implemented across the Arctic as

of 2024. The ban may be another nail in the coffin for the controversial cruise ships that sail into the region. The biggest of the behemoths can drop off up to 5,000 passengers in Longyearbyen, the archipelago's modest main town whose infrastructure, such as roads and toilets, is not designed to accommodate such large crowds.

Electric wave

With tourism here already attracting a

rather exclusive clientele, some operators are going further than regulations require, such as Norwegian cruise line Hurtigruten which aims to become "the most environmental tour operator in the world". Sustainability "shouldn't be a competitive advantage", said a senior executive with the group, Henrik Lund. "It should just give a right to play." The company banned single-use plastics back in 2018, and now offers outings on electric snowmobiles.

It also recently launched excursions on board a small cutting-edge hybrid vessel, the Kvitbjorn (Polar Bear, in Norwegian), combining a diesel motor and electric batteries. "In the idyllic exploration areas, we go full electric. We go silent and we don't have any combustion fumes," said Johan Inden, head of marine engine maker Volvo Penta. But electrification efforts in the archipelago are currently hobbled by the fact that electricity comes from a coal plant—a fossil energy source that contributes to global warming. "Electrification makes sense, regardless of the energy source," insisted Christian Eriksen of the Norwegian environmental group Bellona. Regardless of whether it comes from "dirty" or "clean" sources, electricity "makes it possible either way to reduce emissions," Eriksen said, citing a study on electric cars that came to the same conclusion.

Longyearbyen plans to close the plant by the autumn of 2023, invest in renewable energies and reduce its emissions by 80 percent by 2030. But Brunvoll, the head of the tourism board, noted the main problem is travel. "Even when addressing the things we can do locally, like the emissions from snowmobiles or cars, we must still acknowledge that the really big problem is the transport to and from Svalbard, both in tourism but also for us locals," he said. "We have a climate footprint per capita in Longyearbyen that is insane." — AFP



Tourists visiting an ice cave inside Larsbreen Glacier, near Longyearbyen, on Spitsbergen Island.



The sun appears behind the clouds 7 minutes after midnight, in Longyearbyen.



Tourists come back to Longyearbyen after a tour on snow mobiles.



A warning sign depicting a polar bear and the distances to different cities around the globe at the side of a road outside Longyearbyen airport.



A reindeer is pictured in Longyearbyen.



The Gruve 7, the last coal mine still in operation in Norway, is pictured near Longyearbyen.



Thespians act out a scene in a historic play that was banned for years and its authors, including the celebrated literary, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, imprisoned but after more than four decades, Kenya's most famous play is finally home at the Kenya Cultural Centre, Nairobi. — AFP photos



Thespians act out a scene in a historic play.



Thespians act out a scene in a historic play.

KENYA'S MOST FAMOUS PLAY COMES HOME AFTER 45-YEAR WAIT

It was banned for years and its authors, including the celebrated Ngugi wa Thiong'o-imprisoned, but after more than four decades, Kenya's most famous play is finally home. As the lights dim and a hush settles over the Nairobi audience, the theatre explodes into song and actors dance down the aisle. It is a scene few could have imagined. Although "Ngaahika Ndeenda" ("I Will Marry When I Want") occupies a special place on the Kenyan stage, the drama's tumultuous history means it has not seen the light of day since 1977, when it was performed by peasants and factory workers in the central town of Limuru.

Its withering take on the exploitation of ordinary Kenyans by the country's elite hit home and the government wasted no time in shutting down the show, banning Ngugi's books and jailing him and the play's co-writer, Ngugi wa Mirii. Following a year in Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Ngugi was released but "virtually banned from getting any job", he told AFP in an interview from California, where he lives in self-imposed exile.

After Kenya embraced democratic reforms, he returned home in 2004 and was mobbed by fans at the airport. But the visit quickly turned ugly, when he was beaten by armed men and his wife raped in their Nairobi apartment. It has never been established if robbery was the sole motive behind the attack. "The play has had all these consequences on my life... my life would not (let) me forget it even if I tried," the 84-year-old said.

'Spiritual experience'

Born into a large peasant family in



Thespians act out a scene in a historic play.

1938, Kenya's most feted novelist and perennial Nobel Prize contender launched his writing career in English. But it was a decision in the 1970s to abandon English in favour of his native Kikuyu that cemented his reputation as a writer willing to risk his literary future to preserve African languages. It comes as little surprise then that the play, which tells the story of a poor Kenyan family battling a land-grab by their wealthy compatriots, is also being staged in Kikuyu, with some shows in English.

"It's been a spiritual experience for me to be on that stage," said Mwaura Bilal, who plays the protagonist Kiguunda, a farmer fighting to hold on to his culture and his tiny plot of land. "There's an intrinsic human need to connect with who you are,

especially in Africa, where we have been taught that English, French, German are marks of superiority, of intelligence," the 34-year-old Kikuyu actor told AFP. The production, which runs until the end of May, relied heavily on collaboration, its British director Stuart Nash told AFP.

The process involved him directing the actors in English who would then apply the instructions to their Kikuyu performance as well. "It wasn't so much the language that was challenging but as someone who is not Kenyan or Kikuyu, there's a cultural subtext which isn't always clear," Nash said. The team took pains to make the production feel as authentic as possible, peppering the English version with Swahili and including traditional Kikuyu songs in both performances.



Thespians interact with the audience as they dance their way to the stage.

Troubling relevance

Many of the issues highlighted by the playwrights still persist in Kenya and beyond, from widening economic inequality to the lingering trauma of racism. The play's troubling relevance, decades on, isn't lost on the cast, the director or its creator. "I am an activist, I want to see change," Ngugi said. Nearly 60 years after winning independence from Britain in 1963, Kenya has struggled to bridge the inequality gap and is now preparing for a presidential election that pits two multi-millionaires against each other.

"Nothing has changed," said Nice Githinji, who portrays the show's female lead Wangeci, seeking a better life for her daughter. "Perhaps that was why the play was banned—so nothing would change,"

Githinji, 36, told AFP. Nevertheless, the play's triumphant return to the country that forced its creators to choose between silence or exile is itself cause for some optimism.

Over four decades after Ngugi took the fateful decision to stop writing fiction in English, overturning "the hierarchy of language" remains at the heart of his efforts to fight inequality. Even today, Kenyan children are sometimes bullied by teachers for speaking their mother tongue instead of English at school, in a disturbing echo of the pre-independence era. "It is very important to instill pride in one's language," Ngugi said. "I hope we can continue striving for that world. We cannot give up."—AFP



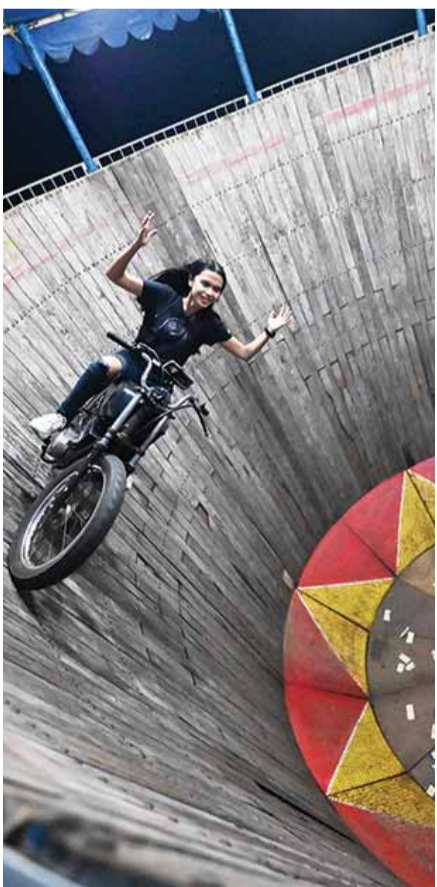
Daredevil Karmila Purba, a rider of the "wall of death", gesturing before a performance inside a six-meter high wall at a night carnival in Bogor.



Daredevil Karmila Purba, a rider of the "wall of death", before a performance inside a six-meter high wall at a night carnival in Bogor.



A rider of the "wall of death" performing inside a six-meter high wall at a night carnival in Bogor.



Daredevil Karmila Purba, a rider of the "wall of death", gesturing before a performance inside a six-meter high wall at a night carnival in Bogor.

'Princess of the Wall of Death': Indonesian daredevil defies gravity and stereotypes

Karmila Purba revs her motorbike under the lights of an Indonesian night carnival and rides up horizontally inside a wooden cylinder called Satan's Barrel, drawing gasps from spectators looking down into the drum. With a smile on her face, Purba delights onlookers as she fearlessly pings around the bowl in Bogor, West Java, spreading her arms to collect tips waved by those above. The gravity-defying daredevil is among a handful of women that perform the stunt in Indonesia, zipping around a structure more commonly known as the "Wall of Death".

Women becoming "Wall of Death" riders is "extremely rare", the 23-year-old told AFP before the show. "When I started there was no one else... so I wanted to be something different, doing something that no one else was doing." For decades, the Satan's Barrel-or "Tong Setan"—has been the main attraction at travelling funfairs in Indonesia, particularly in rural areas where there are few



This photo shows a rider of the "wall of death" performing inside a six-meter high wall at a night carnival in Bogor. — AFP photos

options for affordable entertainment.

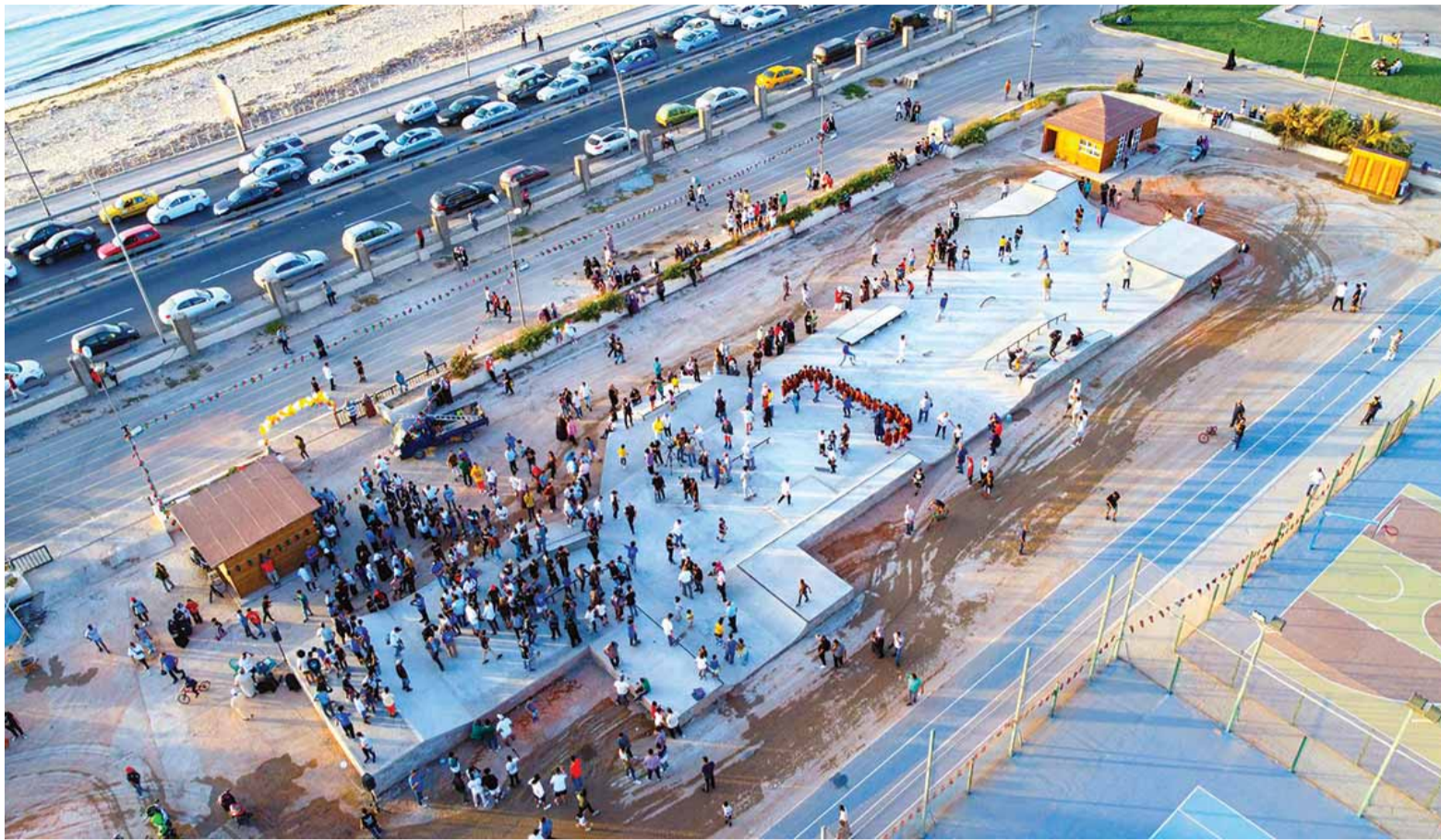
Using centrifugal force, riders steer their bikes around the motordrome at high speeds without protective gear as the smell of rubber fills the air. Purba

came from humble beginnings, earning a meagre living as a street busker on the island of Sumatra in western Indonesia before switching jobs eight years ago for a better income of around 6 million rupi-

ah (\$410) a month.

She can also earn up to 400,000 rupiah (\$27) in tips on a good day. But at the beginning of her daredevil journey, she faced questions about her career choice. "People were saying to me, 'you are a woman, why do you do something like that? It's not for females'," she said. "There was a lot of criticism." Fans eventually began to praise Purba, giving her the nickname "the Princess of the Wall of Death". Now she is one of the star acts of the carnival. "(A) female wall of death rider is very interesting and has become the main attraction in this night market because people are curious," spectator Sumarno told AFP while watching the show. "They didn't believe a woman could do something extreme like that."—AFP

Lifestyle | Features



An aerial picture shows the inauguration of a skatepark, a first in Libya, in the capital Tripoli. — AFP photos



Skateboarders show off their skills during the inauguration of a skatepark.



Bikers attend the inauguration of a skatepark, a first in Libya, in the capital Tripoli.

Boards against boredom: Libya rolls out first skatepark

Libyan Mohamed Abderraouf put a foot on his board and launched himself across Tripoli's first skatepark, a welcome break in the conflict-battered capital with few facilities for bored young people. "I can't describe the joy," said the 18-year-old, who bought his first skateboard in 2020 and had only been able to practice on street corners-until now. "I'm going to come a couple of times a week." The free, open-air facility opened over the weekend in central Tripoli, to the delight of young skaters who spent the afternoon sweeping up and down the halfpipes and taking selfies with their friends.

"I'm really happy, because before there wasn't a dedicated place for skating," said Rayan Al-Omar, 18, who has been skating for a year. The United States-funded facility was built by Make Life Skate Life, a charity that has set up "free-of-charge, community-built concrete skateparks" in Iraq, Bolivia and India. Australian Wade Trevean, who designed the 800-square-metre Tripoli site, said volunteers had come from far and wide to help build it, a process that took about six weeks. "There are people from New York, people from Belgium, Germany or Australia," Trevean said. "The happiness and positivity here are amazing."

Built on Gaddafi bodyguard base
Local skaters played a role in the project too, part of a seaside park that also includes a cycling route and five-a-side football pitches. The rest of the complex was completed a year ago on the site of

meaning few resources were put into leisure and cultural facilities-already almost non-existent under Gaddafi. So almost two years since the guns fell silent following the last major battle on the edges of the capital, the opening

"Thank God it is here now," he said. For Make Life Skate Life, the "overall goal" of the skatepark is "to create a safe community space where people from different backgrounds can come together and positively interact in a playful way",

boys-split equally — who would otherwise not be able to skate, with boards and safety gear available to use. Trevean extolled the virtues of skateparks for building community. "People are skateboarding but also people come here to



Skateboarders show off their skills during the inauguration of a skatepark, a first in Libya, in the capital Tripoli.

a former base of the "Amazons", the entourage of female bodyguards of deposed dictator Moamer Gaddafi, and seen as a symbol of the tyrant's extravagance. Since he was overthrown and killed in a 2011 revolt, Tripoli has endured successive waves of violence,

of a skatepark in Tripoli generated a lot of attention. For young Libyan skateboarders, interest in the sport reflects a yearning for normality, to be like other nations and other young people. Abderraouf said such a project would have been "unimaginable" until recently.



A skateboarder arrives to show off his skills during the inauguration of a skatepark, a first in Libya, in the capital Tripoli.

the organization said. "Apart from creating immediate local employment, the skatepark aims to contribute to a healthier, more active, more engaged, and happier society," it added. The group say they will hold free weekly skate classes of 60 girls and

hang out, exchange ideas, have conversation, meet new people," he said. "I know the benefits of skateparks, and I truly believe in them." — AFP



Skateboarders show off their skills during the inauguration of a skatepark, a first in Libya.



A Libyan folk troupe perform during the inauguration of a skatepark, a first in the country.



Youths show off their inline skating skills during the inauguration of a skatepark, a first in Libya, in the capital Tripoli.

Writer Boris Pahor, survivor of Europe's horrors, dies aged 108

Slovene author Boris Pahor, who suffered the oppression of Fascist Italy and the horror of Nazi camps in a life dedicated to the defense of minorities, has died at the age of 108, local media reported Monday. Italian President Sergio Mattarella hailed Pahor as a "witness and victim of the horrors caused by war, by inflated nationalism and totalitarian ideologies". Pahor was best-known for "Necropolis" (1967), an autobiographical novel written after a visit to a Nazi camp where he had been held 20 years earlier.

arrested by the Nazis in 1944 for his involvement with the anti-fascist Slovenian resistance. He was held at five concentration camps including Natzweiler-Struthof in France's Alsace region and Dachau and Bergen-Belsen in Germany. When he was born, Trieste was still part of the Austro-Hungarian empire and home to a significant Slovenian community. The city became part of Italy in the post-World War



In this file photo Italian writer and member of the Slovenian minority, Boris Pahor reads a book while giving an interview to AFP at Caffè San Marco in Trieste, northern Italy. — AFP

I break-up of the defeated empire, and the Slovenes fell prey to campaigns of "Italianization".

Conquerer in Slovenia
Pahor was seven years old when the Blackshirt militia loyal to fascist leader Benito Mussolini set fire to the Slovenian

cultural centre in Trieste in July 1920, an incident that forever marked him. Slovenian language and media were banned, and books burned. Names were Italianized; Slovenians were arrested, and resistors executed. "Under Austria, the Slovenes were able to develop their culture. With Italy, we knew we were going to lose everything," he told AFP in an interview in 2009.

As a teenager in Trieste, he realized he was one of the "bugs" that Mussolini wanted to crush and vowed loyalty to his Slovene identity. "I started to put my identity on paper, to write about my street, the sea, the quays. I conquered the town in Slovene," he said. With more than a dozen books to his name, Pahor was also politically involved and stood for European and regional elections for the Slovene Union in 2009 and 2018 respectively, representing Italy's Slovene minority, which now numbers at least 80,000 people. "In this Europe, dominated by the economy, the minorities, their culture and their language do not have the place that they deserve," he told AFP. Pahor was particularly lauded in Slovenia, which became independent from the disintegrating Yugoslavia in 1991, receiving its highest award for cultural achievement and appointed to its Academy of Sciences and Arts. —AFP

Hilary Duff admits to 'living in a bubble' as a child star

Hilary Duff "lived in a bubble" as a teenage star. The 34-year-old actress shot to fame as a child, starring in the hit TV series 'Lizzie McGuire' - but Hilary has now revealed that she wanted to walk away from her career at the age of 18. The blonde beauty - who has also enjoyed success as a singer - shared: "Around 18 I gave up everything. I had just finished a tour. I was in Europe, and after the last concert, I said, 'Enough'." Asked why she felt that way, Hilary told Grazia magazine: "I didn't know how to cook or start a washing machine. I didn't even know what I liked and what I didn't. I didn't plan my day and I was never on my own. I had a fabulous career but I was no longer satisfied. My friends did normal things for that age, but I lived in a bubble and felt terrible. Not to mention the pressure I felt: I had about 200 people working for me on tours. I was responsible for their

salaries. It was too much. "I had to pull the plug to understand who I was, what I really wanted, and to learn to live alone." Hilary ultimately opted to take a break for two years, and she now realizes that stepping back from her career has helped her in the long run. The actress - who has Luca, ten, with ex-husband Mike Comrie, as well as Banks, three, and Mae, 14 months, with Matthew Koma - explained: "Taking that break helped me become the humble woman I am today. I don't think I would have kept my feet as firmly on the ground as I do today if I hadn't taken that break then." —www.kkly.com



Sports

Gauff, Trevisan to clash for place in French Open final

Medvedev, Tsitsipas crash as Swiatek survives scare

PARIS: Teenage star Coco Gauff and Martina Trevisan, a seasoned Italian professional who rebuilt her career after conquering anorexia, reached their maiden Grand Slam semi-finals at the French Open on Tuesday. Gauff, who burst onto the scene as a 15-year-old history-maker at Wimbledon three years ago, defeated fellow American Sloane Stephens 7-5, 6-2. Trevisan needed three sets to see off 19-year-old Leylah Fernandez of Canada 6-2, 6-7 (3/7), 6-3.

Victory for Gauff, 18 years old and ranked 23 in the world, avenged her defeat to Stephens at the 2021 US Open and helped erase the memory of her quarter-final defeat last year to eventual champion Barbora Krejčíková in Paris. "I feel so happy," said Gauff. "Last year was a tough loss for me but I believe that match made me stronger. Last time I played Sloane I lost. Today was different. I stayed mentally strong as she is the kind of player who can make shots others can't do."

On Tuesday, Gauff broke in the second game of the match to lead 3-0 before 2018 runner-up Stephens levelled with a break and hold for 5-5. However, clean, precise hitting allowed Gauff to dominate the 12th game to clinch the opener. Stephens, playing in her first Slam quarter-final in three years, and Gauff traded breaks at the start of the second set before the teenager again pounced for 3-1. Gauff held for 5-1, was broken for 5-2 before Stephens dropped serve for the fourth time in the set to hand her compatriot victory.

Gauff was junior champion at Roland Garros in 2018 and then rocketed into the public consciousness when she became the youngest woman to qualify for Wimbledon. Her profile rocketed when she went all the way to the fourth round at the All England Club, knocking out Venus Williams on the way. While in the French capital, Gauff has graduated high school, marking the occasion on Instagram with a family photo in front of the Eiffel Tower. "Getting my diploma meant a lot to me," she said Tuesday.



PARIS: US' Coco Gauff watches the ball as she plays a return to US' Sloane Stephens during their women's singles match on day ten of the Roland-Garros Open tennis tournament on May 31, 2022. — AFP

Italian inspiration

"Lots of players think tennis is the most important thing and it's not." World number 59 Trevisan, 10 years older than Gauff, was a shock quarter-finalist in 2020. She arrived at the French Open with a maiden WTA title in Rabat and went into Tuesday's tie on a nine-match winning streak. She made that 10 when she claimed victory on a second match point having wasted one in the second set with Fernandez left to rue her 44 unforced errors.

"I was very nervous on that first match point, I thought I was already in the semi-final," said Trevisan, the first Italian woman to make the last four since Sara Errani in 2013. Trevisan, now guaranteed a place in the top 30 at least, said Grand Slam titles by fellow Italians Francesca Schiavone in Paris in 2010 and Flavia Pennetta at the 2015 US Open were her influences. "They are happy for me. They are my biggest inspirations."



PARIS: Italy's Martina Trevisan plays a backhand return to Canada's Leylah Fernandez during their women's singles match on day ten of the Roland-Garros Open tennis tournament on May 31, 2022. — AFP

Two years ago, Trevisan, then ranked 159, knocked Gauff out in three sets in the second round in Paris. She then revealed how she struggled as a teenager with an eating disorder after her father was diagnosed with a degenerative disease. "Thirty grams of cereals and a fruit in the evening. It was enough for me to stand up, and to worry my mother, who ran to pick peaches from the trees just to see me eat something," she wrote in an online blog.

Medvedev, Tsitsipas crash

In another development, world number two Daniil Medvedev and fourth-ranked Stefanos Tsitsipas crashed out of the French Open in the fourth round on Monday as women's top seed Iga Swiatek took her winning streak to 32 matches after surviving a huge scare. US Open champion Medvedev was beaten by 20th seed Marin Cilic 6-2, 6-3, 6-2 in just 1hr 45 min on Court Philippe Chatrier.

Tsitsipas, the 2021 runner-up to Novak Djokovic, was defeated by Danish teenager Holger Rune 7-5, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 earlier in the day. Cilic will face Russia's Andrey Rublev in his third career Roland Garros quarter-final. "It's one of the most beautiful matches of my career, it was fantastic from the first to the last point," said Cilic, adding he is playing his "best tennis in recent weeks". Medvedev had enjoyed his best run in Paris 12 months ago when he reached the quarter-finals.

He hadn't dropped a set at this year's tournament but was completely outplayed by the 33-year-old Cilic who broke serve five times. Medvedev was unable to carve out a single break point as the Croatian got the better of the Russian for the first time in four meetings. Rublev made the quarter-finals for the second time when Italian opponent Jannik Sinner retired with a left knee injury with the Russian 1-6, 6-4, 2-0 ahead.

Rune became the first Danish man to reach the French Open quarter-finals when he shocked Tsitsipas. Rune, just 19 and ranked 40, swept to a memorable win on the back of 54 winners. With fellow 19-year-old Carlos Alcaraz already into the quarter-finals, it's the first time two teenagers have made it this far in Paris since Hendrik Dreekman and Andrei Medvedev 28 years ago. In a tense fourth set, Rune gave up a 5-2 lead and fought off three more break points in the 10th game before securing victory when Tsitsipas hit long.

Zheng injury

The 23-year-old is also into his first ever Grand Slam quarter-final as he continues an impressive season which has seen him win two clay-court titles. Swiatek survived a scare at the hands of injured Chinese teenager Zheng Qinwen, dropping the first set before going on to make the quarter-finals. Swiatek prevailed 6-7 (5/7), 6-0, 6-2 to equal the third best winning streak this century of 32 matches set by Justine Henin 14 years ago. — AFP

Tired and sad, Mane, Salah head to Africa for AFCON qualifying

JOHANNESBURG: Premier League stars Sadio Mane and Mohamed Salah head to Africa for 2023 Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers weary and disappointed after a 70-match season that ended with Liverpool's Champions League final loss. Mane-inspired defending champions Senegal host Benin and visit Rwanda in Group L and should secure maximum points in a competition where section winners and runners-up secure tournament places.

Salah-captained Egypt begin with a home match against Guinea in Group D, then travel to Malawi to face Ethiopia, none of whose grounds meet international standards. The first three of 46 matchday one and two qualifiers are scheduled for Wednesday and the last three for June 13.

Another Premier League star, winger Riyad Mahrez from champions Manchester City, cannot lead Algeria against Uganda and Tanzania in Group F due to an undisclosed injury. Barcelona forward Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang will be a notable absentee when Gabon tackle the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mauritania in Group I having announced his retirement from international football. But the spotlight, as always, will be on Anfield teammates Mane and Salah, the last two winners of the African Footballer of the Year title.

According to global footballers' union Fifpro, both forwards made 70th appearances in the 2021-2022 season when playing for Liverpool in the 1-0 Champions League final defeat by Real Madrid last Saturday. Fifpro believe footballers should not play more than 55 matches in a season, warning that stars like Mane and Salah are being pushed to their physical limits. Vincent Gouttebauge, the Fifpro chief medical officer, sent a stark message: "This kind of working environment is conducive to the development of mental health problems." Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp is sympathetic to his African stars, saying "Mane and Salah have two weeks off a year in a physically demanding job". Short flying distances between European countries help national team stars, but Mane, Salah and hundreds of other Africans regularly face many hours in the air, punctuated by lengthy stop-overs. When South African sides play in north Africa, they usually travel via the United Arab Emirates or Qatar due to the absence of direct flights and to cut costs.

While a few comparatively rich national football associations charter jets, it is not unusual for squads to be split into several travelling groups and take several days to reach a destination. Adding to the logistical challenges facing officials is that 16 of the 45 countries competing for 23 places along side the Ivory Coast next June cannot host matches due to sub-standard stadiums. Morocco will stage the matches of Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Mauritius and Liberia while South Africa serves as the temporary home for Mozambique, Namibia, Eswatini and Lesotho. — AFP



SAINT-DENIS: Liverpool's Senegalese striker Sadio Mane reacts after losing the UEFA Champions League final football match between Liverpool and Real Madrid on May 28, 2022. — AFP



MONACO: Red Bull Racing's Mexican driver Sergio Perez kisses his trophy on the podium after winning the Monaco Formula 1 Grand Prix at the Monaco street circuit. — AFP

Red Bull rewards Perez with new deal to 2024

PARIS: Red Bull on Tuesday announced they have rewarded Sergio Perez with a fresh two-year deal until 2024, saying the decision to hold on to the most successful Mexican driver in Formula One history was "a no brainer". Max Verstappen's teammate signed his new contract at Monaco at the weekend to give him double cause for celebration after he emerged from all the chaos caused by a pre-race deluge to win the iconic Grand Prix.

"For us, holding onto his pace, race craft and experience was a no-brainer and we are delighted that Checo will continue to race for the team until 2024," team boss Christian Horner said. Perez, 32, moved to within 15 points of world champion Verstappen and only nine behind Ferrari's Charles Leclerc in the drivers' standings after rising above all the mayhem on Sunday, that fine win coming after three second-place finishes.

Perez said: "For me, this has been an incredible week, winning the Monaco Grand Prix is a dream for any driver and then to follow that with announcing I will continue with the team until 2024 just makes me extremely happy." He joined Red Bull last season, claiming a win on another street circuit in Azerbaijan with four further podiums to finish fourth behind his Dutch colleague. In his statement Horner noted the popular Perez had done a "fantastic" job and stepped up a gear in his second year with the team.

"Time and again he has proved himself to not only be a magnificent team player but as his level of comfort has grown he has become a real force to be reckoned with at

the sharp end of the grid," Horner remarked. "This year he has taken another step and the gap to world champion Max has closed significantly, evidenced by his superb pole position in Jeddah earlier this year and by his wonderful win in Monaco just last weekend." This is not the first time Perez has had reason to be happy on two fronts after a Grand Prix win.

Milestone moment

At the back end of the 2020 season, with his seat at Racing Point already assigned to Sebastian Vettel, he ended the invidious record of 190 starts without a race win in Bahrain at the Sakhir Grand Prix. Shortly after this milestone moment he was putting pen to paper on his first Red Bull contract to put a far rosier complexion on a week where his future in F1 had looked bleak with his Racing Point contract ending in Abu Dhabi the following Sunday. Born in Guadalajara he was a member of the Ferrari driver academy until 2012, making his F1 debut for Sauber the year before. He would go on to drive for McLaren, Force India, and remained with them after the team went bankrupt as Racing Point. As well as the longest streak without a win, he also holds another record not to tell the grandchildren about - he competed in 215 grand prix without taking pole position, only snapping that sequence in Saudi Arabia in March. Last weekend meanwhile in the Perez household it was definitely party-time as on top of getting his hands on the race regarded as the crown jewel in the F1 calendar and a new contract, he also overtook Pedro Rodriguez as the most successful Mexican driver in history.

Horner is convinced that in Perez and Verstappen he has a driver pairing that can mine "the biggest prizes in F1". Perez agreed, believing his strong relationship with Verstappen "on and off the track" is helping to drive Red Bull forward to greater success. "We have built tremendous momentum as a team and this season is showing that, I am excited to see where that can take us all in the future," he said. — AFP

Kohli jinx to Indian talent: Things we learned from IPL

AHMEDABAD: The Indian Premier League ended with debutants Gujarat Titans hammering Rajasthan Royals by seven wickets in front of almost 105,000 fans at the world's biggest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad. AFP Sport looks at five things we learned from the 15th edition of the Twenty20 tournament, which was expanded to 10 teams this year.

Kohli's jinx

Former India captain Virat Kohli and Royal Challengers Bangalore's wait for their first IPL title drags on after they went down to Rajasthan in the sec-

ond qualifier. Kohli endured a tough season that including three golden ducks-out on first ball-before he scored a match-winning 73 in the team's final league game. He averaged 22.73 across the tournament, his lowest since the 2010 season. Coach Mike Hesson says that Kohli, 33, nevertheless remains an "influential character" who brought the senior players together and took care of the youngsters in the Faf du Plessis-led side. But former players including Brett Lee feel the usually game-changing batsman should take a break to "freshen up the mind".

Debut success

Gujarat Titans emphatically shrugged off pundits' concerns about their squad at the end of the February auction to emerge as the team to beat in their debut season. Hardik Pandya, who was called an unlikely choice to lead the side because of his maverick ways and injury-prone career, combined with South African David Miller, Indian batsman Rahul Tewatia and Afghan spinner Rashid Khan to become champions. Pandya's

Pandya tipped as future India captain

AHMEDABAD: All-rounder Hardik Pandya is being tipped as a future India captain after leading an unfancied debut team to victory in the world's most valuable cricket tournament. Pandya's Gujarat Titans thrashed Rajasthan Royals by seven wickets in the Indian Premier League final on Sunday, with the skipper taking three wickets and scoring 34 runs in front of nearly 105,000 fans in the world's biggest cricket stadium. It was the culmination of an extraordinary season that began with pundits lashing the side's purchases in the player auction, questioning Pandya's appointment as captain and predicting a dire outcome for the expansion franchise's first season. But the 28-year-old-a flamboyant cricketer who loves his tattoos and expensive watches, and was once suspended for sexist comments on a TV show-has proved a revelation in his first leadership role. Commentators have lauded the precision of his decision-making and field-setting in the Twenty20 format.

In the wake of the Titans' triumph at their home ground in Ahmedabad, former India captain Sunil Gavaskar said Pandya would be a worthy choice to follow in his footsteps. "When you have leadership qualities, it automatically opens the door for honors at the national level to be able to captain the Indian national team in the near future," the batting great said. "The way he has led the team, the way he has got them together, the way he has got them to gel together means he has got leadership qualities," he told Star Sports.

"Not just my estimation, but everybody's estimation. This was an aspect of his game which nobody had too much information about." The national side are currently led in all formats by Rohit Sharma, who was appointed earlier this year after Virat Kohli's ODI sacking, but at 35 he is unlikely to be a long-term captain and is being rested for a home series against South Africa in June. Rohit's five-time IPL champions Mumbai Indians had a disastrous season, finishing bottom of table.

A hard-hitting middle-order batsman and a fast bowler, Pandya has played 11 Tests, 63 one-day internationals and 54 Twenty20 matches for India. A back injury kept him out after the T20 World Cup last year but he proved his fitness with 487 runs and eight wickets in 15 IPL matches to earn a recall for the five-match Twenty20 series against South Africa beginning on June 9. He could be given his first taste of national leadership in two T20s in Ireland later in June, according to Indian media reports. Pandya said he had "always enjoyed responsibility" and "it kind of gets the best out of me".

His next goal, he told reporters after the IPL victory, was "absolutely to win the World Cup for India no matter what happens. Playing for India has always been a dream come true, no matter how many times and how many games I have played. And the kind of love and support I've got it's only from the Indian team point of view." — AFP

all-round showing in Sunday's final, three wickets with the ball and 34 runs with the bat, capped a fairytale run that began by beating fellow newcomers Lucknow Super Giants in the league phase. Lucknow also impressed on their debut season in finishing third in the regular-season standings, before losing to Royal Challengers in an eliminator.

Evergreen Dhoni

Old warhorse MS Dhoni had a dramatic year for four-time champions Chennai Super Kings, who ended ninth in the table. The 40-year-old gave up the captaincy ahead of the season but returned to lead the side midway through the campaign after Ravindra Jadeja stood down with Chennai's form faltering. The veteran wicketkeeper-batsman not only got some wins for Chennai but also played a few vintage knocks that galvanised their supporters. Chennai ended last but one in the table, their lowest-ever ranking, but in his final league game Dhoni promised fans he would be "back next year". — AFP

Sports

Chelsea's new owner Boehly eyes success after takeover

Boehly's consortium agrees a £4.25 billion deal

LONDON: Chelsea's new owner Todd Boehly promised to build on the team's "remarkable history of success" after the American completed his takeover of the Premier League club on Monday. Boehly's consortium agreed a deal to buy Chelsea from Roman Abramovich for £4.25 billion (\$5.3 billion) on May 7 and the sale has now been officially rubber-stamped.

"We are honoured to become the new custodians of Chelsea Football Club. We're all in, 100 percent, every minute of every match," Boehly told Chelsea's website. Boehly's takeover ends Abramovich's 19-year reign as Chelsea owner after the Russian put the club up for sale in March. Abramovich was sanctioned by the British government for his alleged links to Russian President Vladimir Putin following the invasion of Ukraine.

Los Angeles Dodgers co-owner Boehly has set his sights on emulating Chelsea's success during the Abramovich era, which included five Premier League titles and two Champions League crowns among 19 major trophies. "Our vision as owners is clear: we want to make the fans proud," Boehly said. "Along with our commitment to developing the youth squad and acquiring the best talent, our plan of action is to invest in the club for the long-term and build on Chelsea's remarkable history of success."

Chelsea had been operating under a special government licence which would have expired on May 31 if Boehly had been unable to seal the purchase. That would have put Chelsea's future in doubt, but they are now able to look forward to

next season as the Boehly regime takes the keys to Stamford Bridge. Boehly's group needed approval from the Premier League, the British government and Portuguese authorities-Abramovich has Portuguese citizenship-before the sale could be completed.

"I personally want to thank ministers and officials in the British Government, and the Premier League, for all their work in making this happen," Boehly said. Boehly fought off 11 rival bidders to buy Chelsea in what is a record sale for a sports club. He will "share joint control and equal governance of the club" with his main partner Clearlake Capital investment firm. Boehly is Chelsea's controlling owner, but will work closely with Clearlake co-founders Behdad Eghbali and Jose Feliciano.

'Even more success'

Swiss billionaire Hansjorg Wyss and US tycoon Mark Walter are the other main members of the consortium. "We are excited to commit the resources to continue Chelsea's leading role in English and global football, and as an engine for football talent development," Eghbali and Feliciano said in a joint statement. "We also want to thank the authorities for all their work throughout the process."

"As pioneers in sports and media investing, we are thrilled to partner with Todd and the rest of the consortium to meaningfully grow the club as a global platform. "Together, we will expand the club's investment across infrastructure, technology, and sports science to support the incredible



Photo shows a Chelsea logo at Stamford Bridge.



Chelsea's new owner Todd Boehly

Chelsea football and commercial teams - all with the goal of leveraging this growth to fuel even more on-pitch success." Boehly's arrival in west London will turn the page on Chelsea's remarkable transformation from underachievers to serial winners under Abramovich.

Crucially, the takeover completion should give Blues boss Thomas Tuchel the financial support to mount a challenge to Premier League champions Manchester City. Chelsea finished third in the Premier League this term, ensuring they qualified for next season's Champions League. Tuchel's side also reached the FA Cup and League Cup finals-

losing both matches to Liverpool on penalties-and won the Club World Cup and UEFA Super Cup.

Chelsea were unable to sign players or offer contracts to existing stars because of the sanctions on Abramovich. They are set to lose Antonio Rudiger to Real Madrid on a free transfer, while Andreas Christensen is set to join Barcelona when his contract expires in the close-season. After Abramovich halted plans to redevelop Chelsea's stadium several years ago, the new owners "are committed to investing in key areas that will extend and enhance Chelsea's competitiveness, including the redevelopment of Stamford Bridge". — AFP

A crush, teargas and chaos before Champions League final

PARIS: Liverpool supporter Daniel Austin was looking forward to a memorable night at the Champions League final against Real Madrid. Instead, "it became one of the worst experiences of my life," he told AFP. What he and thousands of fans experienced on Saturday points to a series of worrying failings in the organization of Europe's top club final.

Fears of a crush

At 6:00pm, three hours before the scheduled kickoff, thousands of fans walking towards the Stade de France began to bunch together as the crowd was funneled into narrow channels so tickets could be checked. "We were near the front and it took us 30 minutes to get past this first checkpoint and there were massive crowds behind us. The crowds were moving a lot and you could tell people were getting nervous about a stampede or a crush," an AFP journalist in the midst of Real Madrid fans said.

The Spanish fans seemed, however, to reach the stadium without as much trouble as their Liverpool counterparts. To the south of the Stade de France, thousands of red-shirted English fans who arrived on an RER suburban train were making slow progress. "Police have for some reason parked... vans across the paths, making a broad walkway suddenly narrow, creating a bottleneck," tweeted Rob Draper, the chief football writer of British newspaper the Mail on Sunday, who was among the throng. Austin, 27, was stuck for an hour in an underpass in 23-degree Celsius heat. "Then they decided the ticket checks didn't need to take place after all. That meant that young local lads began to dive through the crowd," he told AFP.

'Couldn't turn back'

He and a group of supporters reached Gate Z two and a half hours before the match was to begin-one of the reasons Liverpool fans were angered by UEFA's claim the match was eventually delayed "due



PARIS: Liverpool supporters gather near Place de la Nation on May 28, 2022 prior to the Champions League final between Liverpool and Real Madrid. —AFP

to the late arrival of fans". But the gate was locked and police looked on. "The crowd soon built up behind us so much that we couldn't turn back. It was becoming really packed. I saw someone have a panic attack and people were taking gulps of air," Austin said.

Less than half an hour kickoff, thousands of supporters were still blocked outside the stadium. At that point, there were thousands of empty seats at the Liverpool end. UEFA decided to delay the match by 15 minutes, and then another 15 minutes. It eventually started at 9.36pm. "In the end, at 9.10pm the police opened the gates and I was pushed forward into the stadium, too quickly. No-one checked my ticket and it meant no-one was sitting in their proper seat," Austin said.

Chaos and teargas

With police distracted, local French youths began scaling the fences into the stadium. Once over, they sprinted towards the steps up to the stands, pursued by police who marched them out. "I'm going to try again. It's my dream to see this match," said one of them, who gave his name as Yacine. As these attempts to enter illegally become more and more frequent, police began spraying teargas. Videos on social media show police spraying teargas directly at incensed Liverpool fans still waiting to enter the stadium.

"At 9:00pm, police decided to evacuate the stadium concourse. There was gas everywhere. Among the supporters waiting by the fences I saw a woman in her nineties who could barely walk and children screaming because the gas was hurting so much," said Pierre Barthelemy, a member of the Football Supporters Europe group at the stadium. "You were supposed to protect us!" one supporter shouted at the police. "I'm really stressed, I'm a teacher, I never got pepper sprayed," Pete Blades, 57, told AFP.

"I haven't done anything wrong. I'm not a threat. The police pushed me at the door, that wasn't necessary, a girl's nose was bleeding. "I was at the Hillsborough disaster and today it was exactly the same. They opened and shut the gates, he said, referring to the disaster that cost the lives of 97 people at a match in 1989. "I'm so angry. France has let itself down," he added. Despite the frustration, AFP reporters said Liverpool supporters remained calm. Real Madrid win the final 1-0, sparking celebrations from the Spanish fans.

Liverpool Football Club said they were "hugely disappointed" by the treatment of their fans. UEFA issued a statement during the match blaming "fake tickets which did not work in the turnstiles" for the problems in getting the crowd into the stadium. In a tweet, France's Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin immediately blamed the Liverpool fans for the problems. — AFP

Liverpool's chairman demands an apology from French minister

LONDON: Liverpool chairman Tom Werner has demanded an apology from French sports minister Amelie Oudea-Castera over the treatment of the club's fans at Saturday's Champions League final in Paris. Werner, part of the US-based Fenway Sports Group that owns Liverpool, said in a leaked letter sent to the minister on Monday that he was left in "utter disbelief" at her comments about the chaos.

Oudea-Castera initially blamed Liverpool for helping to cause the mayhem, telling a French radio station that the club failed to properly organize its supporters who went to Paris. The French government has also claimed "massive" ticket fraud contributed to the chaotic scenes that marred the match with Real Madrid.

The images have tarnished the reputation of the French capital, raising questions about its ability to host major sporting events as it gears up for the 2024 Olympics, as well as the 2023 Rugby World Cup. "I am writing to you today out of utter disbelief that a minister of the French government... could make a series of unproven pronouncements on a matter of such significance before a proper, formal, independent investigation process has even taken place," Werner wrote in his letter, leaked to the local Liverpool Echo newspaper.

"Your comments were irresponsible, unprofessional, and wholly disrespectful to the thousands of fans harmed physically and emotionally," the Boston-based chairman added. "On behalf of all the fans who experienced this nightmare I demand an apology from you, and assurance that the French Authorities and UEFA allow an independent and transparent investigation to proceed."

UEFA, European football's governing body, announced later Monday it was opening an "independent report" into the problems at the final that would "examine decision making, responsibility and behaviors of all entities involved". The organization said it has appointed Portuguese politician Tiago Brandao Rodrigues to oversee the report on a pro bono basis on the completion of which they will decide upon a course of action. — AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Kaifan	24849807
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Shamiya	24848913
Maternity Hospital	24843100	Shuwaikh	24814507
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700	Abdullah Salem	22549134
Chest Hospital	24849400	Nuzha	22526804
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010	Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Adan Hospital	23940620	Qadsiya	22515088
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300	Dasmah	22532265
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000	Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9	Shaab	22518752
		Qibla	22459381
		Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
		Mirqab	22456536
		Sharq	22465401
		Salmiya	25746401

Clinics

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Rawda	22517733
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CASABLANCA: Wydad's midfielder Yahya Jabrane (center) lifts the trophy as he celebrates with his teammates after winning the CAF Champions League Semi-Final between Egypt's Al-Ahly and Morocco's Wydad AC on May 30, 2022. —AFP

Wydad become African champions

El Moutaraji shines as Wydad Casablanca beat Egyptian Al Ahly

CASABLANCA: Zouhair El Moutaraji was the two-goal star as Wydad Casablanca defeated Egyptian outfit Al Ahly 2-0 on Monday to win the CAF Champions League and complete a Moroccan club double in Africa this season. Renaissance Berkane won the second-tier CAF Confederation Cup on May 20 and will face Wydad for the CAF Super Cup.

Wydad coach Walid Regragui promoted El Moutaraji from the bench for the title decider and it proved a masterstroke as he netted after 15 minutes with a brilliant strike and again on 48 minutes in Casablanca. It was the third time Wydad have conquered Africa in the premier competition, lifting the trophy in 1992 and 2017 as well, and the second triumph also came against Ahly. Record 10-time champions Ahly, seeking a record third straight title, had plenty of possession but were undone by clinical finishing.

It was also a disappointing outcome for South

Africa-born Ahly coach Pitso Mosimane, who had hoped to become the first coach to win the premier African club competition three consecutive times. Both Wydad and Ahly showed one change to the sides that drew semi-final second legs against Petro Luanda of Angola and Entente Setif of Algeria respectively to reach the final. France-born Regragui preferred El Moutaraji to Badie Aouk in midfield, with the latter among nine substitutes.

A groin injury sidelined Ahly centre-back Mohamed Abdelmonem and Mosimane promoted another Egyptian international, experienced Ayman Ashraf. Close to 40,000 singing, dancing, cheering, flag-waving Wydad supporters greeted the teams as they entered the pitch, with FIFA president Gianni Infantino among those looking on. Ahly were allocated 10,000 tickets, but only a couple of thousand supporters flew across north Africa to attend the highlight of the club season.

Controversial venue

The Stade Mohammed V-home ground of Wydad-was a controversial choice of venue with Ahly making a failed appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) to have it changed to a neutral one. Morocco were the lone bidders to host the final after Senegal withdrew, and the Confederation of African Football (CAF) said the rules did not permit a change.

Wydad attacked from the kick-off and after rattling the woodwork, went ahead as El Moutaraji justified his promotion. Earlier, Congo Brazzaville-born Guy Mbenza was foiled by the crossbar after his shot from just outside the box beat Ahly captain and goalkeeper Mohamed el Shenawy. But the Moroccans went ahead four minutes later as El Moutaraji unleashed a swerving thunderbolt which flew over El Shenawy and into the net.

Ahly clawed their way back into the match and came close to leveling midway through the half

when a Yasser Ibrahim header off a corner was just too high. Ahly were dangerous from set pieces and Hussein el Shahaat nodded narrowly wide off another corner. The visitors came close again with Wydad goalkeeper Ahmed Tagnaouti dashing from his goalmouth to head the ball clear as South African Percy Tau threatened to equalize. Wydad doubled the lead early in the second half and once again El Moutaraji was the executioner, after a sweeping move.

His first shot from close range was parried by El Shenawy, but the Moroccan reacted quickest to push the rebound into the net. Mosimane rang the changes, including introducing leading scorer Mohamed Sherif, but the Cairo club could not find a way through the Wydad defense. Sherif came tantalizingly close to adding to his six Champions League goals this season with eight minutes remaining, but Tagnaouti parried his close-range poke and the ball was hastily cleared. — AFP

Gulf Games: Kuwait grabs 87 medals

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti fencer Abdulaziz Al-Shatti won the gold medal of the Epee style on Monday, to raise his country's tally of medals to 87 in the 3rd Gulf Games. These include 32 gold medals, 24 silver and 31 bronze. Bahrain took the second position with 59 medals, including 20 gold, 21 silver and 18 bronze. The UAE was third with 46 medals (18 gold, 16 silver and 12 bronze). Qatar came fourth with 49 medals (14 gold, 20 silver and 15 bronze). Saudi Arabia was ranked fifth with 59 medals (12 gold, 19 silver and 28 bronze), while Oman came last with 32 medals (12 gold, five silver and 15 bronze).

The medals standings are as follows:

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Kuwait	32	24	31	87
Bahrain	20	21	18	59
UAE	18	16	12	46
Qatar	14	20	15	49
Saudi Arabia	12	19	28	59
Oman	12	5	15	32

The tournament which was hosted in Kuwait (since May 16th) ended on Tuesday. Kuwait fencers contributed to deciding the standings by claiming gold in the events. Meanwhile, Kuwait honored its guests as the media committee official Sattam Al-Sahly honored heads and members of media delegations and thanked them for contributing to the success of the Gulf Games. Deputy Chairman of the Teams Committee at the Kuwait Fencing

Association Ibrahim Al-Bisaily lauded Kuwait's players' performance.

Head of the Saudi Tennis Federation Araeaj Hamid Al-Mutabagani was impressed with the organization of the games in general and tennis in particular. She said, "it is not strange for Kuwait to succeed in hosting various games as everything went on smoothly." She said Gulf's tennis game needs to increase the number of tournaments as this will give boost the players and coaches.

