

3 Kuwait a safe haven for migratory birds



5 Modi says working to end ethnic violence in Manipur



13 Scent of luxury: India's jasmine infuses perfumes



16 'Work of art' sends Spain into first World Cup final



PM suspends 'exceptional' wages

Speaker proposes reciprocal treatment for visas

Youths keep pearling heritage alive



KUWAIT: Sixty young Kuwaiti men braved the heat as they participated in the annual pearl diving heritage trip. The youngsters dove for pearl oysters in harsh conditions, commemorating their forefathers' sacrifices in the pre-oil era. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (More pics on Page 4)

KUWAIT: MP Jenan Bushehri said on Tuesday she was officially informed that HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah has suspended the so-called "exceptional salaries" given to ministers and senior government officials. She said the prime minister has ordered authorities to accelerate studying the issue of the salaries of retired people and also the issue of the so-called "strategic payroll alternative", a new wide-scale wage system for state workers.

The move comes after Bushehri announced two days ago she plans to grill Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Essa Al-Kandari over the issue of exceptional salaries. Bushehri said she will provide the government with her remarks and comments on the issue. Meanwhile, National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun on Tuesday submitted a draft law requiring the government to impose

reciprocal measures on countries that impose restrictions in granting visas to Kuwaitis. The bill states citizens of foreign countries seeking entry visas to Kuwait will face the same treatment Kuwaitis face while seeking visas from those countries. The Cabinet will issue the necessary decisions to impose these reciprocal measures.

Saadoun said that some foreign countries are imposing restrictions and measures like taking biometrics before granting Kuwaiti citizens entry visas, and as a result the government should take similar measures. In another draft law, Saadoun proposed no loans will be awarded by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development to foreign countries without the prior approval of the National Assembly. The bill states that all loans given to foreign nations should be passed through laws to be approved by the Assembly.

Kuwait workers hit 3m, Indians top workforce

KUWAIT: The total number of workers in Kuwait's labor force, including domestic workers, increased during the first 7 months of 2023 to around 3 million by the end of July 2023, compared to 2.79 million workers by the end of Dec 2022. Excluding domestic workers, the number of workers in the government

and private sectors rose by around 39,000 in the first 7 months of 2023, from 2.036 million workers by the end of Dec 2022 to 2.075 million by the end of July 2023.

The number of Kuwaiti workers rose to 450,000 by the end of July 2023. Expats accounted for 94 percent of the increase in employees, from 1.594 million by the end of Dec 2022 to 1.633 million workers by the end of July 2023 (excluding domestic helpers). Indian workers account for more than 30 percent of new entrants into Kuwait's workforce. Indians continue to lead the workforce with around 877,000 male and female workers, followed by Egyptians, Kuwaitis, Filipinos and Bangladeshis.

NEWS IN BRIEF

EG.5 subvariant detected in Kuwait

KUWAIT: The EG.5 subvariant of the COVID-19 virus has been detected in Kuwait, the ministry of health announced on Tuesday. The emergence of new mutations of the virus is normal and is not a cause of concern, the ministry reassured, urging people to isolate in case they experience any symptoms. EG.5, which has been unofficially nicknamed "Eris" online, is considered to be a descendant of the XBB lineage of the virus.

Neymar quits PSG, joins Hilal

PARIS: Brazil forward Neymar has signed for Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal from Paris Saint-Germain, the clubs announced on Tuesday, joining Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema as the latest big name lured to the Gulf state. "I am here in Saudi Arabia, I am Hilali," Neymar said in a video posted to Al Hilal's social media accounts. — AFP



Algeria pulls Barbie from cinemas

ALGIERS: Algeria has withdrawn the film "Barbie" from its cinemas for reportedly breaching morals, joining a growing number of Arab countries barring the global box office hit. Barbie, which has topped \$1.2 billion in worldwide revenues, was released in Algeria on July 19 before cinemas removed it from their schedules on Sunday without explanation. Online news site 24H Algeria said the film was removed for "violating morals", citing well-informed sources. — AFP

35 killed in Russia fuel station blast

MOSCOW: At least 35 people were killed in an explosion that created a huge fire ball at a fuel station in Russia's remote Caucasus republic of Dagestan, spurring condolences from President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday. Images distributed by the emergencies ministry showed burnt-out cars silhouetted by the massive blaze and rescue workers in helmets attempting to put out the fire and clear rubble.

Government ministries said 35 people had died and 80 had been injured. The Kremlin issued a statement saying: "President Putin expresses his most sincere condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the tragedy in Dagestan and wishes a speedy recovery to the victims."

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Tuesday sent a cable of condolences to Putin over the victims of the blast. In the cable, HH the Amir prayed to Almighty Allah to bestow mercy on the victims' souls, wishing speedy recovery to the injured. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the

Continued on Page 6



MAKHACHKALA, Russia: Rescuers fight a fire at a gas station late Aug 14, 2023. — AFP

Taleban mark two years since return to power

KABUL: Afghanistan's Taleban government on Tuesday marked the second anniversary of their return to power, with supporters celebrating as critics denounced ever-tightening restrictions on women's rights. Flags of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan — the Taleban's formal name for the country — fluttered across the capital Kabul, which fell on Aug 15, 2021, after the US-backed government collapsed and its leaders fled into exile.

In the two years since, Taleban authorities have imposed their strict interpretation of Islam, with women bearing the brunt of laws the United

Nations has termed "gender apartheid". A statement from the authorities hailed a victory that was able to "pave the way for the establishment of the Islamic system in Afghanistan". "The conquest of Kabul proved once again that no one can control the proud nation of Afghanistan" and that "no invader will be allowed to threaten the independence and freedom" of the country, it said.

Hundreds of Taleban supporters, from elderly men to young boys, gathered near the abandoned US embassy building, one of the many that now stands empty — the Taleban government is still not formally recognized by any other country. US-made military vehicles, claimed by the new Taleban rulers when they were left behind by international forces after a weeks-long chaotic withdrawal, rolled past the ajar gates of the fortified embassy walls.

Continued on Page 6



KABUL: Armed Taleban security personnel parade in a convoy near the US embassy during the second anniversary celebrations of their takeover on Aug 15, 2023. — AFP



Local

Kuwaitis shine at WHO youth art competition

Three Kuwaiti winners awarded



KUWAIT: The Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadi takes a group photo with other officials during the event.

By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: The World Health Organization's Kuwait country office hosted an award ceremony under the patronage and presence of Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi on Tuesday at UN House to award three winning students from Kuwait who took part in an international art competition titled '75 Years of Improving Public Health'. This campaign aimed to engage students aged 8 to 18 in creatively expressing their perspectives on global health and its significance.

The competition witnessed great participation from all over the Eastern Mediterranean region, with the participation of 14 countries, including Kuwait. The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean received more than 2,000 entries, which reflects the passion and dedication of young minds in portraying global health challenges creatively. With the collaboration and support of the ministries of health and education, the number of winners reached 35, including students from Kuwait. Kuwait's winners are Abdullah Al-Saffar from Imam Malik High School, Yusuf Ibrahim from Rifa Model School and Ali Al-Mutairi from Kaab bin Malik School.

"When WHO initiated this art competition, the aim was to explore the unique perspective of children and witness how they depict health through

the power of art. We were astounded by the remarkable talent and creativity displayed by the young artists in Kuwait. Their artworks served as a testament to their understanding and awareness of crucial health-related issues that affect us all. They also serve as a reminder that the voices and visions of Kuwait's youth hold great value in shaping the future of public health," WHO Representative in Kuwait Dr Assad Hafeez said.

Dr Rihab Al-Wotayan, Director of International Health Relations at the Health Ministry, said: "We have celebrated the winners of the international art competition to connect art and health. WHO asked them to use art to express their views on the development of the medical field." Wotayan said WHO judged the competition. "Upon notifying the health minister, he insisted on attending the ceremony. The creativity of the children was amazing, as they successfully utilized their imaginations to accurately represent the diligent nature of work in the medical field," she added.

Serin Al-Ghusein, Communication Specialist at WHO, said: "We were happy to see the high participation from Kuwait, as we received over 100 submissions from both private and public schools. The WHO chose 35 participants from the Eastern Mediterranean region and 3 of them were from Kuwait." She praised the role of the ministry in facilitating



the campaign's communication as well as its role in the ceremony, which was held under the patronage of the health minister.

Dr Awadhi extended his gratitude to everyone who contributed to this ceremony, as well as all individuals that play a role in contributing to enhancing healthcare in the country, as well as commending Kuwait's wise leadership of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah. "I would like to thank everyone who contributed

to this ceremony and all efforts aimed at promoting humanity in the field of health globally and regionally, and efforts aimed at improving the healthcare services provided in our beloved country," Dr Awadhi said.

Ali Hussein Dashti, representing the undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, said: "I am pleased and honored to be here today representing Education Ministry Undersecretary Osama Hussein Al-Sultan at this ceremony on the occasion the 75th anniversary of the World Health Organization. It is my pleasure on this occasion to commend the efforts exerted to initiate this art competition."



NBK Academy celebrates graduation of Wave28

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) Academy celebrated the graduation of its Wave28 of newly hired employees who successfully met admission criteria for this intensive course specially designed for Kuwaiti fresh university graduates. The graduation ceremony was attended by Sulaiman Al-Marzouq, Deputy CEO of NBK - Kuwait, Faisal A Al-Hamad, Chief Executive Officer - Global Wealth Management at NBK, Mohamed Al-Othman, Chief Executive Officer of the Consumer and Digital Banking Group.

The program ran for 7 months, from January to August 2023, during which the trainees received intensive training on banking, technological and behavioral as well as other skills that allow them to build a long career at NBK. The course covered various areas of banking principles, such as design thinking and increasing productivity, training on creativity, innovation, and digital trends in the banking sector beside, in addition to banking business, and comprehensive understanding of all NBK groups and departments.

The participants presented new ideas to the executive management through a project covering all learnt topics, aiming to give them the opportunity to practice entrepreneurship as well as to stimulate their creative faculties and ability to generate innovative solutions. The program also included various blended learning interventions occurred through in person and virtual courses. Furthermore, their development continues through e-Learning after the academy ends.

It is worth mentioning that NBK Academy program content is regularly enhanced to keep pace with the latest trends in banking, management and digital areas. The Academy reflects NBK's vision to support sustainable human capital development as one of its top strategic priorities and a shared responsibility between the various governmental institutions and the private sector.

Launched in 2008, NBK Academy aims to pave the way for fresh Kuwaiti graduates to join the banking services sector by providing them with the best training programs developed in cooperation with leading international institutions and universities to meet the demands of the labor market. NBK maintains its leadership in the private sector in terms of attracting, training, up skilling national talent and qualifying them to join the banking sector. The bank also stands out as the employer of choice for national professionals, with the highest Kuwaitization and employee retention ratios across the private sector.

Kuwait denounces terror attack in Iran

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed on Monday Kuwait's strong condemnation of deadly militant assault on Shah Cheragh Shrine in Iran's southern city of Shiraz on Sunday. In a statement, the Ministry voiced Kuwait's unequivocal rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism. It underscored the importance of multilateral work to counter the terrorism scourge and its implications. It extended Kuwait's condolences to the government and families of the victims and wished the wounded people speedy recovery. A gunman opened fire on people at Shah Cheragh Shrine in Shiraz, killing one person and wounding eight others.

Meanwhile, Iranian security forces have arrested

eight foreign suspects after detaining a gunman in the killing of two people at a Shiite Muslim shrine, authorities said on Monday. The attack on the Shah Cheragh mausoleum in Shiraz, capital of Fars province in Iran's south, came less than a year after a mass shooting at the same site later claimed by the Islamic State (IS) group.

Iranian state media on Sunday reported that one person was killed and eight others were wounded. On Monday, official news agency IRNA quoted Fars province chief justice Kazem Mousavi as saying "one of the wounded had succumbed to his wounds and died." Mousavi earlier told the judiciary's Mizan Online news website that "eight people suspected of links with the terrorist attack... have been arrested." "All the people arrested are foreigners," he said without elaborating. The main suspect was arrested on Sunday night shortly after the attack, and Mizan identified him as Rahmatollah Nowruzof from Tajikistan. — AFP



The Ambassador raises the Indian national flag on the occasion.

Indian Embassy celebrates 77th Independence Day

KUWAIT: Braving hot and humid weather, Indian nationals gathered at the Indian Embassy premises on Tuesday in large numbers to celebrate the country's 77th Independence Day. The official celebration commenced at 8 am with Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika paying floral tribute to the statue of Mahatma Gandhi. The ambassador hoisted the national flag which was followed by singing of the Indian national anthem.

The ambassador read out Indian President Droupadi Murmu's message to the nation on the occasion of Independence Day. In his address to the Indian nationals, the ambassador thanked the leadership and the government of the friendly State of Kuwait for the continued support in further deepening and strengthening India-Kuwait bilateral relations and for taking special care of the Indian community in Kuwait.

The ambassador also highlighted the efforts of the embassy to work along with the community in promoting India-Kuwait relations and addressing the issues of concern to the community. He underlined the efforts undertaken by the embassy on various fronts, including promotion of trade, investment, culture and tourism, expansion and deepening of institutional cooperation in different domains, and various measures to ensure the welfare of Indians in Kuwait.



KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika addresses the gathering during the Indian Independence Day celebration at the Indian Embassy on Tuesday.



Ambassador Dr Swaika paying floral tributes to the statue of Mahatma Gandhi.

Acting director inspects public buildings

KUWAIT: The Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, Rashid Al-Enezi, made an inspection tour at the public buildings in the city of Mutlaa in preparation for handing them over to ministries and government agencies. The authority has formed primary committees for work. Among the buildings to be handed over are the public health center, a central market, a police station, a mosque, an imam and muezzin residence, a high school building, and a kindergarten building.



Local

Manpower working on projects to develop Kuwait labor market

Young Kuwaitis urged to go into entrepreneurship

KUWAIT: The General Authority for Manpower said it is currently working on a number of projects that are aimed at developing the labor market in the private sector and facilitating national competencies to engage in it. The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, is keen to empower young people, create new opportunities for them in the labor market, and stimulate the local economy, Manpower said in a statement.

It stated that the approval of the Council of Min-

isters during its weekly meeting to grant the social allowance (employment support) to entrepreneurs is based on the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister, which is "one of the reform steps to amend demographics and develop the labor market in Kuwait". It noted that the decision came in fulfillment of the vision of Kuwait, which is aimed at increasing the percentage of employment in the private sector by urging and motivating citizens to go into entrepreneurship through free and micro-projects.

The decision came in order to create new oppor-

tunities for young Kuwaitis, develop a stimulating climate for creativity and innovation, and create a competitive work environment that encourages the youths to go into self-employment and makes it easier for them to start doing business. A manpower official thanked the Minister of Commerce and Industry and the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Mohammed Al-Aiban, for issuing the decision to organize the issuance of licenses of a special nature, which in turn will contribute to developing the country's business environment. — KUNA



Migrating birds make a crucial stop in Kuwait during its fall migration.



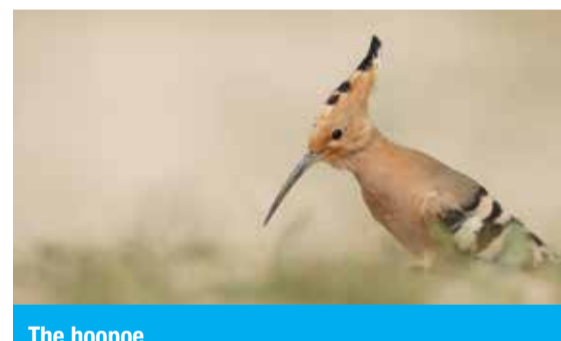
Hankour birds — KUNA photos



Al-Rumani bird



Al-Sauoo bird



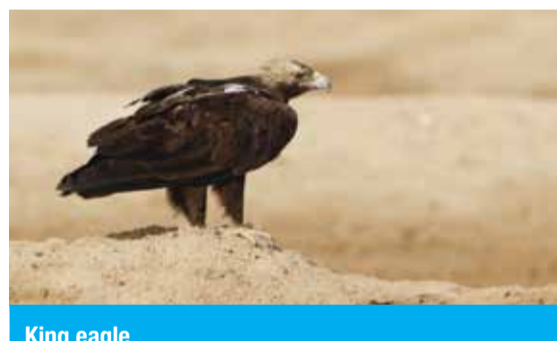
The hoopoe

Kuwait safe haven for migrating birds

KUWAIT: Migrating birds make a crucial stop in Kuwait during its fall migration, which makes the country a safe haven for these kind of creatures, said Kuwaiti Environmental Lens (KEL) on Tuesday. KEL's head Rased Al-Haji told KUNA that there were a huge number of birds making this sort of a natural pit stop on their fall journey, revealing that some 415 kinds of migrating birds of 60 species could be seen this time of the year.

The birds navigate their way from southwestern regions in Russia, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan to warmer climates in eastern and central Africa, indicated Al-Haji, adding that the second route that the birds take was from the north and east of Europe through Turkey and Syria and onwards to India with birds making a stop in Kuwait. The fall migration might continue until the beginning of winter, pointed out the official, revealing that birds could be seen in 13 natural reservations throughout Kuwait.

On his part, member of KEL Awdah Al-Bathali said the migration of birds was crucial for the ecosystem with natural pollination of plants and flowers occurring during the journey. He went on to say that, Kuwait has a unique geographical location connecting their types of eco-systems the desert of the Arabian Peninsula, the Gulf Coast and Tropical climate of the Euphrates and Tigris nearby. — KUNA



King eagle



Birds search for food on coasts.



News in Brief



Health centers closed

KUWAIT: The Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality announced that the Audit and Follow-up Department at Ahmadi governorate carried out an inspection tour in the Mahboula, Mangaf, and Fahaheel industrial areas in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior to ensure the extent of compliance of markets and shops rules. The acting director of the Ahmadi Municipality branch, Saad Al-Shaiba, explained: "The Audit and Follow-up Department of Municipal Services conducted the field tour on shops and advertisements. It resulted in the closure of two health institutes. Also, a garage operating without a license in Fahaheel Industrial was shut down.

37 violators nabbed

KUWAIT: The General Directorate of Residency Affairs Investigations, accompanied by the Public Authority for Manpower, launched a surprise campaign - targeting vehicles and motorbikes operators who deliver orders in Ahmadi and Farwaniya governorates. 37 violators of the residence and labor law were detained. All violators were referred to the competent authority for further actions.

Awqaf launches grand Quran competition

KUWAIT: Acting Secretary General of the General Secretariat of Awqaf Hanan Ali announced on Tuesday the launch of the 26th edition of Kuwait Grand Competition for Memorizing and Recitation of the Noble Quran for 2023 under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. "The competition was launched under the title 'Maknoon', inspired by Surat Al-Waqiah of the Holy Quran," Ali said.

She stressed the secretariat is proud to hold this great Quranic competition every year, and is pleased with participants of different ages and degrees of memorization and intonation. "The Endowment Fund for the Holy Quran and its Sciences is one of the most prominent charitable funds in the secretariat due to its association with the sponsorship of the Holy Quran competition," she said. "There is an increasing turnout every year, which is evidence of the miracle of our Lord and his Book," she said, indicating that the final qualifying stage will be held on Oct 29 at the Grand Mosque.

6,075 students approved for next academic year

KUWAIT: The secretary general of the Council of Private Universities, Adel Al-Bader, announced the approval of the Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and the Acting Minister of Edu-



Hanan Ali

General Coordinator and Director of the Endowment Funds Department at the Municipality Maarib Al-Yaqub said the invitation phase to participate and register in the competition began in August and ends on Sept 27. "The final qualifying stage of the competition begins on October 29 at the Grand Mosque for two weeks, as the first week is devoted to men and the second week to women," she added. Yaqub said the secretariat will receive inquiries at its media booth at The Avenues mall from Sept 14 to 16 to answer questions about the competition and the mechanism of participation in it.

cation, Dr Jassim Al-Ostad, to accept 6,075 students in the internal missions plan for the next academic year (2023-2024). Al-Bader announced the accreditation of admission for bachelor and diploma programs for students with a high school diploma or equivalent. He pointed out the importance of reviewing the student's admissions process. He stressed the need to adhere to the internal missions' regulations, wishing the students a successful academic year. He urged the students to access the secretariat's website via the following link (www.puc.edu.kw) for more information. — KUNA

In my view

What are quantum computers? What it means for our future

By Ali Hamza

A quantum computer is a computer which makes use of quantum mechanical principles. On a small scale, physical matter exhibits particles and waves characteristics at small scales. A quantum computer utilizes these two characteristics by using specialized hardware that helps in creation and manipulation of quantum states.

A scalable quantum computer could execute operations 10 times faster than any modern computer. A large-scale quantum computer could break popular encryption and assist physicists in running physical simulations. According to researchers at Google, the fastest supercomputer in the world would take 47 years to compute the complex calculations performed by Google's Sycamore quantum computer in mere seconds.

The most powerful quantum computer is IBM's Osprey quantum computer with the power of 433 qubits, it has the potential to run complex quantum computations way beyond the computational capability of any classical computer. For reference, the amount of classic computer bits required to express a state on its processor is much greater than the total number of atoms in the known universe.

How do they work?

While conventional computers use bits to process and store information. Each bit can be either a 0 or a 1, identical to how a switch is either on or off. A quantum computer is different as it uses quantum bits or qubits. Identical to regular computers, Quantum computers get more powerful as the number of quantum bits increases.

Qubits can be both 0 and 1 at the same time by using a property called superposition. In simpler words, it is like having a spinning coin that's both heads and tails until it stops spinning and lands on a side. This ability to be in multiple states at once is what makes a quantum computer unique. Quantum computers also use a property called entanglement. Presume having 2 qubits which are entangled. When the state of one qubit changes, the other qubit's state also changes, no matter how far apart they are.

Both properties, superposition and entanglement, allow quantum computers to solve complex tasks faster than regular computers. Apart from these properties, Quantum computers consist of many other properties such as, Quantum algorithms which are designed to support their unique properties, it can also factor large numbers exponentially faster than classical algorithms. This has implications for cryptography. However, building a quantum computer is considered extremely complex as they are very fragile and sensitive, they need to be kept incredibly cold and isolated to protect qubits from external interference. It is crucial for a quantum computer to have an error detection system as quantum states are extremely delicate and vulnerable to disruption.

What does it mean for our future?

Due to their unique computational capabilities, Quantum computers have the potential to transform several faces of our future. Many of the encryptions that are used to protect our online transactions and communications can be cracked by a quantum computer, however quantum computers can also enable new forms of encryption that are virtually unbreakable using conventional computers. Numerous industries, including logistics, supply chain management and finance could use quantum computers to solve complicated optimization issues. They could help in identifying more effective solutions to issues that are now computationally uncontrollable by conventional computers.

Quantum computers can create better models for atoms interacting with one another, which would lead to a more precise understanding of molecular structure. This may directly impact drug and chemical research and affect the way new products and medicines are developed. AI can only function to a certain extent due to their set amount of computational power. With quantum computers it could potentially enhance machine learning and algorithms by processing and analyzing vast amounts of data quicker than conventional computers. They may be very useful in training complex models and pattern recognition tasks.

Quantum computers could help in optimization of energy storage and distribution, which would lead to more efficient utilization of resources. They can also contribute to more accurate and efficient simulations of complex systems, including climate modeling. Which would lead to better predictions and strategies for reducing the effects of climate change. Quantum computers may improve financial modeling and risk assessment by simulating complex financial scenarios more accurately, this would help investors make better investment decisions and manage market risks.

It is important to note that quantum computers are still in development, many countries are eager to invest in quantum computing as it would be of significant benefit to the nations. "Quantum computing is a new pattern that's set to revolutionize how we process information. It's a field that's still in its early stages, but the potential is enormous, it could provide the computational power needed to solve problems that are currently beyond our reach" said Asher Farooqi an embedded systems engineer, in a statement.

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher

YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief

ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432

ADVERTISING : 24833199 Extn. 301

CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 220

ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.

Email: info@kuwaittimes.com

Website: www.kuwaittimes.com

PHOTO OF THE DAY



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti divers search for shells containing pearls during the annual pearl diving season, off the coast of the port city of Khairan, 100 kms (62 miles) south of Kuwait City, on August 15, 2023. Pearl-diving trips are held annually under the patronage of Kuwait's Amir in order to keep alive traditions that accompanied the once important national trade of pearl diving, prior to the discovery of oil. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

NEWS IN BRIEF

Reviving ancestral diving experience

KUWAIT: Reviving the experience of their ancestors, a group of Kuwaiti youth went out on board diving ships for various roles (Nawakha-da, Majdamiya, Ghasa and Bahriya) to commemorate the 32nd anniversary of diving in (Al-Herat) in the Khairan area. The people of Kuwait in the past had pearl-dived in long and tiring trips for months. They were in search of livelihood - armed with determination and patience to provide a decent living and to meet the requirements of life. — KUNA

Three fishing boats looted: Fishermen

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Fishermen Association said that three Kuwaiti fishing vessels were looted on Tuesday in Kuwait's exclusive economic waters. The union asked authorities to provide more protection, pointing out that it has sent official letters to the concerned authorities and "called for intensifying security points to protect Kuwait's fishermen who face horrors at sea. "Many fishing license holders will stop fishing due to robbery and looting," the union said as it appealed to officials to put an end to looting.

CITC issues decision to modify Internet fees

KUWAIT: The General Authority for Communications and Information Technology (CITC) issued a decision on Tuesday to add and amend new Internet speeds and tariff fees on all fixed-home Internet subscriptions (wired and wireless). The director of the department, Khalid Al-Qarawi, said in a press release that the chairman and members of the board of directors agreed to issue this decision in accordance with the requirements of the market and the aspirations of the authority to provide the best service. He explained that service providers may collect not more than 20 percent of the value of the maximum annual tariff stipulated in the case of payment of the subscription value by monthly payments. — KUNA

Security operatives arrest 21 drug suspects, seize firearms, cash, pills

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Internal Affairs said that the criminal investigation department and the General Directorate of Criminal Investigations have arrested 21 people of different nationalities (in 14 separate cases) for being in possession of illicit drugs, 790 psychotropic pills, 171 bottles of wine, firearms, and huge sums of money.

The General Directorate of Security Relations and Information of the Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday that the defendants admitted that the banned products belong to them. Authorities are taking legal actions against them. The statement stressed the continuation of the ministry's efforts to combat drug smugglers by

continuing intensive security patrols. He stressed the need for concerted efforts to eliminate illicit drugs, calling on everyone to cooperate with security men and report any negative phenomena by calling these emergency phone numbers (112) and the hotline of the General Directorate for Drug Control (1884141). — KUNA

Mini guide to being a barista

By Zaid Aboobacker

KUWAIT: Are you interested in learning about the crafting process of a latte or a traditional cappuccino? According to Shenju, working as a barista in Kuwait for the past 16 months, coffees are made with very similar ingredients all around Kuwait. The two main types of coffees are brewed coffees and espresso coffees. Brewed coffee is similar to making tea — ground coffee is mixed with either cold or hot water and left to brew for a specified duration.

Then, the infused coffee is separated from the used grounds using a filter. To achieve the preferred flavor, the extracted coffee can be mixed with various additions like sweeteners and toppings. In contrast, Turkish coffee follows a distinct method, serving the brewed coffee without filtering finely ground coffee beans.

Espresso coffee on the other hand always involves at least one shot of espresso. Espresso can be made with a wide variety of coffee beans and roast degrees, in which a small amount of nearly boiling water (90° C) is forced under 9 to 10 bars of pressure through finely-ground coffee beans. The length of one espresso shot can be a ristretto (reduced), normale (normal) or lungo (long). A double shot espresso is called a doppio.

Espresso-based coffees which include milk mostly use steamed milk, which is milk run through steam or water vapor. The milk can be further run with steam, which will produce frothy milk. Some of the most popular espresso coffees include the latte, which is one of the most popular coffee beverages made with a shot of espresso, steamed milk and a thin layer of milk foam.

The classic ratio is one-third espresso and two-thirds steamed milk. Iced latte is also a popular drink containing espresso with chilled milk poured over ice.

Similar to the latte, flat white is an espresso coffee with less volume and higher proportion of coffee to milk compared to a latte. Moving onto the classics, cappuccino traditionally consists of a single espresso on which the barista pours hot foamy milk, which is a foamier milk compared to steamed milk, usually resulting in a 2 cm thick milk foam on top. Variations can be made by adding another shot of espresso resulting in a double cappuccino.

Americano is another popular espresso drink made by diluting an espresso with hot water. Iced Americano is also a variant where hot water is replaced with cold water and ice. Macchiato, also called espresso macchiato, is an espresso drink with a small amount of milk, usually steamed. This drink has the highest ratio of espresso to milk.

For hot chocolate lovers, mocha is an espresso coffee made with a shot of espresso, hot milk and added chocolate flavoring and sweetener, mostly in the form of cocoa powder and sugar. Variants include white mocha with white chocolate and various chocolate syrups. The most popular drink among youth is frappuccino. Frappuccino is a blended beverage made with espresso or a crème base, ice, flavored syrups and often topped with whipped cream. Available in various flavors like caramel, white chocolate, etc. "Frappuccino" is trademarked by Starbucks, but similar drinks can be found in various cafes.

Another interesting coffee, many call it a dessert, is affogato. It is made with a milk-flavored vanilla gelato or ice cream "drowned" with a shot of espresso. Try this dessert at home if you have a coffee machine that can make espresso. According to a 2022 report by EXCPR, the value of cafes in Kuwait has reached KD 2.8 billion, marking a remarkable growth of 165 percent, with a total of 308 cafes spanning Kuwait.



Scan & Subscribe
KD 20 a year

For Individuals Only



Scan Now

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First English Daily in the Arabian Gulf



Tel: 24833199 Ext: 220



Court rules for young people in landmark US climate trial

Time 'running out': Aid agencies urge immediate action on Sudan

Page 6

Page 7

Clashes in Libya kill two, shut airport

Intense fighting between rival factions erupt after arrest of official



TRIPOLI: Smoke billows amid clashes between armed groups affiliated with Libya's Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU) in the Libyan capital on August 15, 2023. — AFP

TRIPOLI: Gunfighting between the two leading armed groups in Tripoli killed two people and forced the closure of the Libyan capital's only civilian airport, officials said on Tuesday. The clashes between the influential 444 Brigade and the Al-Radaa Force, or Special Deterrence Force, erupted on Monday night and carried over into Tuesday, an interior ministry official said.

"Tensions arose" soon after it was announced "the Al-Radaa Force had arrested the head of the 444 Brigade, without explaining whether this was on judicial orders or for other reasons," the official

said. So far, two people had been killed and more than 30 wounded in the violence, a hospital source told AFP, as the fighting showed no signs of abating.

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya said in a statement it was "following with concern" the security deterioration in the Libyan capital and its impact on civilians. "Violence is not an acceptable means to resolve disagreements," UNSMIL said. "All parties must preserve the security gains achieved in recent years and address differences through dialogue," it added. Images shared on social media late Monday

showed armored vehicles and armed pickups in the east and south of Tripoli after the arrest of 444 Brigade commander Mahmud Hamza at Mitiga airport, in an area under Al-Radaa's control.

Flights diverted

Plumes of smoke were seen in Tripoli and gunfire was heard in the densely populated suburb of Ain Zara before it spread to areas near the airport and Tripoli University, which announced the suspension of classes. The fighting was still underway on Tuesday and had forced "the closure of roads around Mitiga air-

port", according to the official.

Air traffic was stopped, flights were diverted to Misrata about 180 kilometers (110 miles) to the east, and planes that had been parked on the tarmac were moved away. The health ministry called for blood donations and the establishment of safe corridors to evacuate families trapped in the fighting. Libya has been plagued by divisions fueled by the proliferation of armed groups with shifting allegiances since the 2011 overthrow of dictator Muammar Gaddafi in a NATO-backed uprising.

The 444 Brigade is affiliated with Lib-

ya's defense ministry and is reputed to be the North African country's most disciplined. It controls the southern suburbs of Tripoli as well as the cities of Tarhuna and Bani Walid, securing roads linking the capital to the south of the country.

The Al-Radaa Force, commanded by Abdel Rauf Karah, is a powerful ultra-conservative militia that acts as Tripoli's police force, arresting both suspected jihadists and common criminals. It positions itself as independent of the interior and defense ministries, and it controls central and eastern Tripoli and Mitiga air base, the civilian airport and a

Bangladesh Islamist leader buried after violent protests

DHAKA: Around 50,000 people attended Tuesday's funeral for an influential Islamist leader in Bangladesh, police said, after news of his death while he was in prison for war crimes prompted violent anti-government protests. Delwar Hossain Sayedee, 83, was sentenced to death in 2013 for rape, murder and the persecution of Hindu Bangladeshis during the country's independence war decades earlier.

He died on Monday after suffering a heart attack in a prison outside Dhaka, prompting protests in the capital that turned violent when police moved in to disperse them. Heavy police security guarded a funeral prayer at Sayedee's hometown in coastal Pirojpur district where a huge crowd gathered to watch his body be laid to rest. "Some 50,000 people joined the funeral prayer," deputy district police chief Sheikh Mustafizur Rahman told AFP, adding that the burial took place without incident.

But elsewhere in the country, one person was killed during a confrontation between police and a group attempting to hold a memorial ceremony for Sayedee. "They gathered and wanted to hold a funeral prayer, stoking a clash between them and police," Chakaria duty police officer Md. Selim Mia told AFP. "One person has died and some more have been in-



PIROJPUR: This aerial photo shows supporters of Islamist leader Delwar Hossain Sayedee, gathered to offer prayers during his funeral at Pirojpur district on August 15, 2023. — AFP

jured including our policemen." Sayedee was vice president of the opposition Jamaat-e-Islami party, an Islamist political group with a huge following despite being banned for much of its history. The party remains controversial for supporting Bangladesh's continued union with Pakistan during the former country's brutal 1971 liberation war. Sayedee shot to prominence in the 1980s after he started preaching in some of the Muslim-majority nation's top mosques.

In his heyday, he would draw hundreds of thousands of his speeches, recordings of which were widely distributed. His conviction a decade ago by a war crimes tribunal — criticized by rights groups for several procedural shortcomings — trig-

gered the deadliest protests in Bangladesh's history, with at least 100 people killed in the clashes that followed.

Jamaat said tens of thousands of its supporters were arrested in a subsequent crackdown, and the party was only this year permitted to stage public demonstrations again. News of Sayedee's death on Monday night brought thousands of Jamaat supporters to the streets chanting anti-government slogans. Police dispersed protests with rubber bullets and tear gas before dawn on Tuesday, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) spokesman Faruk Hossain told AFP. The police force said it had rejected an application by Jamaat to hold a post-funeral prayer in the capital. — AFP

German government's ageing planes turn it into 'laughing stock'

BERLIN: German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock was forced on Tuesday to scrap her trip to Australia, New Zealand and Fiji after her plane suffered recurring technical problems, the latest in a series of incidents to hit the German fleet. "We tried everything but unfortunately it's logistically not possible to carry out my Indo-Pacific travel (plans) without the defective plane," the minister wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. "That is more than annoying," she added.

Baerbock had left on Sunday for the week-long trip, but her plane had suffered an outage after refueling in Abu Dhabi. The minister was stranded for hours while the technical crew battled to fix a problem with the wing flaps. Her delegation sought to get underway again overnight to Tuesday but the 23-year-old Airbus A340 had to go back to Abu Dhabi

when the defect resurfaced. "For security reasons, the plane had to return there," wrote the German air force on X. The aircraft had to dump fuel to land safely in Abu Dhabi again, it added. The mishap revived debate about the German government's ageing planes, with newspapers dubbing the latest incident "embarrassing" and a "fiasco".

Merkel late for G20

Germany was "turning itself into a laughing stock", the RND media network wrote in an opinion piece. It said the breakdown had caused political damage and hurt the "made in Germany" brand at a time when the economy was already struggling. The incident led Germany's Luftwaffe air force to announce it had decided to retire the plane early, as well the government's other A340-300.

"We will take the two A340s out of service as soon as possible, i.e. in the coming weeks ahead of schedule," the Luftwaffe wrote on X. The government purchased three new A350s for 1.2 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) in 2019 to update the fleet and had planned to phase out the plane carrying Baerbock by the end of 2024. "With the A350s, the air force has robust and modern aircraft at its disposal for long-haul operations," the Luftwaffe said.

German officials have repeatedly seen their flight plans disrupted in recent years because of technical problems. The same A340-300 thwarting Baerbock's travel plans also delayed former chancellor Angela Merkel's trip to a G20 summit in 2018, that time due to an electronic fault. Earlier that year, then finance minister and current chancellor Olaf Scholz had to take a commercial flight home from Indonesia after the same plane was grounded because rodents had chewed through some of its cables.

'Scrap the fleet'

Baerbock had already suffered

a travel setback in May, when she had to extend her visit to Qatar by a day after a different government plane developed a flat tire. The Australian foreign ministry said it shared "minister Baerbock's disappointment" over this week's aborted trip. "We look forward to welcoming her to Australia in the future," a foreign ministry spokesperson said.

New Zealand's foreign ministry said it hoped "there will be an opportunity for the ministers to catch up in the future". Baerbock was heading home on a commercial flight, according to reports. "It's simply embarrassing that the foreign minister couldn't continue her trip," Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, the head of Germany's parliamentary defense committee, told German media.

The opposition far-left Die Linke party called for the government fleet to be scrapped altogether, saying doing so would be better for the climate and the federal budget. "There are plenty of reliable airlines that the government can book," Linke member Gesine Loetzsch told Spiegel magazine. — AFP

Modi working to end ethnic violence

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Tuesday that his government was working to end ethnic clashes in the country's remote northeast that have killed more than 150 people since May. Political opponents have condemned Modi for failing to halt violence in the state of Manipur, while rights groups say his Hindu-nationalist party has fanned the flames of the conflict.

But speaking from New Delhi's imposing Red Fort for his annual Independence Day address, Modi said the conflict had abated and the relative peace in recent days "must continue". "This will pave the way for a resolution — it can only be found through peace," he said. "All Indians are with the people in Manipur and the state and central governments are working for peace." At least 152 people have been killed in Manipur since armed clashes broke out between the predominantly Hindu Meitei majority and the mainly Christian Kuki community.

The state has fractured along ethnic lines, with rival militias setting up blockades to keep out members of the opposing community. Tens of thousands of additional soldiers have been rushed from elsewhere to patrol towns and highways, and a curfew and internet shutdown remain in force across Manipur.

Human Rights Watch has accused state authorities in Manipur, which is governed by Modi's party, of facilitating the conflict with "divisive policies that promote Hindu majoritarianism". Modi easily defeated a no-confidence motion last week that had been called to condemn his government's conduct over the violence. Rahul Gandhi, Modi's chief political opponent, accused the premier of being "set on burning the whole country" by failing to bring the conflict under control. — AFP



IMPHAL: In this picture taken on August 9, 2023, women belonging to the 'Meira Paibis', a group of women representing Meitei society, hold torches during a demonstration demanding the restoration of peace in India's north-eastern Manipur state. — AFP

International

Time 'running out': Aid agencies urge immediate action on Sudan

Appeals for aid to help 19 million Sudanese 'just over 27-percent funded'

GENEVA: Four months into Sudan's conflict, the situation is spiraling out of control, with mass displacement and millions on the verge of famine, humanitarian organizations warned Tuesday, urging immediate international action. Since Sudan's conflict erupted on April 15, the country has been plunged into a dire humanitarian crisis, with the United Nations also warning of arbitrary killings and rampant sexual abuse.

In a joint appeal, the heads of 20 global organizations pointed out that "more than six million Sudanese people are one step away from famine". "The situation is spiraling out of control," said the statement, signed by the heads of numerous United Nations agencies, along with organizations including Save the Children and CARE.

The signatories pointed out that more than 14 million children need humanitarian aid and over four million people have fled the fighting, either within the war-ravaged country or as refugees to neighboring states. At the same time, they warned, "time is running out for farmers to plant the crops that will feed them and their neighbors". They decried the lackluster international response four months into the fighting between Sudan's army, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of his former deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

'No excuse'

"There is no excuse for waiting," said the statement, pointing out that two appeals for aid to help

some 19 million Sudanese "are just over 27-percent funded". "Please change that." The UN said it so far had received just a quarter of the \$2.57 billion it has appealed for to help people inside Sudan, and just 31 percent of the \$566 million requested to help those who have fled as refugees to neighboring countries.

The signatories assured the people of Sudan that their organizations would "continue to push for access to all people and in all areas of Sudan to bring humanitarian supplies and essential services". They called for an "immediate cessation of hostilities" and demanded that the parties to the conflict "grant us safe and unfettered access" to provide desperately needed aid.

They highlighted reports of widespread attacks on civilians, looting of humanitarian supplies, targeting of aid workers, civilians assets and infrastructure, including hospitals, and the blocking of humanitarian assistance.

Such acts, they warned, "may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity". The UN human rights office said its figures, which are surely an undercount, indicate that more than 4,000 people have so far been killed in the fighting, including 28 humanitarian and health workers and 435 children.

Sexual violence

The UN voiced particular concern for women and girls caught up in the conflict, amid "shocking incidence of sexual violence, including rape". "We've seen an increase of more than 900 percent in the conflict areas of gender-based violence," Laila Bak-

potential use of force, but the deadline expired without action. The drumbeat of possible intervention sounded again on Thursday when ECOWAS approved deployment of a "standby force to restore constitutional order" in Niger.

But visits by representatives from northern Nigeria have also helped swing the pendulum back towards diplomacy. Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, the influential former emir of Kano and Nigeria's former central bank governor, travelled to Niger on the eve of the ECOWAS summit for talks with the regime. His visit was followed at the weekend by that of a delegation of religious clerics.

As West Africa's biggest economic and military power, Nigeria wields extensive clout. President Bola Tinubu, who came to power in May after disputed elections, has taken a hard line on stemming a cascade of coups that have now swept through four ECOWAS countries in three years. But concern in northern Nigeria of a potentially catastrophic intervention is heaping pressure on him to exercise restraint.

Hundreds of residents in the Rijiyar Lemo neighborhood of Kano took to the streets last week after Friday prayers in protest against any military operation. Raising the flags of both Nigeria and Niger, the protesters chanted anti-French slogans and dragged a mock French flag along the dusty road, accusing Niger's former colonial power of prodding Nigeria to go to war with its neighbor. — AFP



PORT SUDAN: A Sudanese woman sits in a wheelchair at a hospital in Port Sudan on August 13, 2023 as people seek medical care amid soaring temperatures. — AFP

er of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) told reporters in Geneva via video link from Cairo. "Those women are incredibly at risk," she said.

The victims of such violence, which in several cases end up pregnant, find themselves with little or no access to assistance and care, she warned. UN rights chief Volker Turk meanwhile said in a

statement that his office had "received credible reports of 32 incidents of sexual violence against 73 victims as of 2 August". "This includes at least 28 incidents of rape. Men in RSF uniform were implicated in at least 19 incidents as perpetrators," he said, stressing that "the actual number of cases is likely much higher". — AFP

Regional diplomacy in Niger crisis sheds light on ancient ties

KANO: Religious leaders and politicians in northern Nigeria have opened back-door channels in a frantic attempt to stave off military intervention in coup-stricken Niger. The crisis has sparked fears for ancient cultural, social and commercial links that bind southern Niger with seven border states in northern Nigeria — Katsina, Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi, Jigawa, Borno and Yobe.

Many people in the north are shocked by the threat from West Africa's regional bloc ECOWAS, which is chaired by Nigeria, to intervene militarily to restore Niger's elected president, Mohamed Bazoum. "What we had in the last one thousand years has been lost in a matter of few weeks," Sule Lamido, Nigeria's former foreign minister and ex-governor of Jigawa state, said in an article published on Sunday. Bazoum, 63, was detained on July 26 by members of the presidential guard, in Niger's fifth coup since independence from France in 1960.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) gave Niger's military rulers a one-week ultimatum on July 30 to restore Bazoum or face the



NIAMEY: A vendor sells goods outside a market in Niger on August 14, 2023. — AFP

35 killed in Russia fuel station...

Continued from Page 1

Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah sent similar cables to Putin.

The explosion in the city of Makhachkala happened at a fuel station after a fire broke out, the regional branch of the Investigative Committee, which probes major incidents, announced on social media. "A fire occurred during car maintenance work, followed by a bang, as a result of which people were injured and died," the committee said, adding that nearby buildings and cars were damaged. A criminal case has been opened to establish the circumstances leading up to the fire, it added. State-run news agencies TASS and Ria Novosti reported that the fire had been extinguished, citing the ministry.

Makhachkala, a city of over 600,000 on the Caspian Sea, is the capital of Dagestan, a Russian republic bordering Chechnya. The blast was heard shortly before 10:00 pm (1900 GMT) on

Monday. Sergei Melikov, head of the Dagestan administration, announced on social media. A witness quoted by Russian daily newspaper Izvestia said the fire started in an area where cars were parked and spread to the petrol station. "After the explosion, everything fell on our heads. We couldn't see anything anymore," said the witness, who was not named.

Video footage released by Russia's emergency situations ministry showed firefighters trying to extinguish huge flames near burnt-out vehicles, as rescue workers examined the rubble of a building with flashlights. The fire had spread over an area of around 600 sq m, the ministry said, adding that 260 firefighters had been deployed to the blaze.

A government Il-76 aircraft carrying medical equipment had been dispatched to Makhachkala to evacuate the seriously injured to Moscow, it added. Melikov said that the evacuation operation had since been completed. The Dagestan government declared Aug 15 a day of mourning. "State flags will be flown at half mast throughout the country, and cultural institutions and TV channels will be asked to cancel entertainment events and programs," Melikov said. — Agencies

dealing with Kabul's new rulers. The country's economic and humanitarian crisis is a stark worry for many Afghans, even if, like Herat rickshaw driver Abdulwase Qadri, they express relief at the end of the fighting. "Security has been provided in these two years," the 35-year-old said. "But the work environment is not favorable for young people."

Women in particular have seen avenues to work closed, most recently with the shuttering of thousands of beauty parlors across the country. Non-governmental groups have marked the anniversary by again denouncing the Taliban authorities' treatment of women. "We strongly condemn ongoing and escalating gross human rights violations by the Taliban especially against women and girls and the lack of an effective response from the international community," said a joint statement from 10 rights groups, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

Zholia Parsi, one of those who joined in the rare and brief demonstrations by women against Taliban rule ahead of the anniversary, urged more action from the international community. "Afghanistan has fallen into a pit of darkness, and nobody is paying attention to it," she said. On Tuesday, in the capital of neighboring Pakistan, more than 100 Afghan women protested, carrying a poster that read: "15 August Black Day in Afghanistan". — AFP

Latest indictment in Georgia raises new dangers for Trump

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump has been indicted four times this year, but the latest charges — in Georgia — may carry particular peril for the former president. The Georgia case is the only trial likely to be televised, with the historic proceedings streamed and broadcast into households across the United States and around the world. The billionaire real estate tycoon starred for 14 years in the reality television show "The Apprentice", but he will be in a far different role when the case comes to trial — that of criminal defendant.

Fani Willis, the Georgia district attorney who charged Trump and 18 others with racketeering and other offenses related to their efforts to overturn the 2020 election, said Monday she wants to hold the trial within the next six months. Trump also faces federal charges brought by special counsel Jack Smith for allegedly conspiring to defraud the United States with his attempts to overturn the results of the presidential election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden.

A judge is to set a date on August 28 for a trial in the nation's capital — but television cameras are not allowed in federal courtrooms. Smith has asked for the trial to begin on Jan 2, 2024, nearly three years to the day after Trump supporters stormed the US Capitol in a final bid to block Congress from certifying Biden's victory. The special counsel has also accused Trump, the current frontrunner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, of mishandling top secret government documents in a case set to go to trial in Florida in May 2024.

Trump also faces a state trial in New York in March 2024 for allegedly paying election-eve hush money to a porn star, but those charges pale in severity to the accusations in Georgia. The 77-year-old Trump is accused in Georgia of trying to overturn the results of the election in the southern state, where he lost to Biden by less than 12,000 votes. In a call to Georgia election officials, Trump was recorded asking them to "find 11,780 votes" — the exact number he would need to overturn Biden's victory there.

Racketeering

Trump and the other 18 co-defendants in the Georgia case, who include Mark Meadows, his former White House chief of staff, and his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, are charged with racketeering, a charge that does not figure in the other criminal prosecutions. A conviction for racketeering — typically used to target organized crime — carries a minimum sentence of five years in prison. Trump has pleaded not guilty to the New York



This combination of pictures shows Former US President Donald Trump and Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis. — AFP

and federal charges, and has accused his Democratic political opponents of bringing them to derail his bid to recapture the White House.

As for a pardon: The New York and Georgia indictments both involve state charges, not federal ones, and Trump would not be able to pardon himself if he does manage to recapture the White House next year. A US president can only issue pardons for federal crimes, not state convictions. In Georgia, pardons are granted by a five-member Board of Pardons and Paroles, not by the governor as in many other states. An offender can only apply for a pardon, however, at least five years after completing their prison sentence and they must have "lived a law-abiding life" since their release.

Meanwhile, the property manager at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida pleaded not guilty on Tuesday to charges in a case alleging the former president mishandled classified government documents after leaving office, US media reported. Prosecutors accuse Trump of taking dozens of secret documents when he left the White House in January 2021 — including plans on nuclear programs — an act that they said endangered national security.

Also charged were two employees, property manager Carlos de Oliveira and Trump personal assistant Waltine Nauta. De Oliveira appeared Tuesday for a brief arraignment at a federal courthouse in Fort Pierce, some 200 km north of Miami, US media reported. Prosecutors accuse De Oliveira of scheming with Trump and Nauta to erase images from a surveillance camera to keep the footage out of the hands of investigators.

Trump and the two employees have been charged with conspiracy to obstruct justice and tampering with evidence. Nauta and De Oliveira also face charges of false testimony after they assured federal officers that they knew nothing about the documents kept by Trump at his Florida residence. Trump and Nauta have already pleaded not guilty in the case, but De Oliveira was unable to do so because he did not have local counsel. — AFP

Taliban mark two years since...

Continued from Page 1

In the city of Herat in the west, a crowd of Taliban supporters chanted: "Death to the Europeans, death to the Westerners, long live the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, death to the Americans." In Kandahar, the cradle of the Taliban movement and from where reclusive Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada rules by decree, a military parade was cancelled and then moved to a military compound, officials told journalists.

Kandahar resident Agha Sahib praised Akhundzada's leadership, saying he had unified the country. "When he issues a decree from (Kandahar), it is accepted... all over the 34 provinces of Afghanistan," said the 24-year-old who works for the interior ministry. The decrees have not been welcomed equally by all Afghans, however, nor by the international community, which is divided over whether to engage with the Taliban authorities.

Restrictions on the rights of women — squeezed from public spaces, employment and education — have been key obstacles to recognition and aid, which was slashed as foreign nations were wary of

International

Court rules for young people in landmark US climate trial

Montana's actions, laws deemed violations of youths' right to clean environment

WASHINGTON: In a landmark climate trial, a Montana court on Monday ruled in favor of a group of youths who accused the western US state of violating their rights to a clean environment. District Court Judge Kathy Seeley said a state law preventing agencies from considering the impacts of greenhouse gases when issuing permits for fossil fuel development was unconstitutional.

The case, *Held v State of Montana* — brought by 16 plaintiffs ranging in age from five to 22 — has been closely watched because it could bolster similar litigation that has been filed across the country. "By prohibiting analysis of GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions and corresponding impacts to the climate ... the MEPA (Montana Environmental Policy Act) Limitation violates Youth Plaintiffs' right to a clean and healthful environment and is unconstitutional on its face," Seeley wrote. "Plaintiffs have a fundamental constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment, which includes climate as part of the environmental life-support system," Seeley added in her more than 100-page ruling.

The closely watched case was the first involving a constitutional claim against a state and represented a rare instance in which climate experts were questioned on the witness stand. Julia Olson, executive director of the nonprofit Our Children's Trust, which represented the plaintiffs, welcomed the ruling as a "huge win for Montana, for youth, for democracy, and for our climate."

"Today, for the first time in US history, a court ruled on the merits of a case that the government violated the constitutional rights of children through laws and actions that promote fossil fuels, ignore cli-

mate change, and disproportionately imperil young people," Olson said. "As fires rage in the West, fueled by fossil fuel pollution, today's ruling in Montana is a game-changer that marks a turning point in this generation's efforts to save the planet from the devastating effects of human-caused climate chaos," she said in a statement.

'Dystopian movie'

Emily Flower, spokeswoman for Montana attorney general Austin Knudsen, denounced the ruling and said the state would appeal. "This ruling is absurd, but not surprising from a judge who let the plaintiffs' attorneys put on a weeklong taxpayer-funded publicity stunt," Flower said. "Montanans can't be blamed for changing the climate — even the plaintiffs' expert witnesses agreed that our state has no impact on the global climate," she added.

At the heart of the case was a provision within fossil fuel-friendly Montana's constitution that says: "The state and each person shall maintain and improve a clean and healthful environment in Montana for present and future generations." The youths said they had been harmed by the "dangerous impacts of fossil fuels and the climate crisis," with children "uniquely vulnerable" to its worsening impacts.

During closing arguments, Nate Bellinger of Our Children's Trust said his clients were asking the state government to "embrace its constitutional responsibility to alleviate the harms of its own conduct." "The plaintiffs acknowledge that the work to stop and reverse climate change will be a lifetime journey, but they are asking this court for help," he said. Montana assistant attorney general Michael Russell



HELENA: This picture provided by Our Children's Trust shows plaintiffs in the landmark *Held vs Montana* climate change lawsuit arrive to the Lewis and Clark County Courthouse on June 13, 2023 in Helena, Montana. — AFP

on the other hand argued that energy policy should be decided by the people through their elected representatives.

Russell said that while the state accepted that man-made emissions were responsible for warming, expert witnesses had not been able to quantify the extent to which Montana's laws were responsible. The trial began on June 12 and concluded a few days earlier than expected after Montana declined to call to the stand several experts, including its only climate scientist, Ju-

dith Curry. Over the course of the proceedings, the court heard testimony from the plaintiffs about ways their health, emotional wellbeing, family finances and cultural traditions had been affected. Lead plaintiff Rikki Held, 22, whose family runs a ranch in Montana, said that their livelihoods and quality of life had been increasingly impacted by wildfires, extreme temperatures and drought. Claire Vlasses, 20, said: "When I think about summer, I think about smoke. It sounds like a dystopian movie, but it's real life." — AFP



SARAJEVO: Thousands of people take part in a march on August 14, 2023 to show solidarity two days after a woman was murdered by her partner who livestreamed her killing on social media before killing two men and himself. — AFP

Thousands march after man streams partner's murder

SARAJEVO: Thousands of people marched in Sarajevo and other Bosnian cities Monday, days after a woman was murdered by her partner who livestreamed her killing on social media before killing two men and himself. The murders, and the 35-year-old suspect's Instagram posting of her killing, have shocked the Balkan country. "We demand that femicide be made a specific criminal act," Sarajevo mayor Benjamina Karic told the crowd. Speaking on behalf of the demonstrators, she called for more severe punishment for the crimes of femicide, domestic violence and for the construction of more safehouses for women victims of violence.

She also encouraged victims to report their attackers. "This is the last moment to adopt adequate measures. All those who hold positions of responsibility and who tolerate this situation become accomplices in perpetrating violence," Karic said. Protesters held up placards emblazoned with messages such as "Stop femicide", "Say no to violence" and "Silence is complicity". Protesters also took to the streets of the northeastern town of Gradacac after attending the funeral of the victim, as well as in the southern city of Mostar and the central town of Zenica, media reported.

On Friday, Nermin Sulejmanovic, 35, a professional bodybuilder and fitness instructor in Gradacac, killed his partner Nizama Hecimovic, 37, with a gun, after beating her, broadcasting the crime on Instagram. Before that, he forced her and their nine-month-old child to leave the home of Hecimovic's cousin to where she had fled a few days earlier after being assaulted.

According to local media, the broadcast of his murder was watched live by several thousand people, some of whom were even believed to have encouraged the attacker. After killing his partner, Sulejmanovic killed two other people — a man and his son — whom he knew, and wounded three others, a woman and two men, including a police officer. — AFP

S Korean president calls Japan 'partner' on Liberation Day

SEOUL: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on Tuesday called former colonial ruler Japan a "partner" that shares his country's values and common interests as he aims to strengthen ties with Tokyo in response to North Korea's growing nuclear threats. Relations between the North and South are at one of their lowest points in decades, with diplomacy stalled and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un calling for increased weapons development, including tactical nukes.

In response, Yoon has pulled South Korea closer to long-standing ally Washington while seeking to

Search continues for people missing in Indian floods

DEHRADUN: Rescuers searched Tuesday for people feared missing in floods and landslides that have killed at least 65 in India, including 11 who died in the collapse of a popular temple. Days of torrential downpours have washed away vehicles, demolished buildings and destroyed bridges in the Himalayas.

Flooding and landslides are common and cause widespread devastation during India's treacherous monsoon season, but experts say climate change is increasing their frequency and severity. At least 52 people have been killed in Himachal Pradesh since Sunday, with thousands more stranded after disruptions to roads, power lines and communication networks. "The suffering of those affected cannot be relieved with money, but the government will provide all possible help to them in this hour of distress," state chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said in a statement on Tuesday.

Sukhu said earlier that up to 20 others were feared trapped under rubble after landslides and appealed to residents to stay indoors and avoid going near rivers. Images from hard-hit areas in Himachal Pradesh showed bodies being pulled from piles of dark earth that had crushed buildings and smashed roofs. At least 11 people died when a landslide triggered the collapse of a popular temple for the Hindu deity Shiva in state capital Shimla.

"The rescue work is ongoing, and we fear that at least 10 more people are still trapped under the rubble," district disaster management committee chair Aditya Negi told AFP. Elsewhere in the state,



SHIMLA: National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel search for victims at the site of a landslide after a temple collapsed due to heavy rains in Shimla on August 14, 2023. — AFP

bury the hatchet with former colonial power Japan. The three are set to hold a trilateral summit in the United States on Friday, during which the leaders are expected to announce plans for expanding military cooperation.

The summit "will set a new milestone in trilateral cooperation contributing to peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula and in the Indo Pacific region," Yoon said. Seoul and Tokyo, key US security allies, have long been at odds over historical issues tied to Japan's brutal 1910-1945 occupation of the Korean peninsula, such as sexual slavery and forced labor.

But speaking at an event marking the anniversary of liberation from Japan's rule, Yoon said the two "are now partners who share universal values and pursue common interests". He reiterated that Tokyo, Seoul and Washington must "share North Korea's nuclear weapons and missiles data in real-time". "The seven rear bases provided to the United Nations Command(UNC) by the government of Japan serve as the

railway lines were seen dangling in midair after the ground beneath them was washed away. Sukhu said the disaster was the worst to hit Himachal Pradesh in the past 50 years, adding that state authorities had scaled down Tuesday's annual celebrations of Independence Day, marking the end of British colonial rule, to concentrate on rescue efforts.

More than 300 tourists had been rescued from the floods, he added. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, speaking from the Red Fort in New Delhi for his annual Independence Day address, said that recent natural disasters had caused "unimaginable troubles" for families across the country. "I express my sympathies towards all of them and I assure them that state and central governments will work together," he told the crowd.

Yoga retreat

At least 13 more people have also been killed since Friday in neighboring Uttarakhand state, officials said Tuesday. Rescue teams there raced to remove debris after people were feared buried when heavy rainfall triggered landslides. Five people were buried when a landslide hit a resort near the popular yoga retreat of Rishikesh on the banks of the river Ganges.

Nearly 350 roads around Uttarakhand had been closed to traffic, according to state disaster bulletins. Several riverside towns and villages in both states were at risk of flash floods from the heavy rain forecast. The monsoon brings South Asia around 80 percent of its annual rainfall and is vital for both agriculture and the livelihoods of millions. But it also brings destruction every year in the form of landslides and floods. Days of relentless monsoon rains killed at least 90 people last month, while the capital New Delhi saw the Yamuna River — which snakes past the megacity — record its highest levels since 1978. Forecasters expect heavy rains to continue across the Indian Himalayas until at least Friday. — AFP

How Trump uses indictments to fund campaign

WASHINGTON: Each time Donald Trump is indicted — and that has now happened four times since March, with the latest election interference charges in Georgia — he raises serious campaign cash and gets a bump in opinion polls. Instead of damaging the former president's image, his legal troubles for now offer him valuable political capital in a country where winning the White House costs billions of dollars.

On Sunday, even before charges were formalized in Georgia against the 77-year-old Republican, he fired out an email to his supporters, inviting them to fight back ... by reaching for their wallets. "The Biden Department of Justice is trying to JAIL ME FOR LIFE," he said, before asking his fellow "patriots" to give from \$24 to \$1,000 to his bid to be the Republican Party's candidate in 2024. "Our Republic is hanging by a thread, and America needs you right now."

\$4 million in 24 hours

Since he was first charged with criminal wrongdoing in New York, the feisty onetime reality television star has inundated his backers with text messages and emails of a similar ilk, always peppered with inflammatory language. Criminal charges against him? All "witch hunts." Democratic President Joe Biden? A "crooked" leader of a "tin-pot dictatorship" whose government is conspiring to "eliminate their leading opponent."

So far, the strategy is working: the Republican's campaign team announced they had raised more than \$4 million in 24 hours after his first indictment in March in New York, over hush money payments made to porn star Stormy Daniels. Team Trump also boasted about raising nearly \$7 million after he was charged in federal court in Florida in June over his handling of top secret classified documents — the first time a sitting or former commander-in-chief has ever faced federal charges. In a sign of the influence that the real estate tycoon still wields over his conservative base, thousands of Americans heeded the call to donate. One of them is Jim Wood, a retiree first encountered by AFP in Washington on January 6, 2021, the day of the deadly assault on the US Capitol by Trump's supporters.

Since the Republican billionaire's first indictment, Wood has donated nearly \$400 dollars to his campaign, according to publicly available campaign finance data. The 60-something from New Hampshire says he is convinced that Trump is the victim of political persecution. "Even if he's in jail, I'll still send him money," he told AFP.

Double-edged sword

Trump's campaign war chest and the engagement of his supporters are even more spectacular given that his fundraising efforts before his legal woes intensified were not as successful. With each new investigation, the Republican has benefited from what analysts have called an "indictment bump." A similar boost has been seen in the polls — since the New York charges were laid, the former president has gained nine percentage points in the race for the Republican nomination, according to polling data aggregator RealClearPolitics.

"Any time they file an indictment, we go way up in the polls," Trump said earlier this month. "We need one more indictment to close out this election." Even if Trump and his entourage are happy to brag about their fundraising successes on the back of his mounting legal problems, these cases are a double-edged sword. The candidate has had no choice but to dip into the campaign coffers to pay millions of dollars in legal fees linked to the indictments — money that could have otherwise been used for television ads, rallies or campaign swings nationwide. — AFP

Business

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2023

China stops releasing youth jobs data

Central bank cuts key rate as economic figures disappoint



WUHAN, China: University graduates attend a job fair in Wuhan, in China's central Hubei province on August 10, 2023. China said it would suspend the release of youth unemployment rates on August 15, 2023, as its central bank cut a key interest rate to boost flagging growth. — AFP

BEIJING: China stopped publishing data on its rising youth unemployment rate on Tuesday, as it released a raft of disappointing figures that stoked concerns over the state of the world's second largest economy. Shortly before the latest uninspiring indicators were published, the central bank cut a key interest rate in an effort to boost flagging growth. The new data added to a slew of figures in recent months reflecting a slump in China's post-COVID rebound, with joblessness among 16- to 24-year-olds hitting a record 21.3 percent in June.

But the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said on Tuesday that it would no longer release age-group-specific unemployment data, citing the need to "further improve and optimize labor force survey statistics". "Starting from this August, the release of urban unemployment rates for youth and other age groups across the country will be suspended," bureau spokesman Fu Linghui said at a press conference.

Overall unemployment rose to 5.3 percent in July compared with 5.2 percent in June, the NBS said. College student Li Nuojun told AFP in Beijing on

Tuesday that the rate of joblessness among young people had her "very worried". "When thinking about finding a job, I become very anxious," the 18-year-old added.

Slowing retail sales

As indicators of an economic slowdown have piled up, many experts have called for a large-scale recovery plan to boost activity. "In order to revive demand quickly, we think that the more effective policy option at this junction would be to embark on a central government-backed consumption stimulus measure," said Societe Generale analysts Wei Yao and Michelle Lam in a note.

But for the time being, authorities are sticking to targeted measures and declarations of support for the private sector — with little in the way of tangible steps. Tuesday's announcement that youth unemployment data would be suspended came as Beijing released a series of weak economic indicators for July. Retail sales, a key gauge of consumption, grew 2.5 percent year-on-year in July, the NBS said, down from 3.1 percent in June and falling short of analyst

expectations. Industrial production grew 3.7 percent in July from a year ago, down from 4.4 percent in June. The suspension of youth jobs data "may further weaken global investors' confidence in China", Ting Lu, China economist at Nomura, said in a note.

Chinese social media users were skeptical of officials' explanation for the move, with the topic receiving over 140 million views and tens of thousands of comments on the Weibo platform.

"Can you solve the problem by gagging and blindfolding yourself?" asked one Beijing-based user in a post liked by more than 3,000 people. Chinese leaders have sought to boost domestic consumption in recent weeks, with the State Council last month releasing a 20-point plan to encourage citizens to spend more in sectors including vehicles, tourism and home appliances. The country's top brass has warned that the economy faces "new difficulties and challenges" as well as "hidden dangers in key areas". The recent data suggests China may struggle to achieve a five percent growth target set for the year. The economy grew just 0.8 percent between the first and second quarters of 2023, according to official figures. — AFP

US retail sales bounce with online spending boost

WASHINGTON: US consumer spending rose more than anticipated in July, according to government data released Tuesday, boosted by online spending in a show of resilience even as the economy cools. Retail sales in the world's biggest economy advanced 0.7 percent to \$696.4 billion last month, up from a revised 0.3 percent rise in June, said the Commerce Department.

Consumption has proven more robust than expected in the United States as households dip into savings accumulated during the pandemic, supporting growth while business activity slowed in recent months.

Analysts noted that spending deals offered on Amazon Prime Day — which took place in July — likely buoyed consumer purchases online.

Official data released Tuesday showed that the overall increase came on the back of a 1.9 percent rise at non-store retailers, while sales at restaurants and bars picked up 1.4 percent from June. But sales at auto dealers dipped 0.3 percent from June to July, while those at gasoline stations picked up 0.4 percent amid higher prices at the pump.

Selective spending

Despite the robust headline numbers, "beneath the surface there are signs that consumers are



NEW YORK: Food carts operate outside City Hall in New York City. US consumer spending rose more than anticipated in July, according to government data released Tuesday. — AFP

shifting and becoming more selective with their purchases," said economist Oren Klachkin of Oxford Economics. "Spending on expensive, interest rate-sensitive items such as motor vehicles and furniture weakened, but these losses were more than offset by gains in the other components," he added.

These included food services and drinking spots, alongside leisure and hospitality spending. "The bigger picture, though, is that consumption spending growth is slowing, albeit not collapsing," said economists Ian Shepherdson and Kieran Clancy of Pantheon Macroeconomics in a recent report.

rising, and said the bank risked missing its inflation target in 2024 if prices continued to increase at their current rate.

"In the case of a strengthening of pro-inflation risks, an additional increase of the key rate is possible," it later said, in comments published by Russian news agencies. The bank is next scheduled to consider its key rate on September 15. The ruble has shed around 30 percent of its value against the dollar since the start of the year, as Moscow grapples with falling export revenues, rising imports and higher military spending. Inflation has also remained stubbornly high, despite the bank tightening monetary policy, with consumer prices rising 4.3 percent year-on-year in July.

China noted Tuesday that auto sales have come down slightly since January. At least some of the growth in non-store sales last month, he said, could reflect shifts in the timing of Amazon Prime Day since the pandemic, impacting seasonal adjustments.

"We expect a partial reversal of the July jump in the months ahead," he said. Economists have also pointed out that consumers are drawing down on excess savings while higher interest rates bite. To ease demand and sustainably lower inflation, the Federal Reserve has raised rates rapidly, bringing them to the highest level since 2001 most recently. — AFP

Data from the Moscow Exchange showed the ruble sharply weakening against the dollar after the rate decision, before settling to trade around 98.19 at 13:34 local time. "A rate hike will not help the ruble much," economist Dmitry Polevoy cautioned in a post on social media. He added that the ruble may continue to experience volatility, trading within the "normal" range of 85-95 rubles to the dollar.

On Monday the currency fell to more than 100 rubles to the dollar, prompting one Kremlin aide to publicly criticize "loose monetary policy" in an op-ed published in state media. The decline in the ruble and creeping inflation has prompted fears ordinary Russians' standard of living could take a hit. — AFP

Sri Lanka scraps \$3.85bn foreign funded oil refinery

COLOMBO: Cash-strapped Sri Lanka announced on Tuesday it was scrapping a \$3.85 billion deal to build an oil refinery that was set to become the island's largest foreign investment. Energy minister Kanchana Wijesekera said the cabinet terminated the agreement on Monday because Singapore-registered Silver Park International had failed to begin construction since a ground-breaking ceremony in 2019.

The project was originally meant to be jointly funded by Silver Park, owned by an Indian family company, and Oman and was due to be completed this year. Wijesekera said the government would seek a different foreign partner to set up a refinery primarily for the export of petroleum products.

China's Sinopec and Vitol had been short-listed to set up what would become the island's second oil refinery, near the Chinese-managed southern port of Hambantota, he said. A new partner would be announced within weeks. "The cabinet cancelled the agreement with (Silver Park's) Hambantota Refinery Company because they did not proceed with the construction," Wijesekera said.

Some 1,200 acres (485 hectares) of land allocated for the refinery were taken back, he said. President Ranil Wickremesinghe was Sri Lanka's prime minister when he attended the November 2019 ground-breaking ceremony. Wickremesinghe had hoped the refinery in Hambantota, a deep sea port near busy shipping lanes between Asia and Europe, would attract more investment to the area.

The port was controversially leased to a Chinese state-owned firm in 2017 for 99 years for \$1.12 billion, less than the \$1.4 billion Sri Lanka paid a Chinese company to build it. Sri Lanka defaulted on its \$46 billion external debt in April 2022 after running out of foreign exchange to finance essential food, fuel and medicines. It has since secured a \$2.9 billion bailout from the International Monetary Fund.

Separately, Sri Lanka partially lifted a ban on vehicle imports on Tuesday by allowing buses and trucks back into the island after more than three years. President Ranil Wickremesinghe issued an order removing the restriction imposed in March 2020, when the country faced an acute shortage of foreign exchange to finance essential imports. — AFP



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's Energy Minister Kanchana Wijesekera speaks during a press conference in Colombo on August 15, 2023. — AFP

Russian CB hikes key rate after ruble falters

MOSCOW: Russia's central bank on Tuesday hiked its key interest rate from 8.5 to 12 percent, after the ruble crashed to a more than 16-month low against the dollar. "This decision was taken in order to limit the risks to price stability," the central bank announced after an emergency meeting earlier in the day. It warned that inflationary pressure was still

Business

UK unemployment climbs as wages grow at record rate

British economy struggles with high inflation

LONDON: UK unemployment increased in the three months to the end of June while wages grew at record annual pace, official data showed Tuesday, as the economy struggles with high inflation. The number of people out of work increased to 4.2 percent compared to 4.0 percent in the three months to the end of May, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said.

The rise is "mainly due to people taking slightly longer to find work than those who started job hunting in recent months," said Darren Morgan, director of economic statistics at the ONS. He added that the number of people "prevented from working by long-term sickness has risen again to a new record".

The UK finance ministry noted that Britain's unemployment rate was lower than that of Canada, France, Italy, Spain and the Euro area. While the unemployment rate is the highest since the period from July to September 2021, the ministry added that it remains "low by historical standards".

The ONS figures also showed that regular pay excluding bonuses was 7.8 percent higher in the three months to the end of June compared to the same period last year. This is the highest annual growth rate since comparable re-

ords began in 2001. "Coupled with lower inflation, this means the position on people's real pay is recovering and now looks a bit better than a few months back," Morgan said.

UK annual inflation stands at 7.9 percent, the highest among G7 nations, while the Bank of England is tasked by the UK government with keeping annual inflation at around two percent.

Further rate hike

The Bank of England has hiked its key interest rate several times since late 2021 and analysts predict that the central bank will increase its rates further following today's figures. "The fall in employment in the three months to June and further rise in the unemployment rate will be welcomed by the Bank of England as a sign labor market conditions are cooling," said Ruth Gregory, deputy chief UK economist at Capital Economics.

But she added that with wage growth still accelerating, the Bank of England is likely to increase its key rate to 5.5 percent "before it brings its tightening cycle to a close". "There was always the likelihood that today's unemployment and wages numbers would give the Bank of England a headache



LONDON: People queue to enter a job centre in east London. The UK unemployment rate jumped to a two-year high in the three months to the end of June, official data showed on August 15, 2023, as the country grapples with stubbornly-high inflation and a cost of living crisis. — AFP

when it comes to deciding what to do when it comes to further rate increases," said Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets UK.

"And this morning's numbers have not just given the central bank a headache, but a migraine," he added. For Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at Hargreaves Lansdown, the record annu-

al wage growth means another rate hike from the Bank of England "looks bolted on in September".

According to a report by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) published Monday, 40 percent of British employers making a counteroffer have offered a higher salary amid persistent labor shortages.

At the same time, workers across the economy have over the past year staged industrial action to demand pay rises in response to the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation. According to the ONS, 160,000 working days were lost because of labor disputes in June, and over half of those were in the health and social work sector. — AFP

Minority workers hit by rise in insecure work: UK body

LONDON: The number of black and minority ethnic workers in insecure work has more than doubled over the last decade, a UK union body said on Monday, calling for government action.

The TUC, an umbrella group of 48 unions comprising more than 5.5 million members, said the phenomenon of low pay, variable hours and fewer rights and protections was an example of "structural racism".

It based its findings on analysis of a study it commissioned of agency, casual, seasonal and other workers between 2011 and last year but excluded those on fixed-term contracts. The figures showed that 3.9 million people were in insecure employment: of those, 836,340 were from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds in 2022, up from 360,200 in 2011. BME men were almost twice as likely to be in insecure

work as their white counterparts (19.6 percent compared with 11.7 percent), with women also affected (15.7 percent to 9.9 percent).

Overall, workers from BME backgrounds accounted for two-thirds of the increase, despite comprising only 14 percent of the overall workforce. Corresponding figures for low-paid workers from white backgrounds remained relatively stable, the TUC said, describing it as an example of inequality in the labor market.

The organization has previously highlighted the growth of insecure jobs in the UK such as those employed on zero-hours contracts, which offer no minimum guarantee of hours.

Sectors most affected were in the caring profession, leisure services, and process, plant and machine operatives, as well as delivery drivers. TUC general secretary Paul Nowak said: "Too many



LONDON: The number of black and minority ethnic workers in insecure work has more than doubled over the last decade, a UK union body said on Monday, calling for government action.

black and ethnic minority workers are trapped in low-paid, insecure jobs with limited rights and protections, and treated like disposable labor.

"The massive and disproportionate concentration of BME workers in insecure work — like in the gig economy —

is structural racism in action." Nowak called on the government to end the "exploitative" zero-hours contracts, for improvements to pay and standards, and for firms to close the ethnicity pay gap, which exacerbates existing discrimination. — AFP

Saudi inflation eases to 2.3% in July: Data

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's annual rate of inflation last month eased to 2.3 percent, down from 2.7 percent that the Arab world's largest economy recorded in June, according to official data. Housing, food and transport were among the drivers of a rise in consumer prices in July from a year earlier, data from Saudi Arabia's General Authority for Statistics (Gastat) showed on Tuesday.

"Actual rents for housing increased by 10.3 percent in July, reflecting the increase in rents for apartments by 21.1 percent," Gastat said. "Prices for rents were the main driver ... due to their high relative importance in the Saudi consumer basket, with a weight of 21 percent." Prices of food and beverages rose by 1.4 percent, while transport prices increased by almost 1 percent — mainly due to the increase in transport services charges.

Restaurants and hotels prices rose by 2.9 percent, while education prices increased by 1.8 percent from a year earlier. In contrast, furnishings and household prices eased by 2.5 percent, while clothing and footwear rates decreased by 3.9 percent on an annual basis, Gastat said.

Inflation in Saudi Arabia — OPEC's biggest oil producer — has been on the decline since January, when it hit 3.4 percent. Similar to its peers in the GCC, inflation in the kingdom is relatively lower than the developed markets and advanced economies, on the back of government measures to



RIYADH: Customers shop at a jewelry shop in Riyadh. Saudi Arabia's annual inflation eased to 2.3 percent in July.

control consumer prices. Central banks elsewhere have aggressively increased interest rates to subdue inflation. After hitting pause on its tightening cycle in June, the US Federal Reserve increased the policy rate in July for the 11th time since March 2022. The 25 basis points increase has taken the benchmark rates to the highest since 2001 as the US regulator tries to bring inflation down to its 2 percent target range. The Fed has increased rates by a combined level of more than 500 bps over the past 16 months.

The central banks of the UAE, Saudi Arabia,

Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar also raised their benchmark borrowing rates in July, as they follow the Fed's rate moves due to their currencies being pegged to the US dollar. Saudi Arabia's economy grew by 1.1 percent in the second quarter, boosted by a sharp expansion in the country's non-oil sector as the kingdom continues to diversify its economy away from hydrocarbons.

The non-oil sector grew 5.5 percent in the three-month period to the end of June, compared with the same period in 2022, according to the flash estimate by the Gastat. — Agencies

UK's long-term sick pile pressure on economy

LONDON: The number of people not working in the UK due to chronic illnesses has soared since the pandemic, putting pressure on the British economy, analysts said on Tuesday. The proportion of the population in the labor market peaked in early 2020 but "the pandemic saw a sudden and dramatic reversal of this trend", according to public budget forecasting body the OBR.

This was driven mostly by people citing poor health as a main reason

for their inactivity, it said. At the start of 2023, 2.6 million Britons of working age (6.1 percent of the total) were out of the labor force for health reasons, the body said in a report published last month.

In its latest figures published on Tuesday, in which it reports an unemployment rate of 4.2 percent at the end of June, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) notes that the number of people out of work due to ill health had "climbed to a new record". Chris Thomas, researcher at the Institute for Public Policy Research, pointed to the COVID-19 pandemic and the preceding decade of economic austerity following the 2008 banking crisis. "It's an incredibly substantial drag on the

economy," he said, adding that the UK was struggling more than other comparable countries.

"It's not the sole factor but it's underpinning the vast majority of the biggest economic challenges the UK faces." The proportion of the workforce unavailable for employment on health grounds is exacerbating labor shortages faced by many sectors since Brexit and the re-opening of the post-pandemic economy.

Their growing number is also putting pressure on British public finances, through increased spending on benefits — around £6.8 billion (\$8.6 billion) — higher demand for spending on health and a shortfall in tax for state coffers, according to

the OBR. Chronic Illness Inclusion (CII), an organization that helps people with chronic illnesses, has seen a shift since the pandemic. The people who come to it once suffered from a wide range of conditions, but now so-called long COVID "is one of the main drivers", said co-chair Fran Springfield.

Long COVID had highlighted more widely the problems that people with long-term illness and energy-limiting conditions had been "experiencing for quite a long time", Springfield said. These included long waiting times for treatment on the state-funded National Health Service (NHS), which now has a record 7.6 million people awaiting treatment in England alone. — AFP

Yellen calls for diversified clean energy supply chains

WASHINGTON: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen stressed Monday the need for diversified clean energy supply chains as America shifts away from fossil fuels, warning that production should not be concentrated in a few countries.

While she did not provide names, Yellen's prepared remarks come at a time when China produces the majority of batteries for electric vehicles and the Treasury Department has noted a high level of Chinese control over critical mineral processing globally.

"Today, the production of critical clean energy inputs — from batteries to solar panels to critical minerals — is concentrated in a handful of countries," Yellen said at an event in Las Vegas. She stressed the importance of building resilient and diversified critical global supply chains to mitigate disruptions and safeguard economic security.

"That starts by investing here at home," Yellen said, touting what she called the benefits of President Joe Biden's landmark climate action plan. Called the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the plan provides incentives for America's energy transition and marks its one-year anniversary this week.

Apart from being the country's "bold-est-ever climate action," Yellen said Monday that the act revitalizes left-behind communities and boosts energy security as well.

"A clean energy transition will enable us to depend more on the wind and the sun — and less on fossil fuels and the whims of those who control those resources," according to a text of her remarks.

This brings greater stability in energy costs, she noted. And the IRA, she adds, "is helping re-shore some of the production that is critical to our clean energy economy." Since January 2021, companies have committed more than \$500 billion in manufacturing and clean energy investments, in part boosted by the IRA, Yellen said. As Biden seeks re-election next year, an urgent concern is finding ways to capitalize on an economic agenda he has dubbed "Bidenomics." The term is meant to embrace both the current strength of the US economy and a future built in part on the IRA and major investment programs in technology and infrastructure. — AFP



MCLEAN, US: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen speaks about the Inflation Reduction Act after visiting the site of a new paperless processing initiative in McLean, Virginia. — AFP

Business

Young people in China scratch an economic itch with lottery cards

Lottery sales in China soar to 274bn yuan in H1 of 2023

SHANGHAI: Chinese livestreamer Chen Ying has spent more than 100,000 yuan (around \$14,000) on lottery scratch cards, which she systematically scrapes through on camera for her followers on social media platform Douyin.

But Chen, 28, is not playing to win in the traditional sense, despite China's faltering economy offering little chance of a bonanza for young people.

Instead, she's leveraging the increasing popularity of the lottery among young people in China to build up her follower count—a gamble that paid off when her fanbase went from a few hundred to more than 45,000 in the space of six months. Lottery sales in China soared to almost 274 billion yuan in the first half of the year, an increase of more than 50 percent year-on-year, with analysts pointing to a growing economic malaise as a possible explanation.

"I think it may be because it is not easy to make money now, especially when college graduates and unemployed people can't find a suitable job, which makes them grasp onto the idea of getting rich suddenly," Chen, who is based in central Hunan province, told AFP.

Months of disappointing economic data have confirmed China's post-pandemic recovery is slowing, with the risk of prolonged deflation looming.

China announced on Tuesday it would suspend the release of youth unemployment figures, after previous sets of data hit record levels for several months in a row.

Many of Chen's followers are college students, and one-third are under the age of 23, according to their profiles. "In people's subconscious, the opportunity to get rich through labor is decreasing, so they are more willing to 'take a chance' through the lottery to see if they can get rich overnight through luck," Huang Zhenxing, a professor at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, told Chinese media Cuijing recently.

"It also means that people have little confidence in the current economy." On Douyin, Chen's fans tune in for the vicarious thrill of seeing her tear through cards, leaving messages under the videos detailing their own luck. "The possibility of... achieving overnight wealth is small," Chen said matter-of-factly, something made clear to her audience by her repeated failures to win big.

"Basically I'm trying to get popularity... and have more people get to know me and my brand."

'Sense of possibility'

Chen is far from the only influencer to have jumped on the lottery bandwagon. Videos tagged with scratch card brand "Guaguale"—"scratch, scratch, happy"—have been viewed more than 6.7 billion times on Douyin, while there are 120 million views under the topic #Guaguale on Xiaohongshu.

Curtis Cheng, 25, has found himself buying scratch cards more this year and has noticed he is not alone—at lunch and dinner time, the lottery stand near him is surrounded by young people.

"It's a kind of small lucky feeling," Cheng told AFP. "It's not a big deal if you don't win, it's just a way to spice up your life." But he said he thought there was also a deeper issue at play related to economic confidence. "I think it's probably because young people need a sense of possibility," he said. "They need some luck to help them improve their current situation."

Erika Cui, who works in the IT industry, said a scratch card provided a brief second of escape. "The feeling of not having to think about my bad life because I'm so excited about the moment is much better than winning the lottery or not winning itself," she said. "The economy hasn't been very good over the years... the pressure of work and life is



This photo taken on August 10, 2023 shows a woman scratching a lottery ticket at a stand in Beijing. - Lottery sales in China soared to almost 274 billion yuan in the first half of the year, an increase of more than 50 percent year-on-year, with analysts pointing to a growing economic malaise as a possible explanation. — AFP

quite high, and everyone's mental state is really worrying," the 25-year-old said.

Cui linked the increasing popularity of the lottery to a burgeoning dropout culture that pushes back against China's

often intense study and work pressure. "I feel that it is more of a self-deprecating state of life is like this, why don't we play a scratch card for fun, what if I win the lottery?" she said. — AFP

Best gadgets from Huawei for kids to learn, stay connected

KUWAIT: The summer is almost over, and it's time to get ready for school. Whether your kids are going back to the classroom or learning from home, they will need some gadgets to help them study and play. For parents, this time of the year can be overwhelming. Most of us don't have the time to spend hours in the mall looking for school supplies, let alone go through hundreds of different options and compare their features and prices to find the best ones. So we decided to make it easy for you. Here we have selected some of the best gadgets your kids can have to get them ready for school.

Huawei MateBook X Pro

The new Huawei MateBook X Pro combines performance and portability in a premium and stylish design. It weighs only 1.26 kg, making it lightweight enough to be the most powerful tool in your kid's backpack. It is perfect for online classes, homework, research, and creative projects. With this laptop, they can attend online classes, take notes, and access learning materials on the same device. The laptop has enough power and long battery life to rip through the most demanding workloads smoothly.

Whenever they are working on a creative project, they can take advantage of the laptop's powerful performance to edit photos and videos, and render 3D designs. Moreover, the laptop is

also ready for when they want to take a break and enjoy some free time. The Huawei MateBook X Pro comes with a stunning and vivid 14.2-inch 3.1K Huawei Real Colour FullView Display that provides an immersive experience while watching movies or playing games.

Huawei MatePad 11.5

The Huawei MatePad 11.5 is a versatile tablet that can help your kid with learning, creativity, and entertainment. It offers a wide and immersive view with its impressively large 11.5" 120Hz Huawei FullView Display that renders every detail in stunning clarity. Having an amazing high-resolution display makes it ideal for reading ebooks and pdfs, watching videos, and even playing games. Moreover, the tablet features TÜV Rheinland-certified Flicker-Free technology and Low Blue Light Certification to minimize eye strain.

They can also use the Huawei M-Pencil (2nd Generation) to write, draw, or highlight on the screen with excellent precision. The M-Pencil finely captures each line, dash, and brushstroke. If they are into art, this tablet is going to be a perfect fit. And when it's time to write something, a keyboard is not necessary as the FreeScript feature enables your kid to directly handwrite text in apps using the M-Pencil. But pairing it with the detachable Huawei Smart Keyboard, which offers comfortable typing, gives them that extra flexibility they will need while doing assignments or project reports.

The MatePad 11.5 also comes with a high-performance chip featuring a 4 nm process, delivering smooth performance similar to Huawei's more premium tablets. But that's not all. The tablet also has a massive 7700 mAh battery that keeps it powered all day long.



Huawei FreeBuds 5

A pair of wireless earphones can be great for listening to music, podcasts, audiobooks, and online lectures. What better option for your kids than the FreeBuds 5 that brings a unique look, charm, and premium sound quality? These earbuds are seriously futuristic in their design. They have a beautifully curved shape that fits the contour of the ears, making them comfortable even if worn for extended periods. These earbuds sound incredible while also offering fast charging and extremely convenient touch controls. The cherry on top is that they also have Open-fit Active Noise Cancellation that offers an immersive listening experience.

Kids can also use them to make and receive calls and attend online classes, as they can adaptively filter out external noise to make their voice sound clearer to the person on the other end, even in noisy environments. The earbuds have three microphones and some advanced algorithms for noise reduction. Last but not least, if your kid loves listening to loud music, a pair of wireless earphones will save you and your neighbors from the noise and the complaints, wink-wink.

We hope you found this list helpful. You can get your hands on these gadgets from Huawei's online store or through select retailers across Kuwait.



BUENOS AIRES: A woman walks past an image of one hundred dollar notes in Buenos Aires on August 14, 2023, a day after primary elections in Argentina. — AFP

Economic jitters as outsider leads Argentina poll race

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina devalued the peso as economic jitters gripped the country on Monday after an anti-establishment candidate advocating harsh austerity measures surged to the front of the presidential race.

Fiercely libertarian lawmaker Javier Milei, 52, scored the most votes in a presidential primary election on Sunday, in what local media referred to as a political earthquake in Latin America's third-largest economy. The result was seen as a rejection of the traditional political coalitions that have overseen decades of debt defaults, currency crises, and economic decline.

Year-on-year inflation has hit 115 percent, and poverty levels are at 40 percent. Milei has proposed dollarizing the economy and imposing strict austerity measures. He says climate change is a lie and that he plans to get rid of the central bank, ban abortion and make it easier to buy guns. In a unique election format, all Argentines on Sunday voted for their favorite tickets, allowing parties to pick their main candidate while providing a key popularity test ahead of an October general election.

Milei scored 30 percent of votes, ahead of the right-wing opposition candidate Patricia Bullrich who scored 28 percent, and the ruling center-left coalition's candidate, Economy Minister Sergio Massa, who came third with 27 percent. "We have managed to build a competitive alternative that will put an end to the parasitic, thieving, useless political caste," said Milei in his victory speech.

Milei has on occasion been compared to former US President Donald Trump and Brazil's ex-leader Jair Bolsonaro. Political analyst Carlos Fara said it wasn't so much Milei's proposals that had attracted voters, but rather the desire to "try something new if the other coalitions failed."

President Alberto Fernandez is not seeking re-election. The presidential election is thus shaping up to be a close battle among the top three finishers in Sunday's primary.

Lurching towards deeper crisis

Anticipating a market backlash, the government loosened its grip on the tightly-controlled peso, which depreciated by over 20 percent. The devaluation "underscores that the economy is lurching towards an even deeper economic crisis," according to an analysis by Capital Economics.

The peso was trading at 365.50 to the dollar, compared to 298.50 on Friday. The informal market's "blue dollar"—the most accessible to residents and businesses amid strict currency controls—was trading at about 680 pesos. Capital Economics said the devaluation will further fan inflation, estimating levels of up to 140 percent, "and make it increasingly difficult for the government and IMF to deem that the public debt is still sustainable." — AFP

Japanese economic growth smashes expectations

TOKYO: Quarterly growth data for Japan smashed expectations on Tuesday as car exports rebounded and tourists flooded back, but economists cautioned that it may not last. The world's third-largest economy expanded 1.5 percent quarter-on-quarter in the three months to June, preliminary government data showed, the fastest rate since the fourth quarter of 2020.

This was almost double the average economist forecast of 0.8 percent, according to Bloomberg News, and followed revised growth of 0.9 percent in the previous quarter.

On an annualized basis, growth was 6.0 percent, more than double the market expectation of 2.9 percent, and giving Japan three-straight quarters of growth. "Japan's exports have recovered as the supplies crisis eased for the auto sector while the yen's depreciation provided support," Ryutaro Kono, chief economist at BNP Paribas, wrote in a note issued before the data. Hiroyuki Ueno, at SuMi TRUST,

also said pent-up demand from the pandemic and an increase in capital investment were boosting the economy. "The hospitality sector is expected to remain a driver of economic growth due to the increase in inbound tourism, as the pandemic is now in the rearview mirror," Ueno wrote ahead of the release.

"Although the number of inbound visitors to Japan has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, the per capita consumption of tourists during their stay in Japan has increased, partly due to the weak yen," he wrote.

Domestic doldrums

The chief economist of the International Monetary Fund said last month that Japan was "one of the few advanced economies that is doing better in 2023 than in 2022." The Bank of Japan forecasts growth of 1.3 percent in the current fiscal year, which runs until March 31. The strong reading for Japan follows well-received data for several other major economies including the United



TOKYO: Quarterly growth data for Japan smashed expectations on Tuesday as car exports rebounded and tourists flooded back, but economists cautioned that it may not last.

States, although China remains a worry.

However, economists said that the data also underscored the continued weakness of domestic demand as Japanese families struggle with rising prices. Marcel Thieliand at Capital Economics said that real household disposable income plunged by 4.5 percent year-on-year in the quarter, and that it would continue to fall until the second half of next year.

Exports grew 3.2 percent compared with the previous quarter, mostly due to a "huge" 14 percent jump in car shipments as supply shortages eased. "But with car exports now at a record-high and Japanese carmakers having fallen back in the electric vehicle race, that's unlikely to be sustained," Thieliand said, forecasting a "renewed slowdown across the second half of the year." — AFP

Swedish inflation persists at over 9%

STOCKHOLM: Swedish inflation remained unchanged in July at over nine percent, official statistics showed Tuesday, as central bank rate hikes have struggled to rein in rising prices.

Consumer prices in the Scandinavian country rose by 9.3 percent year-on-year in July, the same as

the month before. "In July, the primary price increases were those of package holidays and foods," Carl Martensson, statistician at Statistics Sweden, said in a statement. "These increases were partially offset by decreasing electricity prices, which contributed to a state of unchanged consumer prices in total."

Rising mortgage costs also contributed 3.1 percentage points to the annual inflation rate, the statistics agency said. Like its peers in the United States and Europe, Sweden's central bank has repeatedly hiked its guiding rate in an effort to bring down in-

flation. Swedish inflation peaked in December at 12.3 percent, a more than 30-year high.

Adjusted for fixed interest rates (CPIF) — the figure used by the Riksbank to guide monetary policy—inflation was 6.4 percent in July. The Riksbank, which hiked its key rate by 0.25 percentage points to 3.75 percent in late June, has a set target to keep inflation under two percent.

For 2023 as a whole, the central bank expects the Swedish economy to contract 0.5 percent, and has forecast unadjusted inflation of 8.9 percent. — AFP



Cat Fashion Week



Dressed cats are held by their owners as they participate in the Cat Fashion Week held at a shopping mall in Banda Aceh, northern Indonesia.—AFP photos



Made in Soweto Mama's Boy crochet hats are stealing hearts

A mother-son duo remind us that in life, we wear many hats, and that everyone has a story to tell. For Simphiwe Ismael Khumalo and his mother Tulisile Jaqueline Radebe, their crochet hat brand, Mama's Boy carries profound significance. Simphiwe, who is the founder and creative director, says the name embraces a personal journey and dismantles stereotypes. "Growing up without a father figure, I was always by my mom's side. People used to call me 'mama's boy' as if it were a bad thing, but I chose to redefine it," he explains. "Being a mama's boy is a beautiful thing, and it celebrates the strength and power of mothers. I want everyone to embrace that love and affection."

His mother, Tulisile Jaqueline Radebe, initially had reservations about the name. "What will people think?" she says. But Simphiwe's vision was clear – to empower and uplift the term "mama's boy" and show the world the profound love and respect between a mother and her son. While the fast fashion industry has a reputation for thoughtless mass production,



Simphiwe and Tulisile's foray into fashion shows craft's potential for drawing attention to the social fabric of our time: in South Africa, it has been estimated that more than 40% of mothers are single parents.

"What sets us apart is that each of our customers feels unique," says Simphiwe. "Our hats are one-of-one, crafted specifically for individuals." The hats' unique shapes become an extension of the wearers' characters, adding a touch of playfulness to their style. Challenging conventions, Mama's Boy cleverly places its tags on the outside of the hats, drawing attention and sparking curiosity. "We want people to question the norm and see our hats as not just accessories, but stories waiting to be told," Simphiwe says.

Describing the brand as "fun, playful, and unique," Mama's Boy aims to tell captivating stories about families,



communities, and friendships in and around Soweto. As Mama's Boy continues to crochet its way into hearts, it serves as a reminder that sustainable fashion can go beyond style. It can become a vessel for storytelling, empowerment, and embracing the uniqueness of its wearer. With Tulisile and Simphiwe leading the way, this family-rooted brand is not just creating hats; it's weaving a tapestry of love, acceptance, and joy in the streets of Soweto. These hats symbolize the diverse roles Simphiwe's mother has played, including that of a single mother raising two sons. The passion and love she pours into her craft are evident in every stitch, making each piece a genuine reflection of her joyful spirit and artistic flair.

—www.twyg.co.za

Ashley Olsen reportedly secretly welcomed a baby boy months ago

Ashley Olsen is a new mother—and has been for some time. TMZ reports that Olsen and her husband Louis Eisner welcomed their first child, a baby boy they named Otto, in New York "a few months ago," per sources close to the couple. The sources did not specify exact birth date but did tell TMZ that the couple is "ecstatic" about their baby boy. Eisner and Olsen got married in December 2022, months after first sparking marriage rumors. There's no official statement from the couple though, as Olsen's rep has not yet commented, and Olsen does not have social media. Both Olsen and her twin sister Mary-Kate live very private lives despite their child star fame. —www.elle.com



Lifestyle



A woman eats pasta with blue crab meat harvested in the Scardovari lagoon, at Chef Luca Faraon's holiday farm restaurant in Eraclea, near Venice, Italy.



A fisherman throw a bucket of blue crabs harvested in the lagoon of Scardovari.



An aerial view shows fishing boats harvesting clams in the lagoon of Scardovari.



A fisherman holds a blue crab in the lagoon of Scardovari, south of Venice, Italy.

In the shallow waters of the Scardovari lagoon, fishermen catch clams for Italy's beloved spaghetti alle vongole, alongside mussels and oysters. But an invader risks putting them out of business. The blue crab, native to the North American Atlantic coast, has been present across the Mediterranean for years but in recent months has become a serious problem on Italy's northeastern coast. "The blue crabs are eating everything. This stretch of lagoon is becoming a desert," said Gianluca Travaglia, a 52-year-old farmer of mussels and clams.

He is the third generation of his family to have a boat on the "Sacca degli Scardovari", an economically important part of the delta where the Po River reaches the Adriatic Sea. "Every day we fish more of them... I don't know what to do," Travaglia told AFP as he guided his motorboat across the water. His fellow farmers had the same issue, he added. "They can't even lower their nets anymore because the crabs swim into the nets and break them."



Picture of a dish of pasta with blue crab meat harvested in the Scardovari lagoon, taken at Chef Luca Faraon's holiday farm restaurant in Eraclea, near Venice, Italy.



Italian Chef Luca Faraon, gives the final touch to a dish of blue crab harvested in the Scardovari lagoon, in the kitchen of his holiday farm in Eraclea, near Venice, Italy.



Italy's clam farmers fear blue crab 'invasion'

'Critical situation'

Italy's government allocated 2.9 million euros (\$3.2 million) last week to address what Agriculture Minister Francesco Lollobrigida called a "critical situation". The money will provide "economic incentives" for those catching and disposing of the crabs, which he said lack natural predators in Italian waters. Business lobby Coldiretti has described the phenomenon as a crab "invasion", driven by warming waters and climate change.

Across the Italian seabed, the crabs are "exterminating clams, mussels, eggs, other fish and molluscs, putting at risk the survival of 3,000 businesses in the Po Delta", Coldiretti said. From their American origins, the "callinectes sapidus" has spread around the world, likely transported via ballast water from ships.

They have thrived in the Mediterranean Sea, which is warming due to climate change. For years, fishermen

from Albania to France and Spain have grappled with the spread of the blue crab, which is disrupting the natural balance of native populations. Excellent swimmers and weighing up to one kilogram (2.2 pounds), they eat almost everything, while their sharp, blue-tinted claws are particularly adept at prying open clam shells.

Crab spaghetti

In Eraclea, outside Venice, restaurateur Luca Faraon is among a number of cooks seeking to explore how to use this new, tasty resource. "With the blue crab, you can prepare many foods," said the 58-year-old, as diners tucked into crab spaghetti the chef prepared using garlic, cherry tomatoes and parsley.

"We are still thinking about how to use it as a dessert!" Faraon added. The crab—whose Latin name is said to mean "savory beautiful swimmer"—is a prized catch in the Chesapeake Bay on the United States' East Coast, where it is known as the Maryland blue crab. After a meeting with the industry last week, Italian minister Lollobrigida said the problem might be an opportunity, citing potential markets in the United States and China. "Blue crabs are a great resource," he said, emphasising their high levels of vitamin B12.

'Devouring clams'

Yet Emanuele Rossetti, a biologist with the Polesine fishing consortium, one of Europe's largest shellfish farm-

ing associations, is pessimistic. Clams were the core business of members of his group, and the molluscs cannot exist alongside large numbers of blue crabs, he said. Although the crabs have been in the lagoon for about 15 years, there has been an "exponential" increase in recent months, Rossetti said.

He warned that the rate at which they were feasting on clams posed an immediate threat. "I am sure that after December the fishermen of our consortium will no longer have any products to sell."—AFP



An aerial view shows fishing boats delivering harvested clams in the lagoon of Scardovari.



The empty shell of a clam broken by the claws of a blue crab is pictured on a fisherman boat in the lagoon of Scardovari.



A person adjusts a price tag for blue crabs on sale at a local fishmonger shop in Cortellazzo, near Venice.



Fishermen harvest clams in the lagoon of Scardovari.

Disney to shut Lucasfilm studio in Singapore

Lucasfilm's visual effects and animation studio in Singapore will close down in the coming months due to economic reasons, parent firm Disney said on Tuesday. The Singapore studio was set up in the 2000s by Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), which was founded by Star Wars creator George Lucas and is a division of Lucasfilm. For years, its home in Singapore was the striking Sandcrawler building, named after the Star Wars transport that inspired its design. Lucasfilm sold the building in 2021.

"Over the next several months, ILM will be consolidating its global footprint and winding down its Singapore studio due to economic factors affecting the industry," Disney said in a statement. It did not say how many employees will be affected in Singapore. Disney said in February it was cutting 7,000 jobs

worldwide—part of a reorganization as its traditional television business erodes and in the face of stiff competition and eroding subscriber numbers for its streaming service, Disney+. "Lucasfilm's decision to wind down its Singapore operations is in response to changes in the industry and business conditions," Singapore's Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) and the Economic Development Board (EDB) said in a joint statement.



"The global media industry is facing disruption from rapid technological advancements, while studios are coping with challenges relating to talent and profitability." The Singapore studio was involved in high-profile Hollywood productions including "Iron Man", "The Avengers" and Star Wars films, according to the EDB's website.—AFP

Malian Afropop star Salif Keita named advisor to junta chief

Malian music star Salif Keita has been appointed a "special advisor" to the head of the country's military junta. Under a decree published late Monday and dated August 11, the Afropop singer-songwriter is named as one of five such advisors to Colonel Assimi Goita, who ousted elected president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita in 2020. The decree does not give details about his new role.

Keita, 73, has been a supporter of the junta, endorsing its narrative of national sovereignty and calling for the departure of UN peacekeeping troops from Mali. Last week he announced he was stepping down from a junta-appointed legislature.

He gave no reason for the move and declared in his letter of resignation that he would always remain "the undisputed friend of my country's soldiers." The landlocked Sahel coun-

try has been mired in a security crisis since 2012, when a regional insurgency broke out in the north of the country. The revolt was fanned by jihadists who in 2015 advanced into the centre of the country and neighboring Burkina Faso and Niger.—AFP



Salif Keita



Thierry Wasser (left), a perfumer at French beauty house Guerlain and Raja Palaniswamy, a director at the Jasmine Concrete Exports Private Limited, examine Jasmine flowers at the factory in Dindigul. - AFP photos



Thierry Wasser, a perfumer at French beauty house Guerlain, speaks with AFP in a farmland of Jasmine flowers on the outskirts of Madurai.



Raja Palaniswamy, a director at the Jasmine Concrete Exports Private Limited, smells Jasmine flowers at his factory in Dindigul.

Head scents fill the air as skilled pickers in India pluck white jasmine before the still fresh buds are rushed for processing into a valuable ingredient for global perfumes. Jasmine only issues its powerful scent when it blooms at night, and pickers must select only the ones yet to open. "We know which one to pick," said Marlakodi, who gave only one name, as she snapped her fingers carefully to pluck the buds, tucking into her hair a few flowers that had already bloomed. "There is no use of these... but I like the smell," she said.



A farmer harvests jasmine flowers in a farmland on the outskirts of Madurai.



An employee displays a bottle of extracted jasmine oil at the Jasmine Concrete Exports Private Limited factory in Dindigul.

Jasmine's fragrant flowers have been used for millennia in India to honor the gods, and the scent is a key part of world-famous perfumes. In the ancient city of Madurai in southern India, jasmine is omnipresent — attracting buyers from some of the world's most recognizable perfumes, including J'adore by Dior and Mon Guerlain by Guerlain.

"It is one of the most expensive oils in the world," said Raja Palaniswamy, a director of Jasmine Concrete, which squeezes vast quantities of jasmine to create a few precious drops of delicious-smelling essence. The women picking the buds earn around \$1.50 a day per day for about four to five kilograms — with each kilogram made up of around 4,000 buds. Once picked, the jasmine is rushed to market, selling for anything between 200 and 2,000 rupees (\$2.40-\$24) a kilogram on special days.

Thierry Wasser (left), a perfumer at French beauty house Guerlain and Raja Palaniswamy, a director at the Jasmine Concrete Exports Private Limited, examine Jasmine flowers at the factory in Dindigul.



Scent of luxury: India's jasmine infuses global perfume

'Expression of love'

The jasmine of Madurai, an Asian variety with the scientific name *Jasminum sambac*, was given a "geographical indication" tag from the World Intellectual Property Organization in 2013, which noted its "deep fragrance". "It is lush, it is rich, it is vibrant," said Thierry Wasser, perfumer and "nose" at French beauty house Guerlain, speaking to AFP while visiting the jasmine operators.

The jasmine in Madurai has a "smoothness... and something floral which is immutable," Wasser added. Wasser sources the jasmine oil he uses from Palaniswamy's company. As well as Guerlain, Palaniswamy said his

company sells jasmine oil to companies including Bulgari, Dior and Lush.

In Madurai, the bright, white flower can be found in the homes of the city's residents, as strings fastened by women to their hair — and in the sprawling 14th-century complex of the Hindu goddess Meenakshi, considered the guardian of the city.

Meenakshi is depicted holding a parrot, a bird associated with love. Every night, people surround a shrine of the goddess with fragrant jasmine flowers as she retires with her husband Shiva in a grand, symbolic ceremony. "When you understand that the purpose of this flower is the celebration of love and

brotherhood and family and friendship; when you smell it, it takes another dimension," Wasser said. "And to me this flower is the expression of love. Period."

'Real fragrance'

The process to extract the oil requires long hours of labor. The women who pluck the jasmine — be it for their deity, weddings, funerals or expensive perfumes — have no time to romance its appeal. In a jasmine field on the outskirts of the ancient city, women tenderly move the branches of the bush, looking for the perfect bud. The processing factory runs around the clock in harvest season, with workers raking out fresh-picked flowers and waiting for the oblong-shaped buds to bloom.

"The minute it starts blooming, it starts emitting its fragrance," Palaniswamy said. Late in the night, as the jasmine's sweet scent fills the air, workers collect the blooms and load them into extractors. The freshly picked jasmine is immersed in a solvent to absorb the fragrance molecules to give a waxy extract called concrete. The concrete is further processed with alcohol to remove the waxes carefully, which then results in a

potent absolute. This absolute becomes the ingredient in perfumes.

Around 700 kilograms of fresh jasmine is reduced to just one kilogram of oil, selling for around \$4,200, Palaniswamy said. But Amsavalli Karuppuswamy, who runs a stall outside the flower market where she threads flowers into garlands, said the fresh jasmine will always outweigh any oil. "I will continue to do this job till I die... women like jasmine, so that is why we are doing this," she said. "The scents are not worth as much as the original jasmine flowers — nothing can match the real fragrance of the jasmine." — AFP



A farmer pours jasmine flowers in a sack after harvesting from a farmland on the outskirts of Madurai.



In this picture a farmer harvests jasmine flowers in a farmland on the outskirts of Madurai.



A farmer harvests jasmine flowers in a farmland on the outskirts of Madurai.



Raja Palaniswamy (right), a director at the Jasmine Concrete Exports Private Limited, interacts with farmers in a farmland of Jasmine flowers on the outskirts of Madurai.



An exterior view of the Jasmine Concrete Exports Private Limited factory in Dindigul.



A farmer pours jasmine flowers in a sack after harvesting from a farmland on the outskirts of Madurai.



Vendors selling jasmine flowers wait for customers at a wholesale flower market in Madurai.

Sports

Novak Djokovic relishing US return at Cincinnati Masters

Swiatek calls for end to late-night scheduling

CINCINNATI: Novak Djokovic is back at a tournament in the United States for the first time in two years and is preparing to make the most of his new opportunity at the ATP/WTA Cincinnati Open. The Serb who refused to get vaccinated for COVID and was denied entry to the States during the latter years of the pandemic is keen to get stuck into the final major tuneup prior to the US Open starting in a fortnight.

The 36-year-old won in Cincinnati in 2018 and 2020 and will face either Toronto semi-finalist Alejandro Davidovich Fokina or Argentine Tomas Martin Etcheverry in the second round on Wednesday. The 23-time Grand Slam singles champion will be competing for the first time since losing the Wimbledon final last month to Carlos Alcaraz; that pair will also duel for the number one title this week in the Midwest.

"I have to recover as quickly as possible and be ready to give my best for the exciting challenges that lie ahead," Djokovic said. "If I weren't motivated, I would stop playing. It's exciting that after almost 20 years on Tour, to keep that inner fire that drives me to fight for big goals. I want to keep winning tournaments."

Djokovic's US return has generated excitement in Cincinnati, where fans packed

out stands to watch the Serbian in a practice session on Sunday. Djokovic added that entering the New York Grand Slam with just one preparation tournament will be enough of a tune-up. "I feel that I can choose with total freedom where I want to play. I really wanted to return to Cincinnati to prepare well for the tournament."

Djokovic also has his mind on Flushing Meadows after missing the last two editions due to his hardline vaccine stance. "I'm very excited to return to the country after two years; I'm very grateful for all the love that people are giving me."

Meanwhile, heavy rain prevented the start of play in Cincinnati on Monday. "Due to rain, the start of play is delayed," tournament organisers said in a brief statement. "We will provide further updates when conditions begin to improve." With scattered thunderstorms forecast throughout the Cincinnati region on Monday, it remained unclear when or if play would start.

World number one Iga Swiatek on Monday joined Elena Rybakina in blasting late-night scheduling which wrecked the closing days of last week's Montreal Masters. The four-time Grand Slam winner, who will chase her fifth title of the season this week in Cincinnati, said the WTA is

taking little account of the physical needs of players when rain-delayed matches stretch into the early hours.

"Maybe we should focus more on what is healthy for players because we have to compete every week," the top-seeded Swiatek said as she awaited her second-round start here after a bye. "The Tour is so intense with travel... that it would be nice in the future to focus on players - especially next year when there will be more and more mandatory tournaments and longer tournaments."

The scheduling ordeal for last year's Wimbledon winner Rybakina began with a Friday night Montreal quarter-final against Daria Kasatkina which did not end until around 3am local time on Saturday. Having won that encounter, the Kazakh had nothing left for a later Saturday semi which she lost in three sets to Liudmila Samsonova.

Samsonova meanwhile was left having to play her semi-final and the final on the same day on Sunday due to weather disruption. Rybakina complained afterwards about the physical demands of the scenario, with Swiatek backing her colleague to the hilt.

"During the clay season, in Rome and Madrid, I played four matches that fin-



Novak Djokovic

ished close to or after midnight," Swiatek said. "I understand we have to adjust to broadcasters and everything, but I also asked the WTA for some data to see if people are watching matches that start past 10 p.m."

"I didn't get anything, but it would be easier to actually understand that it makes

sense to play that late." Samsonova went on to lose the Sunday final to Jessica Pegula in 49 minutes. Rybakina called WTA leadership "a bit weak now," adding: "Hopefully something is going to change because this year (there were) many (scheduling) situations which I cannot really understand." — AFP

Venus Williams upsets Kudermetova in Cincinnati

CINCINNATI: Venus Williams scored a straight sets upset of 16th seed Veronika Kudermetova at the ATP/WTA Cincinnati Open on Monday, bagging her first win over a top 20 player in four years. The 43-year-old American veteran, who was granted a wild card into this week's tournament, rallied superbly to polish off Kudermetova 6-4, 7-5.

The seven-time Grand Slam singles champion, whose career has spanned four different decades, showed great heart to recover from 4-1 down in the opening set before overturning a 5-1 deficit in the second to seal victory.

"I love this game, it's what I do," Williams said in on-court remarks after her victory against the Russian world number 14. "The last few years have been difficult in terms of injuries," Williams added.

"I want to be able to be out here and be strong, and be myself and that's important to me, and I'm trying to get there," Williams, a semi-finalist at Cincinnati in 2012, saw her match interrupted by rain before she completed her victory.

In other women's matches on Monday, 2017 US Open champion Sloane Stephens marked her 12th appearance with a 7-5, 6-2 defeat of Italian Elisabetta Cocciaretto. "This (summer) series so far has been tough. D.C., there was rain. Last week, Montreal was rain. This week again, rain," Stephens said.

In the men's draw, Felix Auger-Aliassime won a battle of injury comeback competitors, keeping former Wimbledon finalist Matteo Berrettini winless on the Tour since March with a 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 victory. Auger-Aliassime, seeded 12th, missed his home Masters last week in Toronto with his injury recovery not yet complete.

Victory snapped a five-match loss streak stretching to the week before Roland Garros in May. Finn Emil Ruusuvuori beat Corentin Moutet 6-4, 6-2. Top seed Carlos Alcaraz will open on Wednesday after a bye against Jordan Thompson, who put out 2013 finalist John Isner 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/2). — AFP

England to host Zimbabwe for Test in 2025

LONDON: England will host Zimbabwe in a men's Test match for the first time in 22 years in May 2025. The four-day Test will take place from May 28-31, with the venue for the one-off match to be confirmed at a later date. Jimmy Anderson, England's leading Test wicket-taker, made his debut the last time his country faced Zimbabwe in 2003.

"We are delighted to be able to host Zimbabwe for a men's Test match for the first time in two decades," ECB chief executive Richard Gould said on Tuesday. "Zimbabwe has a proud cricket history and have produced world-class players and coaches who have enriched the game across the world."

"We are committed to developing a closer relationship with Zimbabwe Cricket and the announcement of this Test against our England men's team is a step in that ambition." England have played three two-Test series against Zimbabwe, drawing in 1996 and winning in 2000 and 2003.

"The significance and magnitude of this tour cannot be over-emphasised," Zimbabwe Cricket managing director Givemore Makoni said. "The experience of playing a Test match against a top team like England is massive for the current generation of our players, coming at a time when our game as a whole is on an upward trajectory."

Revised by captain Ben Stokes and head coach Brendan McCullum, England have breathed new life into Test cricket over the last two years with their aggressive 'Bazball' game-plan. England fought back from 2-0 down to draw the Ashes series with World Test champions Australia earlier this year. — AFP

Himeno to lead Japan at World Cup

TOKYO: Back-row forward Kazuki Himeno was on Tuesday named Japan captain for the Rugby World Cup as the Brave Blossoms seek to replicate their impressive performances on home soil four years ago.

Hosts Japan were the first Asian team to make the quarter-finals in 2019, beating Ireland and Scotland before losing to eventual champions South Africa. Himeno, full-back Kotaro Matsushima and veteran former skipper Michael Leitch were among 30 players named in Japan's Rugby World Cup squad ahead of the tournament beginning next month in France.

Japan head coach Jamie Joseph said he was "not in a position" yet to name the whole 33-man squad due to injuries suffered by some players. The deadline is August 21. Of the 30 players announced, 13 featured in the 2019 squad.

Prop Sione Halasili and scrum-half Kenta Fukuda were the only two uncapped players, alongside another nine players with fewer than 10 Test caps. "We got a lot of confidence from what we achieved in 2019. We surprised the world by the way we played the game of rugby," Joseph told reporters Tuesday.

Japan have been drawn in Pool D with England, Argentina, Samoa and Chile. Joseph said it would be a "massive challenge" to repeat the success of 2019 but "it's our chance to do that again in 2023," the New Zealander said.

"Like every team that's going to the World Cup we want to win," Himeno starred for Otago Highlanders in Super Rugby in 2021. Matsushima played two seasons for Clermont in France's Top 14 and at the last World Cup scored five tries.

Russians might opt out of Olympics

PARIS: Ukraine's Sports Minister Vadym Gutzeit does not "exclude the Russians making a 'goodwill gesture' not to go" to the Paris Olympics next year, he told AFP in an interview. Gutzeit added if the Russians and Belarusians were permitted by the IOC to compete in Paris as neutral athletes and Ukraine boycotted the Games "other countries that have suffered from Russian imperialism at different stages of their history will join this boycott".

The IOC has yet to make a decision on whether Russians and Belarusians can take part in the Paris Games — which run from July 26 to August 11 2024 — as neutral competitors. Since Russia launched its war in Ukraine in February 2022, the IOC imposed sporting sanctions on Moscow and its ally Minsk, but earlier this year it recommended Russian and Belarusian athletes could compete as individuals in qualifying events under a neutral flag and with no anthem.

The decision provoked howls of protest from both the Ukrainian government and their athletes criticising the IOC for placing the human rights of Russian athletes above theirs. This resulted in Ukraine barring their athletes from competing at events where Russians and Belarusians were — tennis being the exception as it has been since the invasion as they compete as individuals.

However, last month there was a dramatic change of tack from the Ukrainian government permitting their athletes to take part in events where the Russians and Belarusians were competing as 'neutral athletes'.

'Right side of history'

Gutzeit is well aware of how important the quadrennial spectacle is to athletes having won fencing gold in 1992 in Barcelona in what was a Unified Team made up of 12 of the former Soviet Republics including Russia.

Ironically one of his team-mates in the gold medal-winning sabre team was Stanislav Pozdnyakov who is now his avowed opponent as he is the head of Russia's Olympic Committee. "If Russian athletes are at the Olympics, then Russian propagandists will try to turn this celebration of sport into a celebration of propaganda, just as Hitler once did," Gutzeit said referring to Nazi Germany's hosting of the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin.

"I believe that the IOC will not allow the aggressors to do this. I also do not exclude that the Russians will make a 'goodwill gesture' and say that they will not go," Gutzeit, who has been in his post since 2020, said he is confident the IOC and sports federations will bar the Russians and Belarusians from the Games.

"The ball is now in the court of the IOC and international sports federations," he said.

"I believe that they will continue to stand on the right side of history and prevent the aggressors from participating in the Games." Nevertheless Gutzeit says if they are permitted to compete then Ukraine could still boycott the Games and would be followed by others.

The Baltic states and Poland have been the most vociferous countries in threatening to follow the Ukrainians if



TOKYO: Japanese players (L to R) scrum-half Yutaka Nagare, back row and former skipper Michael Leitch, back-row forward and captain Kazuki Himeno and hooker Atsushi Sakate pose following a press conference in Tokyo on August 15, 2023, after Japan announced the team headed to the 2023 Rugby World Cup in France. — AFP

Japan will play Italy away in a final warm-up game on August 26, before opening their World Cup campaign against Chile in Toulouse on September 10. Japan squad for the Rugby World Cup (September 8-October 28) announced on Tuesday:

Props: Keita Inagaki (Saitama), Craig Millar (Saitama), Sione Halasili (Yokohama), Jiwon Gu (Kobe), Shinnosuke Kakinaga (Suntory), Asaeli Ai Valu (Saitama).

Hookers: Shota Horie (Saitama), Atsushi Sakate (Saitama), Kosuke Horikoshi (Suntory).

Locks: James Moore (Urayasu)

Back row: Jack Cornelsen (Saitama), Shota Fukui

(Saitama), Kazuki Himeno (Toyota, captain), Michael Leitch (Toshiba), Ben Gunter (Saitama).

Scrum-halves: Naoto Saito (Suntory), Yutaka Nagare (Suntory), Kenta Fukuda (Toyota)

Fly-halves: Lee Seung-sin (Kobe), Rikiya Matsuda (Saitama), Jumpei Ogura (Yokohama)

Wings: Siosaia Fifita (Hanazono), Semisi Masirewa (Hanazono), Jone Naikabula (Toshiba), Lomano Lava Lemeki (NEC)

Centres: Ryoto Nakamura (Suntory), Tomoki Osada (Saitama), Shogo Nakano (Suntory), Dylan Riley (Saitama)

Full-backs: Kotaro Matsushima (Suntory). — AFP



KYIV: Ukraine's Minister of Youth and Sports Vadym Gutzeit gestures as he addresses a press briefing in Kyiv, following Ukraine's Olha Kharlan's disqualification for not shaking hands with her beaten Russian opponent Anna Smirnova at the Fencing World Championships. — AFP

they do boycott the Games. "I do not rule out that if Russians or Belarusians are allowed to participate in the Olympics and we boycott the competition, other countries that have suffered from Russian imperialism at different stages of their history will join this boycott," he said.

As for Podzniakov's remarks the IOC were siding with Ukraine in urging federations to show sensitivity to Ukrainian athletes Gutzeit is dismissive. "Over the sound of Russian missiles exploding and Russian machine guns firing, it is impossible to hear what individual Russians are saying," he said.

The conflict has taken its toll on sporting infrastructure with a human cost too. "Stadiums can be rebuilt, infrastructure can be restored, but lives cannot be returned," said Gutzeit. "The

war takes away our best every day. More than 300 Ukrainian athletes and coaches have been killed in this war."

Gutzeit says they will be honoured in a project called 'Angels of Sport' because "we count each one and remember each one". "These heroic boys and girls were supposed to conquer sports peaks, they were supposed to live, enjoy themselves, become popular," he said.

Gutzeit, 51, said this "war leaves a mark on all Ukrainians". "Some lost their father; others lost their neighbour or former classmate," he said. "The mother of Kateryna Tabashnyk (2023 European indoor high jump bronze medalist) was killed in the shelling of residential areas in Kharkiv by Russians. "Among the ruins of the house, we also found Kateryna's awards, which her mother kept." — AFP

Sports

Mancini denies Saudi rumors after Italy exit, Spalletti hits roadblock

'I'm a football manager and when I receive an offer that I like I will accept'

MILAN: Roberto Mancini insists that a potential move to the Saudi Arabia national team is not the reason for his sudden decision to quit Italy which has sparked a contract row over his tipped successor Luciano Spalletti. Mancini resigned on Sunday with less than a month until European champions Italy recommence their bid to qualify for Euro 2024 and has reportedly been offered 25 million euros to coach the Gulf nation.

But in interviews with four Italian newspapers all published on Tuesday he says he has made no decision about his future. "I'm a football manager and when I receive an offer that I like I will accept it. But that's not why I quit the national team," said Mancini to *Corriere Dello Sport*.

"Italy was always the number one for me. After many years I've received plenty of offers which I will look at in the coming weeks but right now there is nothing solid. "I'm a manager and I can't just stop... but Saudi Arabia has nothing to do with it."

FA fall out

Mancini had a mixed time in his five years as Italy coach, victory at Euro 2020 seeming to revitalise a troubled football nation. But the Azzurri failed to

qualify for last year's World Cup following a disastrous play-off defeat to North Macedonia and the country no longer produces the sort of world class talent which helped make Serie A the world's top football league.

Mancini's resignation came as a major shock, as earlier this month the 58-year-old had been handed responsibility for the country's Under-21 and Under-20 teams. He was heavily criticised for his decision especially following reports that he was set to accept a mega-money move to Saudi.

But Mancini said that he stepped down as Azzurri coach because of disagreements with the head of Italy's football federation Gabriele Gravina, in particular over his decision to make changes to his coaching staff. "Have you ever seen the head of the federation change a manager's coaching staff? I'm the one who should be making changes," he said to *La Repubblica*. "The truth is that we've been on a different wavelength for a while. But why make changes to my staff? At that point he should have sacked me... if he wanted to keep me, he could have, but he didn't want to."

Spalletti contract wrangle

Italy face North Macedonia and Ukraine in the

Euro 2024 qualifiers next month and the federation is scrambling for a coach who can ensure they don't miss out on yet another major tournament. Spalletti and former Italy coach Antonio Conte are the favourites for the post but a contract wrangle might yet stop the former from taking the big chair.

Despite quitting Napoli after winning their first league title since 1990 Spalletti is still under contract until June next year. A clause in that deal says he is free to coach another team with payment of three million euros in compensation, a sum which decreases by 250,000 euros each month until the end of his contract.

Italian media reported that Gravina would try to convince Napoli to let Spalletti off the payment as he isn't moving to a rival club but on Tuesday owner Aurelio De Laurentiis said that was not an option. De Laurentiis said in a statement that he allowed Spalletti to leave because the coach said he was tired and needed time away from the game, and inserted the penalty clause as a guarantee over his season-long sabbatical.

"If they rightly choose Spalletti... offering him a three million-euro salary for three seasons, we can't be burdened with paying one million euros a year on



Roberto Mancini

behalf of the coach to free him from his contractual obligation (not just to Napoli but to its millions of fans)," said the movie mogul. "Three million euros is not a lot of money for Napoli and it's even less for Aurelio De Laurentiis. This isn't a question of 'the almighty dollar' but of principle." — AFP



Yaqoub Al-Youha



Ibrahim Al-Thafeeri

Kuwait national team to participate in World Athletics Championship

KUWAIT: Kuwait's National Athletics team is to take part in the World Athletics Championship from the 19th to the 27th of August, held in the Hungarian capital, Budapest.

The team's general treasurer Hussien Abdullah spoke to KUNA prior to the team's departure and affirmed their readiness following the training camp they underwent in Turkey. Representing Kuwait in the championship will be Yaqoub Al-Youha, Ibrahim Al-Thafeeri and Mudhawi Al-Shammari, stated Abdullah.

The first qualifiers will kickstart on the 20th of this month with the 100 meters race for Al-Shammari, followed by the 110 hurdles race with Al-Youha and Al-Thafeeri's 800 meters race is set to take place on the 22nd. Runner Al-Shammari was qual-



Mudhawi Al-Shammari

ified by the international federation following her win in the 25th West Asia athletics championship with gold, silver and bronze medals. Al-Youha and Al-Thafeeri, on the other hand, were awarded the bronze medal each. — KUNA

Atletico hit three to take Liga lead

MADRID: Atletico Madrid wrapped up the opening round of the Spanish Liga season by jumping to the top of the table with a 3-1 home victory over promoted Granada. Alvaro Morata gave the hosts the lead seven minutes into first-half injury time.

Cesar Azpilicueta, on his Atletico debut, crossed and Malaga centre-back Jesus Vallejo mis-timed his clearing header nodding the ball straight to the unmarked Morata, who fired home. Malaga levelled on 63 minutes after Yannick Carrasco lost the ball trying to dribble out of defence. Gonzalo Villar drilled a cross into the goalmouth where Samu Omorodion lifted a first-time shot into the roof of the net.

Carrasco atoned with a simple assist five minutes later, rolling a short pass square to Depay who

lashed a shot home from 25 metres. "It's an awesome goal," said Atletico boss Diego Simeone. "I'm happy for him, because he has been working very hard and knows he has to make an effort to compete for a place."

Both teams went close, before Marcos Llorente picked up a loose ball in the box and wriggled past two defenders to end the match by poking a third goal home in the ninth minute of added time. "It was hard work because Granada played a good game," said Simeone.

The only blot on Atletico's evening was an injury to captain Koke, who went off after six minutes. Atletico were the only team to score more than two goals in the opening round. They moved above Real Madrid, Osasuna and Rayo Vallecano, who also won their openers by two goals, on goals scored.

In Monday's early match, Cadiz beat another promoted team, Alaves, 1-0 with a seventh-minute goal from midfielder Fede San Emeterio. — AFP

Chelsea sign Caicedo for reported British record £115m fee

LONDON: Chelsea completed the signing of Ecuador midfielder Moises Caicedo on Monday for a reported Premier League record fee of up to £115 million (\$146 million). The Blues said the 21-year-old has agreed an eight-year contract at Stamford Bridge, with a club option for a further year, after Chelsea beat off competition from Liverpool for his signature.

It is the second time Chelsea have broken the British transfer record in seven months after spending £107 million on Enzo Fernandez in January. Liverpool had a £110 million offer accepted on Friday after Brighton had set a deadline for bids.

But Caicedo turned down the opportunity to join the Reds to pursue a move to the Blues. "I am so happy to join Chelsea!" Caicedo said in a club statement. "I am so excited to be here at this big club and I didn't have to think twice when Chelsea called me, I just knew I wanted to sign for the club."

"It's a dream come true to be here and I can't wait to get started with the team." Chelsea will reportedly pay an initial £100 million with a further £15 million due in performance-related bonuses. The deal represents another huge profit for Brighton, who signed Caicedo from Independiente del Valle for just £4 million in 2021.

However, he has only been a regular starter for the Seagulls over the past 18 months after spending the first half of the 2021/22 season on loan at Belgian side Beerschot. Brighton finished sixth in the Premier League last season to qualify for European competition for the first time in the club's history.

"Chelsea are getting one of the top midfielders in the world," said Brighton's technical director David Weir. "Moises has been one of our exceptional players over the past 18 months."

'Rare midfield skill set'

Chelsea have spent close to £900 million on players in just three transfer windows since a takeover fronted by LA Dodgers co-owner Todd Boehly and private equity group Clearlake Capital. However, they slumped to 12th in the Premier League last season—their lowest finish since 1994.

New manager Mauricio Pochettino's reign got off to a promising start in a 1-1 draw with Liverpool on Sunday. "Moises possesses a rare midfield skill set and is a player we've been targeting for some time," said Chelsea's co-sporting directors Laurence Stewart and Paul Winstanley said

"We believe he will make a significant impact at Stamford Bridge this season – and in the years ahead." Chelsea could be set to snatch another midfield target away from Liverpool with Southampton's Romeo Lavia also reportedly favouring



LONDON: Brighton's Ecuadorian midfielder Moises Caicedo jumps to control the ball during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Brighton and Hove Albion. Chelsea have agreed a British record transfer fee of £115 million (\$146 million, 133 million euros) for Brighton and Hove Albion midfielder Moises Caicedo. — AFP

a move to Stamford Bridge. Liverpool are in desperate need of midfield reinforcements after captain Jordan Henderson and Fabinho departed for Saudi Arabia. Naby Keita, James Milner and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain have also left Anfield since the end of last season after their contracts expired.

Alexis Mac Allister, who also starred for Brighton last season alongside Caicedo, and Dominik Szoboszlai are Liverpool's only two signings of the window so far. — AFP

Today's Matches

FIFA Women's World Cup

Australia v England beIN Sports 1 HD Premium beIN Sports HD 1 English	13:00
Manchester City v Sevilla beIN Sports 1 HD Premium beIN Sports HD 1 English beIN 4K HDR	22:00

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Hospitals

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

Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

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

Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Change of Name

I, **Zainab Saifuddin** holder of Indian Passport No T3173369 having permanent address Mohalla Saifeepura Nai Abadi Banswara, Banswara, Pin: 327001, Rajasthan, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: **Zainab Murtaza** (given name) and **Tatiwala** (surname). **(3846) 16/8/2023**

I, **Khuzema** (current name in Passport) holder of Indian Passport No Z2809131 having permanent address - Boharawadi, AT and PO Salumber, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India, 313027 residing in Kuwait at present hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: **Khuzema Ali Husain**. **16/8/2023**

I, **Ramandeep** S/o Chaman Lal R/o Vpo. Muthada Kalan Teh-Phillaur

(Jalandhar) changed my name to Ramandeep Mehmi. **(3843) 14/8/2023**

I, **Mahamad Abid Chand Saheb** S/o Abdul Qadir Chand Saheb R/o D. No. 240-3, Main Road, Gandlapenta, Ananthapur, Pin Code : 515521 Andhra Pradesh, India corrected my name from Mahamad Abid Chand Saheb to Muhammad Abid Chand Saheb S/o Abdul Qadir Chand Saheb. **(3844) 14/8/2023**

I, **KASHIM** holder of Indian. Passport No. R5455215 having permanent address H. No. 559, Gali. No. 19, Saurabh - Vihar, Jaitpur, South- Delhi-110044, residing in Kuwait at present do hereby change my name to (given name) Kashim and (Surname) Khan for all future purposes. **(3845) 14/8/2023**

Automated enquiry about the CivilID card is 1889988

For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL hotline 128

Spain into maiden Women's WCup final

Carmona's late stunner sets up showdown with either Australia or England



AUCKLAND: Spain's players and officials pose while celebrating their win in the Australia and New Zealand 2023 Women's World Cup semi-final football match between Spain and Sweden at Eden Park in Auckland. — AFP

AUCKLAND: Olga Carmona's stunning 89th-minute strike gave Spain a 2-1 win over Sweden on Tuesday to propel them into the Women's World Cup final for the first time in their history. Spain's thrilling victory at Eden Park sets up a showdown in Sydney on Sunday with either Australia or England, who meet in the other semi-final on Wednesday.

The last-four clash in Auckland seemed to be drifting towards extra time before suddenly bursting to life when substitute Salma Paralluelo put Spain ahead with nine minutes left. Rebecka Blomqvist equalised for Sweden in the 88th minute only for full-back Carmona, Spain's captain, to score with a superb shot in off the underside of the crossbar from the edge of the box 60 seconds later.

"We are so proud of everything we have done and for getting to the final because now we are one small step away from glory," said Paralluelo. It has been a remarkable run for a nation who had never previously gone beyond the last 16 at a Women's World Cup, and for a team who

had been in disarray in the months leading up to the tournament. Fifteen Spanish players told their federation last September that they no longer wished to be considered for selection, mainly out of unhappiness with coach Jorge Vilda, and only three of them returned for this World Cup run. While their dream of World Cup glory remains alive, Sweden are left with a familiar feeling after going so far at another major tournament before falling short.

This is the third time in four World Cups that they have reached the semi-finals, only to lose on each occasion. Peter Gerhardsson's side also lost in the last four at the European Championship last year, having been beaten in the final of the Tokyo Olympics on penalties against Canada in 2021.

"Everyone just feels sadness and huge disappointment," said Gerhardsson, whose team had been so impressive in beating Japan 2-1 in the last eight. "We were up against an excellent Spanish side and they were able to disrupt us a lot more than Japan did."

Super-sub Paralluelo

Vilda decided against handing a start to Paralluelo, after she came off the bench to score the winner in the quarter-final against the Netherlands. Instead he recalled Alexia Putellas and the reigning Ballon d'Or winner started for the first time since Spain were walloped 4-0 by Japan in the group phase. The plan was clearly to dominate possession and make a more physically imposing Sweden do the chasing. Spain had far more of the ball in the first half but the closest they came to breaking the deadlock was from long range when Jennifer Hermoso laid the ball back to Carmona, whose shot whistled wide.

Sweden had taken the game to Japan in the quarter-finals but they offered next to nothing here until suddenly they almost struck three minutes before half-time. Nathalie Bjorn sent a hanging cross from the right to the back post for Fridolina Rolfö—facing seven of her Barcelona club colleagues in the Spain starting lineup—but her side-foot volley was saved by Cata Coll.

Vilda's plan was clearly to save the pacy Paralluelo for when the Swedish defence was tiring, and it was just before the hour mark that he turned to the former athlete. Paralluelo replaced Putellas, who has still not completed 90 minutes at this World Cup as she continues to recover full fitness following a serious knee injury.

The substitute's persistence almost brought the opener for Spain with 20 minutes left as she stretched to keep the ball in play, but Alba Redondo turned her cutback wide. Paralluelo then struck with nine minutes of normal time remaining, showing a killer instinct to lash a shot low into the corner.

Sweden drew level in the 88th minute thanks to two substitutes of their own. Lina Hurtig had only just come on when she nodded down a cross for Blomqvist to fire home, raising the spectre of extra time. But Carmona, the Real Madrid left-back, had other ideas as she clinched victory for Spain in style. —AFP

Wiegman England's biggest weapon in WCup semi-final

SYDNEY: England had never won a major women's football trophy before Sarina Wiegman became coach. Now they are closing on a second in the space of a year. Wiegman's European champions face co-hosts Australia in the Women's World Cup semi-finals on Wednesday, with the prize a place in Sunday's final against Spain.

England's squad is packed with quality but arguably their biggest weapon in Sydney will be the 53-year-old native of the Netherlands standing on the sidelines. When Wiegman was named to succeed Phil Neville as coach almost exactly three years ago, England's football association described her as "steely and a winner". It turned out to be the perfect description. She masterminded England to European glory last summer on home soil and they are now on the brink of a first World Cup final.

Wiegman smiles easily at press conferences, but gives very little away either about the team or herself. It is clear, though, that she has the total faith of her squad, who describe her as calm but direct. Midfielder Georgia Stanway described how Wiegman had fostered a family environment at the World Cup that allows England's squad to thrive while also relaxing when they need to.

That includes allowing the players to have their families with them, rather than isolating the squad. But even for her players, there is something about Wiegman that is almost otherworldly. "We've all got families out here—even Sarina," said Stanway.

Asked by a reporter to clarify what she meant by "even Sarina", Stanway looked a little sheepishly at her coach sitting next to her and laughed. "Sometimes, er, sometimes you don't realise that your head coach is ac-

tually human," she said. The strength of the Women's Super League and the game's growth in England means that Wiegman has a deep pool of players from which to choose. Even prior to leading England to European glory last summer, there was a feeling that Wiegman could be the difference between this Lionesses side and those that went before.

The former PE teacher led the Netherlands to the European title in 2017, then did the same with England. She also guided the Netherlands to the final of the 2019 World Cup, where they lost 2-0 to the United States.

England had to wait more than a year between Wiegman agreeing to the job in August 2020 and taking charge in September 2021, because of her commitments with the Dutch at the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics. But she proved worth the wait and England have lost only once under Wiegman. That sole defeat suddenly becomes more relevant—it was to Australia, a 2-0 loss in London in April that ended the Lionesses' 30-game unbeaten run.

Because of her success, Wiegman has long been seen as the standard-bearer for women coaches. She noted with a hint of disappointment how, following results in the last 16, she was the only woman coach left at the World Cup.

England have certainly not been perfect in getting to this stage—they were the inferior team before squeezing past Nigeria on penalties in the last 16. But they have reached the last four without two of their best players—skipper Leah Williamson and star striker Beth Mead, both missing the tournament with serious knee injuries.

Much of the credit must go to Wiegman, who as a child cut her hair short so that she could play football with her twin brother. The former defender went on to become the first Dutch player to be capped 100 times.

Asked on the eve of the quarter-final against Colombia—which England went on to win 2-1 -- to describe her football journey, Wiegman was typically recalcitrant. "I'm not really busy with my journey at the moment," she told the Colombian reporter, looking a little unimpressed at the line of questioning. —AFP

Man Utd punish wasteful Wolves

MANCHESTER: Manchester United survived an onslaught from Wolves and huge claims for a late penalty to start the Premier League season with a 1-0 win thanks to Raphael Varane's header on Monday.

Wolves had seen manager Julen Lopetegui walk out less than a week before the new campaign, but dominated for long spells at Old Trafford. A combination of wasteful finishing and new United goalkeeper Andre Onana kept the visitors at bay until Varane headed in 14 minutes from time.

Onana was lucky to escape when he punched Sasa Kalajdzic as he flapped at a cross deep into stoppage time and VAR did not intervene. "It looked like the keeper nearly took our forward's head off," said Wolves boss Gary O'Neil. "I think it is a foul. You go for the ball and clatter the player that hard. It is a penalty."

O'Neil added that Premier League referees chief Jon Moss had contacted him after the game to apologize for the decision. United clung on to get off to a winning start, in stark contrast to the two defeats that began Erik ten Hag's reign 12 months ago.

But the manner of the performance raises questions over whether United can pose a serious challenge for their first Premier League title in a decade. "There is no easy game in the Premier League and definitely not Wolves," said Ten Hag. "You have to fight in every game. We hope we'll be better on the ball in the next game." United fans' wishes that a new season would start under new ownership have not been met with a sale process seemingly at a standstill.

The home support again showed their displeasure towards owners, the Glazer family, with a pre-match protest against the Americans and chants of "we want Glazers out" at kick-off. That lingering uncertainty has not stopped another summer of big spending by the Red Devils. Onana and midfielder Mason Mount were hand-



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's English defender #29 Aaron Wan-Bissaka (L) vies with Wolverhampton Wanderers' Brazilian midfielder #27 Matheus Nunes during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Wolverhampton Wanderers at Old Trafford in Manchester. — AFP

ed their debuts by Ten Hag, but new £64 million (\$81 million) striker Rasmus Hojlund was ruled out by a back injury. Wolves, by contrast, lost Lopetegui less six days ago due to a lack of funds in the transfer market.

O'Neil replaced the Spaniard tasked with repeating his heroics in keeping Bournemouth in the Premier League last season. Wolves did not look like a club in crisis as they controlled the game, but suffered from a lack of a cutting edge up front. Pablo Sarabia and Matheus Cunha fired the best chances of the first-half just past the post.

Cunha came even closer at the start of the second period. The Brazilian should have scored when he hit the outside of the post with the goal gaping.

The £44 million obligation to buy Cunha from Atletico Madrid this summer has restricted Wolves' budget. But the 24-year-old showed a glimpse of why he could yet live up to that fee with a surging run through the heart of the United midfield before firing a low shot that Onana turned behind. —AFP