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Calls to punish exam leakers

15 jailed over tribal primaries • Assembly adjourned until Feb 7



By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari submitted a draft legislation which stipulates a jail term of between two and seven years for those who print, publish or publicize questions of school exams or their answers with the intention of helping students to cheat. The draft legislation was filed after authorities uncovered a large network of teachers who distributed questions of higher secondary exams to thousands of students for money. The public prosecution is currently interrogating over 20 people believed to be involved in the network.

The public prosecution has also given the education ministry a list of names of students who have been involved in cheating groups from 2020 in order to take the necessary measures of either failing them or making them retake their exams, which is within the ministry's authority. The students were investigated and their phone numbers were found in the phones of accused leakers. Students obtained copies of leaked tests after paying the suspects.

MP Saleh Ashour asked the government to not be lenient and send all those suspected of partici-

pating in the cheating scandal to the public prosecution. "In the event of conviction, the services of all convicts involved in this crime must be terminated and they must be dismissed from their jobs, as well as punishing students whose complicity is proven. Do not be complacent on the issue of education," Ashour told the government. He said the emergence of a generation that grows up and succeeds through fraud destroys the state and its future, considering it as long-term damage.

Also, the criminal court sentenced 15 people, including a former MP, to two years in jail for taking part in tribal primaries ahead of the September elections. The verdict is not final as it can be appealed in the appeals and cassation courts.

Meanwhile, National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun on Wednesday adjourned National Assembly sessions until Feb 7 after the government did not attend. The Cabinet of HHH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah submitted its resignation on Monday, but there has been no word on its fate until going to print. HHH the Amir can either accept or reject the resignation and can

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News in brief

Salmi victim raped, murdered

KUWAIT: The public prosecution announced on Wednesday a woman whose body was found in Salmi was sexually assaulted and murdered, and that the alleged perpetrator is a Kuwaiti teenager who was taken into custody. After officers at Taima police station received a call about the partially burnt woman's body in Salmi, officers and forensics personnel headed to the scene to investigate.

ChatGPT bot passes law exam

PARIS: A chatbot powered by reams of data from the Internet has passed exams at a US law school after writing essays on topics ranging from constitutional law to taxation and torts. Jonathan Choi, a professor at Minnesota University Law School, gave ChatGPT the same test faced by students, consisting of 95 multiple-choice questions and 12 essay questions. In a white paper titled "ChatGPT goes to law school", he and his coauthors reported that the bot scored a C+ overall. ChatGPT from OpenAI uses artificial intelligence (AI) to generate streams of text from simple prompts.—AFP

Suez Canal nets record \$8bn

CAIRO: Egypt's Suez Canal Authority announced Wednesday an all-time annual revenue record, earning \$8 billion in transit fees in 2022. The income from the vital waterway is about 25 percent higher than the \$6.3 billion netted in 2021, following a series of toll hikes. The authority said an average of 68 ships traversed the vital waterway daily last year, carrying 1.41 billion tons of cargo, which it also described as a "record high". Authorities credited a 2015 expansion of the canal with the rise in revenue.—AFP

10K visitors to Wonderland on weekends

KUWAIT: CEO of Touristic Enterprises Company Fadhel Al-Dawsari announced the number of visitors to Winter Wonderland Kuwait will be increased to 10,000 from Thursday to Saturday, while 6,000 tickets will be available during weekdays.

"The number of visitors to Winter Wonderland Kuwait, which includes

around 40 rides, has nearly exceeded 100,000 visitors since it opened at Al-Shaab Park on December 11, 2022. The project is directed towards serving and revitalizing Kuwaiti projects, as it has given more than 100 opportunities to entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises managed by locals. This project also provides parking for more than 1,600 cars," Dawsari said.

TEC also announced it will host 50 visitors with special needs daily, part of its commitment to social responsibility. It added for more security and to avoid fraud, it is important to buy tickets through the official website of the project www.winterland.kw.



KUWAIT: People visit Winter Wonderland Kuwait on its opening day in December. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Hipkins replaces Ardern as New Zealand premier

WELLINGTON: Hundreds gathered to applaud Jacinda Ardern as she left New Zealand's parliament to resign as prime minister on Wednesday, before Chris Hipkins was swiftly sworn in as her replacement. Ardern said last week she no longer had "enough in the tank" after steering the country through natural disasters, its worst-ever terror attack and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hipkins was sworn in by Governor-General Cindy Kiro during a ceremony in the capital Wellington, saying he was "energized and excited by the challenges ahead". "This is the biggest privilege and responsibility of my life," he said. The 44-year-old is now tasked with reversing the government's sagging popularity, which has been hampered by a deteriorating economy and a resurgent conservative opposition.

Ardern made her last public appearance as prime minister earlier on Wednesday, walking out of the distinctive Beehive parliament building as hundreds of staff and onlookers broke into a spontaneous round of applause. Prince William was among the first to congratulate Ardern. "Thank you Jacinda Ardern for your friendship, leadership and support over the years, not least at the time of my grandmother's death," he wrote on Twitter.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak thanked Ardern "for her kindness and strong leadership". He also said he looked forward to working with



WELLINGTON: New Zealand's new Prime Minister Chris Hipkins smiles as he is sworn in by Governor General Dame Cindy Kiro at the Government House on Jan 25, 2023. — AFP

Hipkins, adding a joke about the new leader's self-professed love for sausage rolls. "Our countries have so much in common, and I hope we get to discuss our shared priorities in person soon - maybe over a British sausage roll?" Sunak tweeted.

Folk singer Yusuf/Cat Stevens, who played a concert in memory of the 51 people killed during the 2019 Christchurch mosque massacre, also praised Ardern. On Twitter, he described Ardern as a "supporter of the peace train who kept New Zealanders together following the terror attack in Christchurch". Ardern was first elected as prime minister in 2017, before riding a wave of "Jacindamania" to secure a second term with a landslide victory in 2020.

But her center-left government has increasingly struggled over recent months as it battles soaring inflation, a housing affordability crisis, and a

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UNESCO lists two Mideast sites as heritage in danger

PARIS: The United Nations on Wednesday inscribed an ancient city and its dam in war-torn Yemen and a futurist park in cash-strapped Lebanon on its world heritage list. The UN cultural agency listed both as world heritage sites in danger, the first because of the conflict raging in Yemen since 2014, and the second because of "its alarming state of conservation" and the lack of resources in Lebanon to maintain it.

Seven archaeological sites were added in Yemen's province of Marib for bearing witness to the achievements of the Saba kingdom from the first millennium BC to the arrival of Islam in around 630, UNESCO said. The kingdom, known for the legendary Queen of Sheba, at the time controlled much of the incense route across the Arabian Peninsula.

The newly listed sites include the ancient city of Marib, two temples and the remains of the city's ancient dam, a feat of ancient hydrological engineering whose bursting is mentioned in the Holy Quran. The UN body said it hoped the decision would help "mobilize the entire international community for the protection of sites".

UNESCO's world heritage committee also voted to add the Rachid Karamah International Fair in Lebanon's northern coastal city of Tripoli to the list. The concrete park, a short walk away from the seafront, was designed by legendary Brazilian

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Local

Why women's movements in Kuwait are still struggling?

Quota system may help Kuwaiti women attain strategic goals: Hayat

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Kuwait recently witnessed political obstacles that have affected the trajectory of basic women's rights that many in the local society are calling for, whether men or women. These demands, such as empowering women in leadership positions, giving citizenship to children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis or the quota system and many other rights, all rely on a supportive sovereign decision by the leadership, according to women's rights activist Asrar Hayat.

Hayat explained that despite the efforts made by women's movements in the country and all the success these movements are achieving toward women's rights, the main issue that these movements are suffering from is opposition by rejecters of women's basic rights, who have the power and authority to prevent women's movements from achieving their goals.

On the other hand, Hayat considered rights movements in general, whether by societies or initiatives, going through a weak stage of achievements in the country despite the great tools they have, adding Kuwait witnessed a great awakening since the '60s until 20 years ago in the matter of general rights and women's rights in particular.

Hayat addressed the reasons for the weakness in the absence of prioritization of goals and consistency, in addition to opponents of women's rights. "In order to reach better achievements considering the



Asrar Hayat

country's current situation, women's movements in Kuwait should focus on each case separately and move to the next one when the first goal is accomplished," she said.

"Our problem nowadays is that our efforts are not organized and prioritized. We want to accomplish everything at the same time, and this is not helping us, especially with the great opposition we are facing, not from the people who are very supportive, but those who have the power," she added. "Kuwait has always been one of the leading countries that has supported women's right issues, but still, we have to take advantage of the available tools, especially since the leadership is on our side," Hayat said.

"Despite the fact that previous generations faced hard conditions, they managed to attain most of the rights we are enjoying currently. That's why we should achieve more, due to the better conditions and freedom that we already have," she pointed out.

Hayat said what can help women in Kuwait reach their strategic goals for the benefit of the next generation is the quota system that they are calling for since long, recalling that several Arab countries



KUWAIT: A woman activist demonstrates in this file photo.

have applied this system, which helps greatly in employing women in leadership positions to meet the needs of the other half of the society.

"We are calling for a quota system to be a transitional stage in Kuwait until we gain full trust. We

know women can prove themselves in the way companies, institutions and authorities demand for their leadership, like how some companies are doing right now by believing in our great female leadership," she said.

KUNA chief discusses boosting cooperation with Djibouti envoy

KUWAIT: Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Dr Fatma Al-Salem received on Wednesday Ambassador of the friendly Republic of Djibouti to the State of Kuwait, Abdoukader Houssein Omar. They discussed means of boosting bilateral relations and establishing cooperation in diverse fields namely the media.

Dr Al-Salem affirmed, during her reception of the ambassador in her office, necessity of maintaining the mutual cooperation and reciprocal meetings for cementing the bilateral ties in various sectors, with

emphasis on coordination in the media realm for promoting personnel's potential.

Moreover, the KUNA director general indicated at the news agency's readiness to join hands with Djibouti at diverse levels. The envoy congratulated Dr Al-Salem on her recent assumption of the top post, wishing the news agency further progress, hailing its accuracy and credibility in news coverage. The meeting was attended by the Deputy Director General for the Editorial Department, Issam Al-Ghanem, Director of Marketing and Public Relations Issam Al-Ruwaieh and Chairperson of the International Relations Nora Al-Nafisi.

Meanwhile, Dr Fatma Al-Salem explored on Wednesday with the General Manager of The Training Gate Kefaya Al-Alban ways to boost media cooperation. In a statement upon receiving Al-Alban at KUNA's headquarters, Al-Salem stressed the importance of expanding media cooperation and



KUWAIT: Dr Fatma Al-Salem with Abdoukader Houssein Omar.



KUWAIT: Fatma Al-Salem with the General Manager of The Training Gate Kefaya Al-Alban.

participation with several institutions. She also expressed KUNA's readiness to provide all their training capabilities that serve to develop the skills of individuals with disabilities. For her part, Al-Alban reviewed The Training Gate role regarding the

affairs of people with disabilities in Kuwait, aiming to improve their lives and integrate them into society. Al-Alban thanked KUNA for their media support, expressing her keenness to contribute to development programs that go beyond media. —KUNA

Time to elevate India-Kuwait ties to strategic partnership

By Ambassador Satish Mehta

I was taken by surprise when India's new envoy to Kuwait Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaikar suggested that I write a piece for the Indian Republic Day 2023. Notwithstanding my demanding travel schedule for my philanthropic work, this was a request that had to be honored. Republic Day is a special occasion in every Indian's life and Kuwait holds a very special place in my heart. The very warm memories of unfurling our beloved tiranga in front of the majestic and iconic Indian Embassy building, popularly known as the 'Red Fort' due to its captivating design resembling a fort and use of red sandstone for elevation, resurfaced. Not just that, the two and a half years I spent between 2011-2013 in Kuwait as India's Ambassador are replete with fond remembrances of the affection I received from Kuwaiti and Indian friends alike.

Traditionally, India's Republic Day on 26th January is celebrated with much enthusiasm and pageantry at the Republic Day parade which showcases not just India's military and defense capabilities, particularly the rapid advancements made in developing indigenous technologies, but also floats and performances from various parts of India depicting its rich diversity in arts, traditions, customs and costumes, flora and fauna and all that truly makes us the Incredible India. It's both a depiction and celebration of India.

But this year's celebrations carry special significance as this will be the first Republic Day parade at the newly refurbished, rechristened and rejuvenated two-kilometer long road from Rashtrapati Bhawan (President's House) to India Gate which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi on September 8, 2022 and renamed 'Kartavya Path', symbolizing transition from colonial era power and mindset to Republican ideals and commitment to nation building. This renovation is part of the larger redevelopment of the larger Central Vista area which will have a new parliament building, new offices for various Ministries, new residences for the Vice President and Prime Minister. The larger story behind this physical and psychological change in India is a narrative that we should not miss out.

In the last over seven decades since its Independence and becoming a Republic, India has witnessed many trials and tribulations as also triumphs. The lessons have been learnt and internalized and correctives initiated. Notwithstanding the havoc caused by a Black Swan event like COVID and a highly stressed global economic scenario, India continues to grow at a healthy

rate of about 7%, confounding its critics and cynics but inspiring its people and its friends. It made and administered COVID vaccines to over a billion Indians and, true to its age old belief in Vasudevaya Kutumbkam (the world is a family), shared vaccines generously with about 100 other countries as a true friend. India lived its beliefs and walked its talk.

Today India is not just the 5th largest economy in the world but on course to become the third largest economy in the next few years. In an indication of what lies ahead, we have already become the 3rd largest car market in the world. But this is just the beginning of the India Story as the big triggers of next round of growth are being put in place through massive investments in the digital and physical infrastructure, revamping and re-energising its education system, and making policies people and growth centric.

Let me start with the digital where a silent but transformative and game changing revolution is underway. Mobile telephony is India, with over 1.15 billion connections, is ubiquitous; 1.3 billion, including over 99% of adult population, are enrolled under Aadhaar, the unique identification system; over 850 million have internet access; over 750 million use social media; data cost which was about US \$4 per GB in 2014 was 10 cents per GB in 2022 - amongst the lowest in the world-supporting rapid growth in data consumption; roll-out of 5G has begun; and common public platforms have been built like the UPI leading to tremendous growth and reduction of friction and cost in financial transactions; Direct Benefit Transfers to the beneficiaries of various government support programs are paperless, seamless, and intermediary-less, saving the government over \$30 billion. Right from paying rent to a cup of tea at the road side joint, payments can be made and received instantly. Even though merely 6 years old, UPI transactions in 2022 exceeded 74 billion surpassing some of the well established credit cards in number of transactions and is now being used in many countries.

Physical infrastructure creation, the lack of which had stymied India's manufacturing ambitions, is now receiving a massive boost. From indigenously developed Vande Bharat trains to new metro systems in dozens of cities, to making highways at over 28 kilometers per day in the last financial year. Soon, the new Mumbai-Delhi access-controlled highway will make it possible to travel between these two cities in 12 hours. New ports, new airports, waterways, too are sprouting all over the country. Catching up on giving India first class infrastructure, a precursor for rapid industrialization, is

well and truly on the way.

While India didn't make the most of the opportunities earlier, it is determined to make up the lost time through rapid industrialization leveraging its growing market and the large skilled work force, by offering incentives and support to domestic and foreign companies. This in essence is the campaign to make India not just aatmirbhar (self-sufficient) but also a global manufacturing hub. Massive incentives have been given for a semiconductor manufacturing facility, and the Production Linked Incentive scheme is attracting large new investments in automobiles and components, Electric vehicles and batteries, pharmaceuticals and APIs, textiles, electronics, just to name a few sectors. Initial outcomes are very positive - for the first time Apple exported phones worth over a billion US dollars last month from India and by 2027, a quarter of all Apple phones are expected to be made in India.

The results of the combination of business acumen, high skills, growth oriented policies, and financial incentives are already visible through the spurt in entrepreneurship. Helped by the digital revolution, India has over a 100 UNICORNS, the third highest in the world. Despite many headwinds, India ranked second in the number of new UNICORNS it created in 2022. Today India is the bright spot on global economic firmament, lending it both stability and hope.

India and Kuwait - A meeting of minds and hearts

Like Indians, Kuwaitis are enterprising and have a native and intuitive business sense. Trading with India was an important source of wealth creation for Kuwaiti businessmen even decades after Kuwait found oil. Whether for education or healthcare or for recreation or to enjoy its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, India, and in particular, Bombay (now Mumbai) was the preferred destination for Kuwaitis. Indian rupee was a legal tender in Kuwait. The Amir of Kuwait bought a building in the 1950s on the iconic Marine Drive of Mumbai to be his home during his regular visits to India which is called the Al Sabah court. These are but just a few examples.

Oil price boom generated much resources for Kuwait which it used to rapidly modernize, facilitated with the participation of India's skilled engineers, technicians and work force, which even now continues to be the preferred work force in Kuwait. As oil wealth grew in Kuwait the roles reversed. Indians started looking at Kuwait for wealth creation and opportunities. As India's energy requirements grew, Kuwait became an important source of oil for India. And not just an important source, but based on my own experience, I can safely assert that it became a very reliable source of oil. On more than one occasion, I was told at very high levels in the Kuwaiti government that India's oil requirements



The Indian Embassy building Kuwait.

will be given the highest priority by Kuwait. This was but one reflection of the strong bonds of friendship, mutual trust and deep understanding.

In recent decades, as India grew, Kuwait participated in Indian growth - both to support it as also to benefit from it. The growing investments in India by Kuwait Investment Authority, which manages Kuwait's sovereign wealth, as also by private groups in India tell their own story.

Perhaps not so well known is the fact that Kuwait has been generous in sharing its wealth with developing countries by assisting them, but doing it quietly and without much fanfare. This generation may not know but for the Asian Games in 1982, they built a stadium in Delhi.

Kuwait and India - A glorious future beckons

For India, the Gulf countries are the largest source of oil and gas imports, the largest trading partner, home to over 8 million Indians, source remittances said to exceed \$50 billion every year, and an increasing source of investments. Stability of this region is of direct interest to India. Given its close bilateral relations with each of these countries, the mutual trust it enjoys with them, the time has come for India to play a larger role in the stability in the region working bilaterally with each of these countries as also through regional groupings. While with some countries India has strategic partnerships, with Kuwait its historic partner this isn't the case yet. A first step could be to elevate the relationship to strategic partnership. This will also create the political and psychological framework for both countries to take a long term view of the bilateral relations and make the required investments.

As India moves ahead economically and technologically - it is already a powerhouse in Information Technology, Pharmaceuticals, Space, Renewable Energy, Automobiles, Fintech, Start-ups in a range of sectors - to name a few - new opportunities are unfolding for Kuwait to actively participate in India for mutually

beneficial cooperation by investing in India's infrastructure, renewable energy, petrochemicals to name a few sectors, in addition to portfolio investments in Indian companies.

It is not far-fetched to believe that oil will lose salience as a fuel, though its other uses as feedstock for petrochemicals would remain. Kuwait should, and perhaps is planning for a post-oil economy which is not dependent only on incomes from investments abroad. Kuwait can team up with Indian companies and become a base for manufacturing for the GCC market and the regional market leveraging free trade within GCC and geographic proximity to other countries in the region.

Many large Indian EPC companies, with enviable track record, have already proved themselves in Kuwait. The two governments need to work closely to give these companies more opportunities in Kuwait for mutual benefit, may be in return for Kuwait's investments in these companies.

A combination of Indian companies' technical know-how and capabilities and Kuwait's financial strength could be leveraged to participate in third-country projects.

There is a life beyond economics. Relations with other countries and peoples should also have a dimension of empathy, care, compassion, and human solidarity. Both India and Kuwait have believed in it and have helped other countries selflessly. They should come together and do some joint humanitarian projects in other developing countries to give relevant, meaningful and impactful assistance.

In 2020, India lost two very good friends in Kuwait - His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Amir of Kuwait and his elder son His Excellency Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister. It will be a worthy tribute to them to elevate India-Kuwait relations to strategic partnership.

(The writer was India's Ambassador to Kuwait during 2011-2013. Views expressed are his own)

Local

Zain unveils MAX, the new generation of Internet plans

Biggest library of content from 6 streaming partners on Kuwait's biggest 5G network

KUWAIT: Zain, Kuwait's leading digital service provider, unveiled its all-new MAX Internet plans, redefining a new generation of Internet and entertainment plans for postpaid customers. With MAX, Zain offers the biggest library of entertainment and sports titles from six regional and global leading streaming partners on the biggest and most powerful 5G network in Kuwait.

The all-new MAX plans are a result of Zain's early investment in building an unmatched partnership ecosystem with the most leading streaming platforms from the MENA region and the world. The new plans offer Zain customers the biggest library and thousands of hours of unlimited entertainment and sports content from Disney+, Shahid, TOD, OSN+, STARZPLAY, and Anghami+.

Zain's new MAX plans offer the best way for postpaid customers to enjoy three essential features all in one comprehensive plan: superfast 5G Internet, the latest Internet device of their choosing, and unlimited subscriptions in their favorite streaming platforms starting at KD 12 monthly only.

This announcement is the latest step in Zain's strategy to provide best-in-class digital services and content to its customers across Kuwait. Working with regional and global content providers enables Zain to offer its customers access to the largest library of titles to choose from and the ability to enjoy beloved content anywhere, anytime, on Kuwait's fastest and most powerful 5G network.

Zain continues to stay ahead of the digital curve, offering the latest innovative technologies and serv-

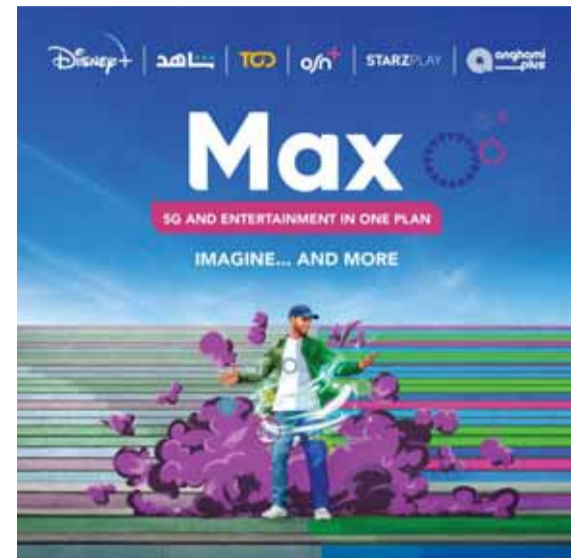
ices to customers. Representing Kuwait's biggest family of subscribers, the company is always committed to meeting customer expectations and serving their aspirations to provide the best and most unique digital lifestyle experiences.

MAX partners

Disney+
Disney+ is the streaming home of the world's greatest stories from Disney, Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars and National Geographic, as well as a huge range of incredible general entertainment from Star. Enjoy thousands of hours of TV series, movies, documentaries, and originals from all the worlds of Disney+ for the whole family. Keep your family safe with easy-to-use PIN-protected parental controls.

Shahid
Watch thousands of hours of Arabic and international series and movies with Shahid, along with Shahid Originals, exclusive series and movie premieres, Live TV channels, the Roshn Saudi League, and safe children's content from Cartoon Network, Nickelodeon, Spacetoon, MBC 3, and much more.

TOD
Enjoy the best of both worlds with sports and entertainment from TOD, including the biggest selection of sports from the UCL, EPL, LaLiga, UEFA, Bundesliga, NBA and more. Enjoy unique TOD360 features for sports fans, including live stats and interactive timelines. The platform also brings an extensive selection of TOD Originals, exclusive Arabic and Turkish content, the latest international movies, series, and safe children's content in your



preferred language.

OSN+
OSN+ exclusively brings the best of HBO, Paramount+, OSN+ Originals, Universal, NBC, and more. Enjoy exclusive Turkish series with the latest episodes and much more.

STARZPLAY
With STARZPLAY Sports, enjoy exclusive LIVE access to the Italian league Serie A with Arabic and English commentary. Watch the Euroleague and EuroCup basketball competitions and many other

sports titles. With STARZPLAY Entertainment, discover new content every day from Hollywood movies, Turkish and Arabic series, documentaries, StarzPlay Original content, and more.

Anghami+
Anghami+ is the perfect music companion with a library of over 57 million Arabic and International songs, thousands of podcasts, and hundreds of playlists. Enjoy the best music experience and play your downloads offline as much as you want and without interruption.

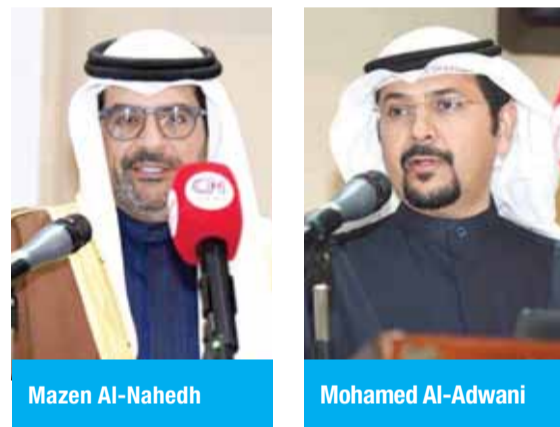
Industry awards raise the bar for Kuwaiti factories

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Granting awards to distinguished factories by the Public Authority for Industry has achieved good success during the past five sessions, Minister of Commerce and Industry Mazen Al-Nahedh said Wednesday at the His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Award for Distinguished Factories ceremony. This has become the most important award in Kuwait for industrial establishments, he added. It has created a spirit of competition between factories by encouraging them to measure their current performance against the best international practices on an ongoing basis and improve their performance accordingly.

Valued at KD 100,000, the award is one of the initiatives introduced by the government aimed at raising the standards of the industrial sector. The establishment receiving the award must be licensed by the Public Authority for Industry. Achieving this goal, said Nahedh, requires the support and concerted efforts of all concerned governmental and private parties, including the Public Authority for Industry, the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Industrial Bank of Kuwait and the Federation of Kuwaiti Industries.

Mohamed Al-Adwani, acting Director General of the Public Authority for Industry, said the authority seeks to provide continuous support to national industries in Kuwait, based on the country's development vision for the industrial sector, with the purpose of contributing to the economy. The



Mazen Al-Nahedh

Mohamed Al-Adwani

authority also aspires to create an optimal work environment to attract national labor to work in industrial facilities.

The award, he added, includes three categories: Large industrial establishments, medium and small industrial establishments, and youth under 35 who work in the industry. Encouragement awards will be given in two selected areas: Digitization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, in addition to social responsibility and global sustainability.

The authority has derived the criteria for this award from the US Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and will continuously update it based on American standards, Adwani said. The award will be submitted by owners of national factories and those who meet the conditions, starting from Jan 25 until April 1, 2023, said Walid Al-Majni, official spokesman of the Public Authority for Industry. He pointed out the award was allocated to distinguished factories according to specific international standards as a means of creating a spirit of fair competition among national factories, raising production efficiency and achieving institutional excellence.



KUWAIT: The attendees of the industrial conference.



Meshaal Al-Qurayfah during the festival.

PAAAFR assures full support to Kuwaiti farmers

KUWAIT: The acting director of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), Meshaal Al-Qurayfah has said that the support of local farmers and their produce is a governmental priority.

Al-Qurayfah has called to institute a public contributing company to market local agriculture produce and organize more exhibitions to support local food security and reduce prices.

"The agriculture authority attaches great importance to local agriculture, supporting its marketing, and working with the Union of Cooperative Societies as well as the Social Affairs ministry to remove obstacles that Kuwaiti farmers face in marketing their products and provide them in coopera-

tive societies. This is probably the most important for farmers and local agriculture," Al-Qurayfah said.

"What we have seen today is a diversity of products and the superior quality of the imported products. Competitive prices are heartening and motivate us to increase the support for Kuwaiti farmers," he said, indicating that the coming days will witness unlimited support and unprecedented coordination with concerned authorities to meet the aspirations of farmers.

He noted the interest of the political leadership in supporting Kuwaiti farmers as the cornerstone of providing food security, pointing out that the endeavor to exert all efforts to encourage them to continue and develop their production.

He concluded by calling on associations in various regions in Kuwait to open their doors to the local products, and called on citizens and residents to buy and support local agriculture, expressing his thanks to those in charge of the Ashbiliya Cooperative Society for designating a place to organize an exhibition for farmers and to market their local products. —KUNA

كن جزءاً من الإرث. BE PART OF THE LEGACY.

Duqm Refinery is a Joint Venture (JV) between Oman and Kuwait located in the Southeast Al Wusta Governorate of the Sultanate of Oman. This gives the project a strategic maritime location and a competitive advantage in the path of international shipping lines in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea, thus easing the process of transport in and out of the region.

The Refinery can process 230,000 barrels per day and is the first Gulf refinery to utilise exported crude oil and the largest investment between the two Gulf countries in the refineries and

مصفاة الدقم هي مشروع مشترك بين سلطنة عمان ودولة الكويت ويقع في قلب المنطقة الاقتصادية الخاصة بالدقم في سلطنة عمان والتي تتميز بموقعها الاستراتيجي الذي يعد ميزة تنافسية بسبب وقوعه على مسار خطوط الشحن البحرية الدولية على المحيط الهندي وبحر العرب. وهذا من شأنه أن يسهل أنشطة النقل البحرية من وإلى المنطقة.

تبلغ الطاقة التخيرية لمصفاة الدقم 230 ألف برميل يوميا و تعد أول مصفاة خليجية تعتمد على النفط الخام المستورد في عملياتها و تعد أحد أكبر المشاريع الإستثمارية بين دولتين خليجيتين في قطاع المصافي و البتروكيماويات.

مصفاة الدقم تقدم فرصاً للإلتحاق بالوظائف في الأقسام التالية:

- المالية
- شؤون الشركة
- الخدمات المساندة

للإلتحاق و لمعرفة المزيد حول الوظائف المطلوبة، يرجى زيارة صفحة الوظائف عبر الرابط <https://www.oq8.om/careers>

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News in brief

MoI holds mock drills

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Interior Ministry on Tuesday urged conventional and social media to refrain from false reporting and to instead obtain news from official sources, explaining it held a mock exercise at the Mishref International Fairgrounds on Tuesday evening using ammunition and stun grenades. This exercise is part of drills aimed at raising the efficiency, coordination and in-field cooperation amongst staff. It will also boost the policemen's management of urgent security situations, said a ministry statement. The ministry's media and public affairs department stands ready to respond to any queries related to security, the statement added. — KUNA

US dollar stabilizes vs dinar

KUWAIT: The exchange rate of the US dollar against the Kuwaiti dinar stabilized Wednesday at 0.305 while the euro's exchange rate increased by 0.24 percent to the level of 0.332 dinars compared to Tuesday's rate. The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), in its daily bulletin on its website, stated that the exchange rate of the pound sterling decreased by 0.42 percent to the level of 0.376 dinars, and the Swiss franc by 0.08 percent to the level of 0.330 dinars, while the Japanese yen settled at 0.002 dinars. It is noteworthy that the exchange rates announced by the Central Bank of Kuwait are the average currency prices for the day and do not reflect the actual buying and selling prices. — KUNA

Malawi envoy lauds KRCS' efforts

KUWAIT: Ambassador of Malawi to Kuwait Younis Abdulkareem commended Wednesday Kuwait Red Crescent Society for all the efforts and aid it provides to countries in need. In a statement to the press after meeting with KRCS vice-chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi, Ambassador Abdulkareem affirmed the importance of coordination and cooperation to provide better care for humanity as a whole. Collaboration between KRCS and the Red Cross Society in Malawi and their joint efforts were discussed during the meeting, stated the Ambassador calling for further collaboration to provide food and medicine in light of the cholera outbreak in his country. — KUNA

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: People play football in Salmiya garden on a chilly morning. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Kuwait Municipality keen on raising awareness of green culture: Official

'Green buildings help rationalize use of water, electricity and preserve environment'



KUWAIT: Saud Al-Dabbous attends the GCC Green City and Building Conference on Wednesday. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: Deputy Director of Municipality Affairs in Hawally and Ahmadi governorates Saud Al-Dabbous underlined the importance of creating awareness about green culture which aims to preserve the environment, cut down the use of water and electricity in buildings and recycle waste.

Addressing the GCC Green City and Building



Conference on Wednesday, Al-Dabbous said: "Kuwait Municipality aims to increase the awareness about green building as it is a priority as well."

"This type of construction carries modern technology which will help rationalize the use of water and electricity. Kuwait has a group of existing buildings that have green building certificates, be it golden or silver from reputed international organizations," Al-Dabbous said.

He mentioned that these buildings include Shadadiya University as well as major projects under construction, such as the Kuwait International Airport expansion project (Terminal 2), in addition to major future projects, including the Medical City

of the Social Insurance Corporation.

The United Nations in 2009, under the name New Global Green Agreement, decided to make green economy concept a priority for achieving sustainable development and reducing harmful effects on environment. This was in fact the beginning when countries evinced interest in this proposition.

The Development and Environment Conference aims to identify strategic plans for green buildings in the region and renewable and sustainable energy which will significantly contribute to the existence of clean, pollution-free cities and the reduction of harmful emissions.



Behzad stresses role of civil institutions in fighting climate change

KUWAIT: Jenan Behzad, program and activities director as well as member of the Kuwait Environment Protection Society's administrative council underlined the importance of combating climate change and the role of civil institutions in reducing carbon emissions.

She made these remarks during a workshop organized by Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS). "The best way to rope in individuals into the program is through environmental awareness programs," she said. Increasing awareness surveys, using social media platforms as well as organizing workshops, lectures, and training programs can get people involved directly in initiatives, she pointed out.

The lecture presented by Jenan Behzad was entitled, "The role of civil institutions in facing the dangers of climate change." Many local and international institutions participated in the workshop.

"Civil institutions in the GCC with the support of Saudi Arabia and the Green Middle East initiative are working to increase green areas through afforestation, caring for natural reserves, and interest in ecotourism," she stated.

"The traditional perspective of the GCC on the



Jenan Behzad speaks during the workshop.

issue of climate change, renewable energy, and traditional fossil energy sources has changed dramatically in recent years as the emergence of many projects synonymous with the Middle East Green Initiative has made the issue of climate change a priority for environmental action," Behzad added.

She drew attention to the importance of tending to preserve the components of the environment by raising awareness and training national cadres. "One of the most prominent activities of civil society organizations is supposed to be met with interest and used to raise the quality of Arab expertise," she added.

She also referred to the lack of experience in the region and the lack of technical capacity that did not prevent the GCC countries from working on many initiatives including afforestation, mangrove cultivation, and constructing green buildings.



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US averted nuke war between India, Pakistan

London police sorry after another officer guilty of sex crimes

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BERLIN: (L-R) German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, German Health Minister Karl Lauterbach, German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser, German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius and German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Svenja Schulze talk prior to the weekly cabinet meeting at the Chancellery in Berlin. —AFP

Germany approves Leopard tanks for Ukraine

Berlin's decision hailed by Kyiv and its allies but slammed by Moscow

BERLIN: Berlin on Wednesday agreed to deliver powerful German-made Leopard tanks to help Ukraine repel Russia's invasion, a decision hailed by Kyiv and its allies but slammed by Moscow as "extremely dangerous". "The first step on tanks has been taken," said Kyiv, urging its allies to now build a "tank coalition".

"We need a lot of Leopards," the head of Ukraine's presidential administration Andriy Yermak said on social media. Germany will provide a company of 14 Leopard 2 A6 tanks from its Bundeswehr stocks, government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit said. It is also granting approval for other European countries to send tanks from their own stocks to Ukraine, with the aim of quickly assembling "two tank battalions with Leopard 2 tanks for Ukraine," he said. "This decision follows our well-known line of supporting Ukraine to the best of our abilities," Chancellor Olaf Scholz said. While scores of nations have pledged military hardware for Ukraine in recent weeks, Kyiv has been clamouring for the more sophisticated Leopard tanks, seen as key to punching through enemy lines.

Several other European countries, including Finland and Poland, have said they are ready to provide their stocks, but had required Berlin's approval to transfer the German-made armaments to a third party. Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, who had vocally sought German approval to send on the tanks, thanked Berlin for the decision and called it "a big step towards stopping Russia". "Together we are stronger," he said, as Britain and France also welcomed the announcement.

But Russia's ambassador to Germany Sergei Nechaev warned that the "extremely dangerous decision takes the conflict to a new level of confrontation, and contradicts statements by German

politicians about the unwillingness of the German Federation to get involved in it".

Soledar pullout

Scholz, who had faced fierce accusations of dithering over whether to send the tanks, is taking questions in the Bundestag German parliament. The Leopard 2 is seen as one of the best-performing tank models worldwide and is widely used across Europe, meaning spare parts and ammunition can be easily obtained. Berlin will also offer to train Ukrainian forces to use the tanks in Germany, as well as providing logistics, ammunition and maintenance for the vehicles.

Germany did not specify the number of tanks in two battalions but for the Bundeswehr a battalion typically comprises of 44 tanks. The Wall Street Journal has meanwhile reported that Washington was leaning toward sending a significant number of M1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine. The Kremlin warned Wednesday that if Western countries supply Ukraine with heavy tanks they will be destroyed on the battlefield. "These tanks burn like all the rest. They are just very expensive," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

The Kremlin's warning came as a Moscow-backed official said Russian forces had advanced in Bakhmut, a town in eastern Ukraine that Russia has been trying to capture for months. The Ukrainian military also conceded to AFP that its troops had pulled out of battle-scarred Soledar, to the northeast of Bakhmut.

Russian forces had claimed control of Soledar earlier this month. And Denis Pushilin, Moscow's top official responsible for Donetsk, said its capture "has now made it possible to block the enemy's supply routes and, in part, take under operational

control areas" from which Ukrainians struck Russian positions. Amid the fierce fighting in eastern Ukraine, Kyiv and several of its allies had been urging Germany for weeks to allow the delivery of the Leopards, but a US-led meeting of Kyiv's allies in Germany last week failed to yield a decision.

'Blatant provocation'

Russia's ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Antonov, responded to reports about Washington potentially sending battle tanks by saying such a move would show "the real aggressor in the current conflict".

"If the United States decides to supply tanks, it will be impossible to justify such step using arguments about 'defensive weapons'," he said, according to a post on the Russian Embassy's official Facebook page. "This would be another blatant provocation against the Russian Federation."

In a further show of international support for Ukraine, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said Wednesday he is considering visiting Ukraine, after an invitation from President Volodymyr Zelensky.

"I will consider this in light of various circumstances and conditions," said Kishida, whose country is hosting this year's Group of Seven meeting. However, Zelensky is battling a widening corruption scandal—with his defence ministry shaken by allegations of food procurement fraud.

Local media reports last week accused the ministry of having signed a deal at prices "two to three times higher" than current rates for basic foodstuffs. Several officials have resigned over the allegations.

Ukraine has a history of endemic corruption, including among the political elite, but efforts to stamp out graft have been overshadowed by the war. —AFP

EU grapples with asylum reform

STOCKHOLM: Eight years after facing a refugee crisis in 2015, the European Union is still struggling with how to reform its asylum system — just as migrant entries are once again rising. Reaching consensus among the bloc's 27 nations has become more complicated with the growing influence of the far-right in the politics of several member states.

The issue, kicked along the road for years, will be on the agenda of a Thursday meeting of EU interior ministers, with a focus on how to speed up the process of returning undocumented migrants to their country of origin in cases where their asylum bid fails. Sweden, the current holder of the EU presidency, will host the meeting.

The Scandinavian country, among the more generous in terms of giving asylum before 2015-2016, has since October had a coalition government reliant on a nationalist far-right party, the Sweden Democrats (SD).

That alliance "is really stepping up the restrictive approach" introduced under the previous Swedish government, an expert at Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, Bernd Parusel, told AFP. The aim, he said, is to reduce all immigration, not only asylum, and Stockholm would not back "any deal or any compromise that would increase the number of people arriving in Sweden to apply for asylum".

A spokesman for the SD, lawmaker Ludvig Aspling, confirmed to AFP that "we don't want any mandatory relocation of migrants," as has

been mooted under EU plans to reform the system. The area the Swedish EU presidency is expected to focus on is increasing the number of irregular migrants sent back to their countries of origin.

Currently, only around 20 percent of those denied asylum in the EU are sent home. Some aspects of the proposed EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, set out by the European Commission in 2020, have made progress, notably on expanded use of EURODAC, a bloc-wide database of fingerprints taken from irregular migrants and asylum-seekers.

But the main thrust of the reform has languished, with little prospect of it being agreed and adopted before European Parliament elections next year, as the legislature and the European Council have promised.

'Disagreement' in EU

One key point, on overhauling the so-called Dublin Regulation under which irregular migrants are the responsibility of the EU country where they first enter, remains stalled. The EU's outer countries facing irregular migrant inflows — Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain — back the proposed reform that would see asylum-seekers relocated across the bloc.

But other countries, such as Hungary, Poland and the Netherlands, are fiercely opposed to that. "On that issue we see there is still enormous disagreement among member states," said Helena Hahn, migration expert at the European Policy Centre.

"It's not very clear what the compromise could actually look like," Parusel said. He suggested a "flexible system" might emerge where EU countries refusing to host relocated asylum-seekers would be made to contribute in other ways, with money or resources.



BRUSSELS: EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson (R) and European return coordinator Mari Juritsch give a press conference on the operational strategy for more effective returns, at the EU headquarters in Brussels. —AFP

A Dutch policy paper circulated to other EU member countries heaved to that contribution idea, and called for better "enforcement" of the Dublin Regulation. It also stressed the need for better cooperation with non-EU countries "to decrease irregular migration and foster return," citing the 2016 deal struck with Turkey to house migrants in exchange for European funds.

The EU, it said, should wield "trade, visa, development cooperation and temporary legal and circular migration pilots" as levers to improve returns and cut irregular migration. Pressure is building for a coherent policy.

The EU last year saw irregular migrant arrivals jump to 330,000, according to the bloc's Frontex border control agency — its highest level since 2016. There were 924,000 asylum applications lodged in 2022, a 50-percent year-on-year increase, said EU home affairs commissioner Ylva Johansson, who is Swedish. —AFP

International Monetary Fund IMF-Middle East Center for Economics and Finance, Kuwait Vacancy Announcement Capacity Development Advisor (Economist)

Job Description

The IMF-Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) located in Kuwait is looking to hire a Capacity Development Advisor (Economist). The CEF is an office of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with a mission to strengthen the skills of officials from Arab League countries in economics, finance, and policy formulation, done mainly through the delivery of training courses and seminars. This is a full-time position with an initial appointment term of two-years (renewable) and carries a competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with the successful candidate's experience and qualifications. For non-residents of Kuwait, relocation and living allowances are provided.

Summary Description

We are seeking an experienced Capacity Development Advisor (Economist) to enhance our CEF-based economics and finance faculty. Primary tasks include teaching of selected courses delivered by the IMF, involvement in curriculum development, and conducting research in support of the CEF's training activities, and series of seminars and conferences.

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

- **Teaching:** Teach several advanced short courses in conjunction with the IMF and other international organizations. The audience will include public sector officials from Arab countries, especially officials from central banks, finance ministries and other government economic agencies.
- **Course Development:** Develop new courses on topics of relevance to the region, in collaboration with staff in IMF headquarters or other international organizations, as needed. Course development will include the preparation of pedagogical material such as lectures, and detailed quantitative case studies based on country experiences.
- **Outreach:** coordinate events (seminars, webinars, and conferences) on cutting edge economic issues of relevance to the region in collaboration with staff in IMF headquarters or other international organizations. The Capacity Development Advisor will also be expected to spearhead efforts to produce quarterly newsletters.
- **Research:** Conduct original research on economic issues of relevance to the CEF's training mission and cooperate with universities, research institutes, and think tanks in the region.

Qualifications:

Candidates should have strong analytical skills in macroeconomics or finance, at least five years of practical experience with analyzing economic issues especially in emerging and developing countries, as well as a substantial experience and interest in teaching. Experience in providing advanced training to public sector officials in applied macroeconomic policy issues, finance and econometrics would be highly desirable. Applicants should hold an advanced degree in economics or finance. Excellent teaching and communication skills and fluency in Arabic and English are essential.

Closing date of the application is February 7, 2023.

Interested applicants should visit www.imf.org/jobs for the full vacancy information and to apply to requisition # 23-R4216.

International

Spain detains suspect over Ukraine embassy, PM letter bombs

Ukraine's ambassador to Spain blame Russia for the letter bomb at its embassy

MADRID: Spanish police arrested a suspect Wednesday in the letter bombing campaign that targeted the prime minister and the Ukrainian embassy, authorities said. The Spanish citizen was taken into custody in Miranda de Ebro in northern Spain and police were searching the home of the man, who a police source said was 74 years old.

Nobody was killed by the six letter bombs sent in late November and early December to various sites in Spain, but an employee of the Ukrainian embassy was lightly injured while opening one of the packages. Among the sites targeted was the official residence of Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, Spain's defence ministry and an air base near Madrid from which weapons donated by Spain are sent to Ukraine.

The headquarters of a military equipment firm in the northeastern city of Zaragoza which makes the grenade launchers that Spain has sent to Ukraine was also targeted. Kyiv ramped up security at its embassies abroad after the embassy in Madrid was targeted by a letter bomb.

The arrest comes after the New York Times reported Sunday that Russian military intelligence officers had "directed" associates of a white supremacist militant group based in Russia to carry out the campaign in Spain. US officials told the newspaper that the Russian officers who directed the campaign appeared intent on "keeping European governments off guard" and "may be testing out proxy groups in the event Moscow decides to escalate a conflict".

Investigators suspect the Russian Imperial

Movement (RIM), a radical group that has members and associates across Europe, of being behind the letter bomb campaign. The group, which is designated a global terrorist organisation by the United States, is believed to have ties to Russian intelligence agencies.

"Important members of the group have been in Spain, and the police there have tracked its ties with far-right Spanish organisations," the newspaper said. The newspaper based its report on anonymous "US and allied officials".

'Terrorist methods'

According to Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation, RIM "maintains contacts with neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups across Europe". "The group has provided paramilitary training to Russian nationals and members of like-minded organisations from other countries at its facilities in St. Petersburg," it added.

Ukraine's ambassador to Spain, Serhii Pohoreltsev, had appeared to blame Russia for the letter bomb at its embassy. "We are well aware of the terrorist methods of the aggressor country," he said during an interview with Spanish public television on November 30 just hours after the letter exploded.

Russia's embassy to Spain condemned the letter bomb campaign. "Any threat or terrorist act, especially those that target a diplomatic mission, is to be totally condemned," it said in a tweet at the time. Spain's National Court had opened an investigation



MADRID: In this file photo Spanish police stand guard near the US embassy in Madrid, after they received a letter bomb, similar to one which went off at the Ukrainian embassy. —AFP

for "terrorism" over the letter bombing campaign.

In addition to sending arms to help Ukraine after Russia sent troops into the country in February last

year, Spain is also training Ukrainian troops as part of a European Union programme and providing humanitarian aid. —AFP

London police sorry after another officer guilty of sex crimes

LONDON: The head of Britain's biggest police force on Wednesday apologised after another of his officers was convicted of sex crimes, and admitted that on average two to three officers faced criminal charges in court every week.

The Metropolitan Police is battling to restore its reputation after a serving officer was jailed for life for the kidnap, rape and murder of a young woman in south London in 2021. Earlier this month another officer admitted 24 rapes and a string of other sex offences, prompting fresh questions about lax vetting procedures at the London force.

In the latest case, police constable Hussain Chehab on Tuesday admitted having sex with a 14-year-old girl and possessing indecent images of children. A court was told that Chehab had even served as a school liaison officer during his time on the force. Met Police commissioner Mark Rowley described the case as "ghastly" and conceded that the force was dealing with "more than a few bad apples". The Met has said 1,071 of its own officers had been or are under investigation for domestic abuse and violence against women and girls.

"Most weeks there's two to three officers going to court," he said, adding that the cases were a mixture of dishonesty, violence and violence against women and girls. He apologised for the Chehab case, but warned that more cases were likely to emerge as he implements reforms to root out the criminal and corrupt in the Met's ranks.

"We are going to be surfacing more," he told the



LONDON: Handout photograph shows Britain's Home Secretary Suella Braverman giving a statement on former British police officer David Carrick, who was sacked after admitting being a serial rapist, in the House of Commons, in London. —AFP

London Assembly's police and crime committee. Last week campaigners dumped 1,071 rotten apples, representing the number of officers being probed, in front of the Met's New Scotland Yard headquarters.

"We've been told time and time again that it's just one bad apple here and there, but this is actually a fundamental problem right across policing," said Ruth Davison, head of the domestic abuse charity Refuge,

which organised the protest.

She called for any officer facing formal allegations to be suspended while an investigation takes place. Wayne Couzens, who served in the Met's armed unit protecting MPs and foreign diplomats, was jailed for life for the kidnap, rape and murder of Sarah Everard. Serial rapist David Carrick, who will be sentenced next month, served in the same unit. —AFP

Iraqi PM to visit France for energy, security talks

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani will travel to France on Thursday for energy and security talks with President Emmanuel Macron, he told AFP. Sudani, in written answers to AFP, said he wants to "activate the agreements" between oil-rich Iraq and France "particularly in the transport, energy and investment sectors".

French giant TotalEnergies in 2021 signed a \$10 billion contract with Baghdad, but work on the multiple projects is yet to begin. They include construction of oil and gas processing facilities with the capacity for electricity production, along with a one-gigawatt photovoltaic power plant.

Despite being home to a wealth of hydrocarbon reserves, Iraq's neglected electricity grid is dilapidated and a victim of the country's rampant corruption, with power cuts lasting for hours. Neighbouring Iran currently supplies a third of Iraq's gas and electricity, and Baghdad is seeking greater energy independence. Sudani's coalition government, formed in October, is supported by pro-Iranian parties, which hold a majority in Iraq's parliament.

Macron is particularly invested in Iraq, having twice visited the country since taking office in 2017, and last month told a regional conference in Jordan that Baghdad should embark on a path not "dictated from outside." Security will also be discussed, with Sudani saying talks will include "training and development of Iraqi security capabilities, as well as in the field of arms purchases". —AFP

Calls to punish exam...

Continued from Page 1

also rename Sheikh Ahmad to form a new

UNESCO lists two Mideast sites as...

Continued from Page 1

architect Oscar Niemeyer, but activists have warned it risked crumbling into ruin in recent years.

"The fair was the flagship project of Lebanon's modernization policy in the 1960s," UNESCO said,

Hipkins replaces Ardern as New...

Continued from Page 1

looming recession. After chairing his first cabinet meeting on Wednesday afternoon, Hipkins said it was an "immensely proud moment" for him to take "the baton of responsibility" from Ardern. He singled out the cost of living as one of his most urgent priorities, but was coy when pressed on other potential policy changes.

Ardern, a global figurehead of progressive politics, has been credited with raising New Zealand's profile on the world stage. Hipkins said he would be building his own relationships, but he expected Ardern "will put in a good word". The father-of-two is nicknamed "Chippy" and describes himself as a "regular, ordinary Kiwi" from a working-class background who loves cycling to work. He has con-

Cabinet or appoint a new premier.

The government blamed its worsening relations with the National Assembly for forcing it to quit after just over three months of its formation. The government was annoyed by MPs' insistence to push for populist draft legislation, including one to purchase billions of dinars of loans owed by Kuwaiti citizens to local banks. The government said the draft laws are too costly to public funds.

describing it as "one of the major representative works of 20th century modern architecture" in the region. Its inscription as a world heritage site in danger "opens access to enhanced international assistance" to preserve it.

Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati, who hails from the city, welcomed the decision as "a great achievement for Lebanon and Lebanese, especially for the city of Tripoli". Activists had been hoping for a UNESCO listing to open the way to donor funding to save the park, in a country mired since 2019 in one of the worst financial crises in recent history. —AFP

demned the "utterly abhorrent" social media abuse levelled at Ardern, which intensified during her years as prime minister.

Ardern said Tuesday she would "hate" for her departure to be seen as "a negative commentary on New Zealand". "I leave feeling gratitude for having this wonderful role for so many years," she said. Ardern will continue to sit in parliament, but has announced her intention to step back from the cut and thrust of daily politics. She has also said she plans to marry her partner Clarke Gayford, a television personality who fronts a popular fishing show, and is looking forward to taking her daughter Neve to school. Gayford said Ardern's resignation had been met with an "incredible outpouring of thanks and respect", and that he was immensely proud of her "superhuman efforts".

Hipkins studied politics and criminology at Victoria University in the capital Wellington and then worked in the industry training sector. Before becoming an MP in 2008, he worked as a senior adviser to two education ministers and former prime minister Helen Clark. —AFP

Air India tweaks service policy after 'peegate' scandal

NEW DELHI: Air India said it has adjusted its in-flight alcohol service policy in the wake of a mid-air urination scandal that has cost the carrier over \$40,000 in fines. The incident, in which a drunk senior US bank executive was accused of urinating on a 72-year-old woman seated in business class on a flight last year from New York to New Delhi, has been dubbed "peegate" by local media.

The airline has faced severe criticism for its handling of the woman's complaint and for allowing the banker, Indian national Shankar Mishra, to disembark as normal when the aircraft landed. But Air India defended itself in a statement on Tuesday, saying "in the judgement of the crew, the alleged perpetrator posed no risk to flight safety at any time".

"The alleged perpetrator was calm, co-operative and professed ignorance of the allegation. He had not been served excessive alcohol by crew and did not appear intoxicated to the crew," the statement added. The airline did acknowledge, however, its failure to report the incident, which took place on

November 26, as required by the Indian aviation regulator.

The Indian Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) last week fined Air India three million rupees (\$37,000), and the airline's director of in-flight services an additional 300,000 rupees. The flight's pilot also had his license suspended for three months for "failing to discharge his duties" to ensure safety and discipline. The airline has since called the penalty "excessive" and vowed to help its staff mount an appeal.

The DGCA on Tuesday imposed an additional fine of one million rupees on the airline for failing to report two more incidents of unruly passenger behavior on a separate flight from Paris to New Delhi on December 6. On that occasion, an allegedly drunk passenger was found smoking in the lavatory, while another relieved himself on the vacant seat and blanket of a fellow female passenger, the regulator said.

"We have reviewed our existing in-flight alcohol service policy taking reference from other carriers' practice and input from the US National Restaurants Association's guidelines," Air India said in a statement. The airline will now adopt the NRA's "traffic light" system to train crewmembers to recognize and manage possible cases of intoxication, Air India said. The incidents have led to the first major public relations crisis at the former flag carrier since its privatization last year. —AFP



NEW DELHI: An Air India aircraft is pictured on the tarmac at Indira Gandhi International airport on Jan 20, 2023. —AFP

International

Pompeo says US averted nuclear war between India, Pakistan

US diplomats convinced both India and Pakistan that neither was preparing to go nuclear

NEW YORK: Former US secretary of state Mike Pompeo wrote in a book published Tuesday that India and Pakistan came close to nuclear war in 2019 and that US intervention prevented escalation. "I do not think the world properly knows just how close the India-Pakistan rivalry came to spilling over into a nuclear conflagration in February 2019," the likely future presidential contender wrote in "Never Give an Inch," his memoir of his time as Donald Trump's top diplomat and earlier CIA chief.

India in February 2019 broke precedent by launching airstrikes inside Pakistani territory after blaming a militant group there for a suicide bombing that killed 41 Indian paramilitary soldiers in the flashpoint Kashmir region. Pakistan shot down an Indian warplane, capturing the pilot.

Pompeo, who was in Hanoi for a summit between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, said he was woken up with an urgent call from a senior Indian official. "He believed the Pakistanis had begun to prepare their nuclear weapons for a strike. India, he informed me, was contemplating its own escalation," Pompeo wrote. "I asked him to do nothing and give us a minute to sort things out," Pompeo said.

Pompeo said that US diplomats convinced both India and Pakistan that neither was preparing to go nuclear. "No other nation could have done what we did that night to avoid a horrible outcome," Pompeo wrote.



WASHINGTON: File photo taken shows former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo looks on during a press conference of the Republican Study Group to introduce their Maximum Pressure Act against Iran. — AFP

Pompeo, who wrote that Pakistan "probably enabled" the Kashmir attack, said he spoke to "the actual leader of Pakistan," then army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, in an allusion to the weakness of civilian governments.

Pompeo at the time publicly defended India's right to act. In his book, Pompeo spoke highly of India and, unlike officials in New Delhi, made no secret of his

desire to ally with the South Asian democracy "to counteract Chinese aggression."

India, followed by Pakistan, tested nuclear bombs in 1998, a watershed moment. Then-president US Bill Clinton later famously said that Kashmir, divided between the two nations, was "the most dangerous place in the world."

'I'm still trying to kill you'

Pompeo writes extensively in the book of his diplomacy with Kim Jong Un, which included preparing three meetings between the young totalitarian leader and Trump. He recalled a chilling first conversation as he flew into Pyongyang in March 2018 on a clandestine trip as CIA director. "I didn't think you'd show up. I know you've been trying to kill me," Pompeo quotes Kim as telling him.

"I decided to lean in with a little humor of my own: 'Mr. Chairman, I'm still trying (to) kill you.'" But Pompeo described a budding understanding with Kim as the Trump administration offered incentives to lower tensions.

Pointing to Kim's smoking habit, Pompeo wrote that he told Kim he would take him to "the nicest beach in Miami and smoke the best Cubanos in the world. He told me, 'I already have a great relationship with the Castros.' Of course, he did."

As for their substantive conversation, Pompeo said

Kim spoke candidly on concerns about China, usually viewed as North Korea's main ally. Told that China believes North Korea wants US forces out of South Korea, "Kim laughed and pounded on the table in sheer joy, exclaiming that the Chinese were liars."

Kim "said that he needed the Americans in South Korea to protect him from the CCP, and that the CCP needs the Americans out so they can treat the peninsula like Tibet and Xinjiang," Pompeo wrote, referring to the Chinese Communist Party.

Xi 'hates you'

Pompeo became known for his hawkish stance on China, controversially accusing Beijing of spreading the "Wuhan virus," in a derogatory reference to COVID-19. He said that Trump told him with an epithet that Chinese President Xi Jinping "hates you" and asked Pompeo to "shut the hell up for a while" as the United States needed health supplies from China.

"I was not happy that the president had tweeted that the CCP was doing a good job on the virus and praised Xi," Pompeo said. "But I understood the circumstances—we needed health equipment and were at the CCP's mercy for it. I worked for the president, and I would bide my time." Pompeo has not ruled out running against Trump for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, although early polls show little support for Pompeo. — AFP



JEJU: This handout photo from the Korea Coast Guard taken and released on January 25, 2023 shows coast guard forces searching for missing people after a Hong Kong cargo ship sank off South Korea. — AFP

Two crew dead after ship sinks between Japan, S Korea

TOKYO: Two crew were confirmed dead and nine others were missing Wednesday after their cargo ship sank in rough waters between Japan and South Korea, Japanese authorities said. Coast guards from the two countries, joined by military aircraft and a private vessel, located 13 of the 22 people who were onboard the Jin Tian, a Japan coast guard official said.

But Japanese medical authorities later confirmed two of those retrieved were dead, the official told AFP. The crew were from China and Myanmar, but the precise identities of the dead, rescued and missing remained unclear, he said.

"Our vessels will remain in the area and will continue the search operation throughout the night," he added. The Jin Tian sent a distress signal late on

Tuesday evening from a position around 110 kilometres (68 miles) west of the remote and uninhabited Danjo Islands in far southwestern Japan.

Three private ships were in the area and helped pick up five of the stranded crew members, Japan's coast guard said. Multiple vessels and aircraft from Japan's coast guard and military, as well as the South Korean coast guard and a private ship, were involved in the search operation. The ship's captain used a satellite phone to tell South Korean coast guard officials that he and the crew would abandon the sinking ship in the early hours of Wednesday morning, the Jeju Coast Guard said. Contact with the crew was then lost.

The accident came as a cold snap hit much of Asia, with daytime temperatures in some of Japan's islands nearest the rescue site reaching just three degrees Celsius (37 degrees Fahrenheit). The 6,651-tonne Jin Tian is registered in Hong Kong. Japan's coast guard said. In 2020, a cargo ship with 43 crew and 6,000 cattle on board sank off southwestern Japan after being caught in a typhoon. Two crew survived. — AFP



NAGANO: People walk on the snow as they visit Nagano's Zenkoji Temple on January 25, 2023. — AFP

One dead as heavy snow, cold hit Japan

NAGANO: Tourists revelled in wintry scenes across Japan on Wednesday, as much of the country was blanketed by snow in a cold snap that has killed at least one person and disrupted travel. "These temperatures are some of the coldest we've seen in a decade," Japan Meteorological Agency official Takafumi Umeda told AFP.

Record lows were logged in several locations, including one area of southern Kumamoto, where the mercury hit -9 degrees Celsius (16 degrees Fahrenheit), the coldest logged there since 1977 when that observation site began keeping track.

Top government spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno said one person had died in the cold snap, while meteorologists warned of blizzards, high waves and traffic snarl-ups due to icy roads. Authorities were also investigating whether two other deaths were related to the freezing weather across much of the archipelago,

Matsuno told reporters. Hundreds of flights were cancelled due to the snowstorm, while delays and cancellations disrupted both local trains and long-distance Shinkansen services. Vehicles on major roads in several locations were left stranded, local media said.

At the seventh-century Zenkoji Temple in the mountainous region of Nagano, north of Tokyo, a chilly calm descended with trees, old-fashioned lamp posts and the place of worship itself covered in layers of powdery snow.

Visitors included some who were there for skiing but had been forced off the slopes by blizzard conditions. "I came to ski, but the snow was incredibly heavy so I cut my plan short and instead decided to do a bit of sightseeing," 30-year-old Akiko Sotobori told AFP.

"The blizzard (at the ski resort) was such that I couldn't see anything three metres (10 feet) ahead." There were picturesque scenes in the former capital, tourist favourite Kyoto, where the shining walls of the famous Golden Pavilion contrasted with the temporary bright-white brilliance of its tiered roofs.

The country's Sea of Japan coast was hit hardest by the overnight blizzard, with Tokyo and its surrounding regions spared the snow but seeing unseasonably low temperatures. — AFP

Aide to former Pakistan PM Khan arrested

ISLAMABAD: An aide to former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan was arrested on Wednesday for criticising election officials, police said, the latest case brought against the opposition as it tries to force early polls. Fawad Chaudhry, who was information minister under Khan, was detained in a pre-dawn raid on his home in the eastern city of Lahore.

Chaudhry is accused of having "harassed and intimidated" election commission officials and their families in televised comments on Tuesday, according to a police report shared by his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party. The charges, lodged in the capital Islamabad, also say he is being held under sedition legislation because he "tried to cause an impediment in the election process of the state". Khan's populist PTI government was ousted by a vote of no-confidence in April 2022 after his coalition partners switched allegiance. Fresh elections are due no later than October, with Pakistan mired in political and economic uncertainty. PTI is pushing for early polls, holding rallies, pulling out of parliament and dissolving the two provincial assemblies it controls in a bid to force the government's hand.

Khan and other PTI leaders have been caught up in a slew of court cases, a common hurdle facing opposition groups, which rights monitors say are orchestrated to shut them out of office. The police report shared by PTI cites Chaudhry describing the Election Commission of Pakistan as "clerks" signing off the orders of the government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. "If you are so weak then better you should pack up and go home," he said, according to police.

Chaudhry earlier told reporters: "We warn the election commission, its members and their families that, if the series of abuses against us continues, you will have to pay back." Pakistani politicians regularly trade ugly, personal barbs, invoking each others' families in mud-slinging speeches. Khan, a former cricket star, was turned out of office as the economy slid backwards and he lost the backing of the military establishment, which is considered the true powerbroker in Pakistan. Khan was shot in the leg at a political rally in November and blamed the assassination attempt on an army officer and Sharif, without offering evidence. The nation of more than 220 million is in dire economic straits with runaway inflation, scant foreign exchange reserves and stalling bailout talks with IMF lenders. — AFP

Two killed in Philippines air crash

MANILA: Two Philippine air force aviators were killed in a crash Wednesday, while rescuers were searching for another plane that went missing the previous day with six people on board, authorities said.

During a training, the military's SF260 Marchetti plane plummeted onto a rice paddy in Pilar town near Manila, killing the pilot and another aviator, Bataan province's Police Chief Colonel Romell Velasco told AFP. "It's a total wreck. The wings were separated," Velasco said after visiting the crash site. "No one could survive this," he said, adding that the bodies have been recovered.



PILAR: A handout photo from the Bureau of Fire Protection Region II taken and released on January 25, 2023, shows rescuers retrieving a body from a crashed plane in Pilar, Bataan, where two Philippine air force aviators were killed. — AFP

'Brazil is back,' Lula hails at Latam summit

BUENOS AIRES: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva declared Tuesday that his country is "back in the region" after joining more than a dozen other Latin American leaders at a summit in Buenos Aires. Less than a month after his inauguration, Lula arrived in the Argentine capital looking to rebuild bridges after his far-right predecessor Jair Bolsonaro had pulled out of the grouping.

"Brazil is back in the region and ready to work side-by-side with you with a very strong feeling of solidarity and closeness," said the 77-year-old leader during the seventh Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) summit, which brings together 33 nations. Lula, who previously served as Brazil's president from 2003-10, was one of the founders of CELAC during the first "pink wave" of leftward political shifts on the continent over a decade ago. But Bolsonaro pulled Brazil out of the group over what he perceived as its support for undemocratic governments in Nicaragua, Venezuela and Cuba. Lula spoke Tuesday about the "multiple crises" affecting the world — from the pandemic to climate change, geopolitical tensions, food insecurities and threats to democracy. "All this happens in the midst of an unacceptable rise in inequality, poverty and hunger," said Lula, the only leader to publicize his speech at the summit. Democracy and its threats — especially from the far right — were a central theme of the summit.

"We cannot allow the recalcitrant and fascist far right to put our institutions and our people in peril," said the host of the forum, Argentina's center-left President Alberto Fernandez, in opening remarks. He pointed to the riots by Bolsonaro supporters at the seats of power in Brasilia earlier this month and the alleged attempt to assassinate his vice president, Cristina Kirchner, in September. But Fernandez made no mention of communist Cuba or the accusations of political oppression made against radical leftist regimes in Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia. In fact, with Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel in attendance, Fernandez called for an end to the US-led blockade of Cuba and Venezuela. — AFP

An investigation to determine the cause of the "mishap" is under way, air force spokesperson Colonel Consuelo Castillo told reporters. In June 2021, the military temporarily grounded its entire Black Hawk fleet after an S-70i helicopter crashed during a night-time training, killing all six on board.

In a separate incident in the country's mountainous north, a Cessna plane carrying a pilot and five passengers failed to arrive at a remote airstrip on Tuesday, the Philippines' civil aviation authority said.

The missing plane had taken off from Cauayan airport on a route that would have taken it across the Sierra Madre mountain range, said Eric Apolonio, spokesperson for the industry regulator.

Air traffic controllers initiated a "communication search" after the plane did not respond half an hour after it was supposed to land, he said in a statement. The search and rescue operation was temporarily halted by poor weather on Wednesday, he added. — AFP

Business

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2023

CBK raises discount rate to 4.0%

Half percentage point hike in light of local, global economic developments: Al-Haroon

KUWAIT: The Governor and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), Basel A Al-Haroon stated that the CBK Board of Directors decided to raise the discount rate by 0.50 percent from 3.5 percent to 4.0 percent effective January 26, 2023.

The governor clarified that this decision came in light of recent developments in the local and international economic conditions, local monetary and banking indicators and movements on KWD interest rate in the local market considering the changes to the interest rates on the other major currencies.

The governor pointed out that the decision is in line with a progressive approach adopted by CBK to reinforce the financial and monetary stability of the banking and financial units, and maintain the attractiveness of the national currency as a lucrative and reliable store for domestic savings, which repre-



Basel A Al-Haroon

sent a main source of finance provided by the financial and banking units to the national economic sectors, and foster an environment conducive to economic sustainable growth.

The governor added that CBK's decisions for monetary policy, including those related to local interest rates, are



based on our review and analyses of the latest available economic, monetary and banking data, e.g. the economic performance ratios, inflation rates, local liquidity indicators, movement of deposits and bank credit, and interest rates on Kuwaiti Dinar and the other major currencies. Such data are important for



assessing the need to change local interest rates, movement of prices and amount thereof, and the appropriate instruments to address. The decision also considered the various factors affecting the consumer price index to identify the factors that put pressure on prices, in view of the nature of the

Kuwaiti economy openness to the world.

The governor concluded that the CBK shall continue its monitoring of the local and international economic, monetary, and banking developments, and, whenever appropriate, shall take any additional measures to safeguard the financial and monetary stability in the country.

Boeing reports Q4 loss but reaffirms 2023 targets

WASHINGTON: Persistent supply chain woes and staffing issues led to another quarterly loss at Boeing, but the company on Wednesday confirmed its 2023 outlook amid strong aviation demand.

Boeing said its commercial plane business was dented by "abnormal costs," while "labor instability and supply chain disruption" weighed on its defense, space and security unit. The company's \$634 million loss for the quarter ending December 31 was smaller than the \$4.1 billion loss in the same period last year. Revenues rose 35 percent to \$20 billion, but came in below analyst forecasts.

The aviation giant, which has been beset in recent years with production problems and certification delays following the 737 MAX crashes, nevertheless finished 2022 with positive free cashflow for the first time since 2018 as it reaffirmed 2023 targets. "We had a solid fourth quarter, and 2022 proved to be an important year in our recovery," said Boeing Chief Executive Dave Calhoun.

"Demand across our portfolio is strong, and we remain focused on driving stability in our operations and within the supply chain to meet our commitments in 2023 and beyond."

Boeing has said it expects to return to a level of financial strength comparable to its pre-pandemic state around the 2025-26 timeframe. The company's turnaround has been aided by robust demand for commercial planes as airlines struggle to meet pent-up demand for flying and replace older planes with newer jets that burn less energy and release fewer carbon emissions.

But efforts to ramp up output have been hindered by snags in gamering key parts and materials, including delays in receiving engines from key suppliers. Calhoun, in an interview with CNBC, said suppliers have made progress in hiring more staff,



but are still working through the process to be able to increase output. "You have to train," Calhoun told the network. "Every one of these products are pretty sophisticated."

He predicted that 2023 would remain "bumpy" as far as the supply chain, but said the ramp-up was aided by shared knowledge that demand for aviation remains strong. Boeing has resumed deliveries of the 787 Dreamliner after a lengthy halt, and confirmed it would increase production in 2023 from the current "low" level.

The company expects to deliver 70-80 Dreamliners in 2023, up from 31 last year. Boeing is eyeing 400-450 deliveries of 737s, compared with 387 in 2022.

A key unknown facing the company is the degree to which it can expect bankable revenues from China after a lengthy pause in deliveries of 737 MAX planes while the country maintained strict Covid-19 policies. Boeing executives have previously suggested the suspension was a reflection at least in part of the tense state of US-China relations. China was the last major market to clear the MAX to return to service after a global grounding following two fatal crashes. On January 13, a 737 MAX operated by China Southern Airlines undertook the first flight by a MAX plane in the country since March 2019. —AFP

statement.

But it also said it was "prepared to increase the policy rate further if needed" to reach the government's inflation target of two percent. "Inflation is projected to come down significantly this year," the bank said, though it remained at 6.3 percent in December — three times the goal. The central bank noted that while job markets were "still tight," it had seen "growing evidence that restrictive monetary policy is slowing activity, especially household spending."

It projected GDP growth of about one percent in 2023 and about two percent in 2024. The bank predicted that lower energy prices, better global supply chain conditions and the series of interest rate increases would bring inflation down to "about three percent" by the middle of 2023, and back to two percent in 2024. —AFP

Amid the fallout, central bank chief Mustafa Ghaleb Mukhif's "request" to be relieved of his duties was accepted on Monday by Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani. But among the crowd of protesters in the capital, who waved flags and chanted "Lower the dollar!", the departure was considered more symbolic than substantial.

"The poorer classes are affected; we have reached a point where it is difficult to continue living," protester Raed Abdelqader told AFP. Around 400 people attended the demonstration, according to an official from the interior ministry who wished to remain anonymous. Analysts and officials attribute the drop in the dinar's value to efforts to make Iraq's banking system compliant with the international electronic transfer system known as SWIFT. An adviser to Sudani said that since mid-November, Iraqi banks wanting to access reserves stored in the United States must make transfers using the electronic system. —AFP

Lebanese protest central bank chief as pound hits new low

BEIRUT: Lebanese protesters on Wednesday blocked roads and burnt tires near the central bank in Beirut as the weakened local currency plummeted to a new low against the dollar. Since 2019, Lebanon has been in the throes of an economic crisis dubbed by the World Bank as one of the worst in recent global history, pushing much of the population into poverty.

Alaa Kharchib of the Depositors' Outcry Association that had organized the demonstration warned of an impending "social explosion". "No one trusts our corrupt officials or the central bank governor," Kharchib told AFP. Lebanese banks have imposed draconian restrictions on withdrawals since the country's economy collapsed three years ago, essentially cutting off people from their savings and prompting public anger.

Dozens of protesters gathered Wednesday near the central bank headquarters amid heavy deployment of security forces, AFP correspondents said.

Protesters chanted slogans lambasting long-time central bank governor Riad Salameh, one of several officials widely blame for Lebanon's economic demise, and burnt images of him.

Salameh is under an international investigation in

Europe on suspicions of financial misconduct including money laundering and embezzlement. Demonstrators held up posters calling Salameh "public enemy number one" and others saying: "We won't go hungry, we'll eat you," taking a jab at the country's ruling elite, the correspondents said.

The Lebanese pound, which had already lost more than 95 percent of its value since 2019, plunged to nearly 56,000 to the US dollar on the parallel market, dealers said. The main official exchange rate still pegs the pound at 1,507 to the greenback—its value before the crisis.

"People are tired, hopeless and migrating," said Kareem, a 38-year-old protester who only gave his first name. "All we want is a solution, a dollar will soon be worth 60,000 pounds yet nothing is being done," the telecoms employee told AFP.

As the local currency nosedived, fuel prices have soared, reaching about \$19 for 20 litres of petrol. Lebanon's economic woes have been exacerbated by mounting political troubles. The country has been effectively leaderless for months, without a president and ruled by a caretaker cabinet.

Lawmakers have failed to elect a president 11 times since Michel Aoun's mandate expired last year, and politicians have yet to agree on the makeup of a new government. Earlier this week, the judge investigating the deadly 2020 Beirut port blast resumed work after a 13-month hiatus, charging high-level officials. The surprise move has sparked controversy, with Lebanon's top judge rejecting judge Tarek Bitar's return to the politically-charged case. —AFP



BEIRUT: Dozens of protesters gather Wednesday near the central bank headquarters amid heavy deployment of security forces.

Canada central bank raises key interest rate to 4.5%

OTTAWA: Canada's central bank on Wednesday raised its key lending rate for the eighth time in less than a year, this time by 25 basis points to 4.5 percent, as it tries to tame inflation. This is the highest interest rate in the Group of Seven country since 2007 — at the start of 2022, it was at a record low of just 0.25 percent.

The bank "expects to hold the policy rate at its current level while it assesses the impact of the cumulative interest rate increases," it said in a

Iraqis protest at central bank over falling currency

BAGHDAD: Hundreds of Iraqis gathered on Wednesday in front of the central bank in Baghdad to protest after falls in the local currency against the US dollar. AFP journalists reported.

The official exchange rate is fixed by the government and remains unchanged at 1,470 dinars for one dollar, but since mid-November the value has fluctuated on unofficial markets. On Wednesday, the dinar was trading at 1,600 against the greenback, a fall that has fuelled anger among Iraqis whose purchasing power has declined sharply.

Tata Motors swings to profit on strong demand, better supply

MUMBAI: India's Tata Motors returned to profitability after seven quarters in the red, as easing semiconductor shortages and stabilizing commodity prices helped the automaker meet strong demand for its vehicles. The Mumbai-based parent company of Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) posted a profit of 29.6 billion rupees (\$362.5 million) in the December quarter, compared to a loss of 15.2 billion rupees in the same period last year.

Total revenue from operations rose 22.5 percent on-year to 884.9 billion rupees, thanks to improved production and strong demand across its passenger vehicle segments.

Jaguar Land Rover saw revenues rise 28.1 percent to £6.04 billion (\$7.4 billion) in the quarter, as supply bottlenecks eased and pricing improved. The British subsidiary posted a profit before tax of £265 million, compared to a £9 million loss in the same quarter last year. "JLR has returned to profit as chip shortages eased in the quarter and production and wholesales increased," interim chief executive officer Adrian Mardell said in a statement.

The company said sales to auto dealerships in China were hurt due to lockdowns followed by high staff absences as coronavirus restrictions were

relaxed, but were expected to normalise in the ongoing quarter. Pending orders at JLR, Britain's biggest carmaker, rose to a record high of 215,000 units at the end of December, as customers ordered 95,000 more units in the quarter.

The company said it will be launching a fully electric Jaguar model-built at its Solihull plant-in 2025, "heralding an exciting new era of electric car production in the UK". Revenues from Tata Motors' commercial vehicle business rose 22.5 percent on-year to 168.9 billion rupees, helped by improved infrastructure activity in India. But commercial vehicle exports remained weak on subdued demand in key overseas markets, the company said, pointing to "geopolitical situation, inflation and interest rate risks" on supply and demand. Demand for passenger vehicles remained strong, with revenues up 37.4 percent on-year to 116.7 billion rupees, and 138,900 retail sales, the highest in any quarter. Shares in Tata Motors closed 0.73 percent lower in Mumbai ahead of the earnings announcement. —AFP



Business

Adani stocks plummet in India on fraud, stock manipulation claims

Asia's richest man sees his net worth drop \$6 billion

MUMBAI: Asia's richest man Gautam Adani saw his net worth drop \$6 billion on Wednesday after a US investment firm accused him of "brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud".

Adani, 60, is the world's third-richest person, with an estimated fortune of around \$120 billion and interests ranging from Australian coal mines to India's busiest ports. But the magnate was the biggest loser on Forbes' real-time billionaires list on Wednesday, dropping nearly five percent-or \$6.4 billion-of his net worth overnight as investors rushed to sell shares in his group of companies.



Gautam Adani

Hindenburg Research published a report on Tuesday alleging that Adani Group "has engaged in a brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud scheme over the course of decades".

The firm said it had taken a short position in Adani

Group companies after a two-year investigation based on interviews with former executives, site visits in multiple countries and document reviews.

Its report claims that Adani's elder brother Vinod "manages a vast labyrinth of offshore shell entities" in tax havens including Mauritius, Cyprus and several Caribbean islands. Hindenburg said it had identified numerous instances of undisclosed related-party transactions and earnings manipulation "to maintain the appearance of financial health and solvency" of listed Adani companies.

The allegations come ahead of an ambitious \$2.5 billion follow-on public offer-India's biggest-ever-due to open for bids on Friday and aimed at bolstering the business empire's balance sheet. "The report is a malicious combination of selective misinformation and stale, baseless and discredited allegations," Adani Group chief financial officer Jugeshinder Singh said in a statement.

Singh added that the report had been deliberately timed to undermine the conglomerate's reputation "with the principal objective of damaging the upcoming follow-on public offering".

'Afraid to speak out'

Adani Group is India's second-largest conglomerate, with the combined market capitalisation of its seven listed companies exceeding \$218 billion. Shares in Adani business units have soared up to 2,000 percent in the past three years, adding more than \$100 billion to its founder's net worth and



MUMBAI: A man wearing a helmet passes by an advertisement board of Adani Realty in Mumbai.

vaulting him up the ranks of the world's richest people. Critics of the billionaire attribute his meteoric rise to a close association with Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi and support for his policies.

Hindenburg's report said there had been a pattern of "government leniency towards the group" stretching back decades. "We believe the Adani Group has been

able to operate a large, flagrant fraud in broad daylight in large part because investors, journalists, citizens and even politicians have been afraid to speak out for fear of reprisal," the report said. Shares in flagship Adani Enterprises fell as much as three percent on Wednesday, before recovering to trade 1.41 percent lower in the afternoon. Other business units fell as much as 6.5 percent over the day's trade. — AFP

3M to cut 2,500 jobs as it girds for tougher economy

WASHINGTON: 3M announced Tuesday it will cut 2,500 manufacturing jobs as the industrial giant reported lower profits and offered a lackluster 2023 outlook based on weakening demand. The move comes as 3M, which operates in several sectors including health care, transportation and electronics, contends with a drop in pandemic-related sales of face masks or "respirators," and "rapid declines" in consumer-facing businesses.

The company also expects very low US growth in 2023 of about one percent, under the global average of 1.5 percent, Chief Executive Mike Roman said on a conference call with analysts. "We expect macroeconomic challenges to persist in 2023," Roman added in an earnings press release.

"Based on what we see in our end markets, we will reduce approximately 2,500 global manufacturing roles—a necessary decision to align with adjusted production volumes," he said. A company spokesperson said there were no additional details on where the jobs are located, or in which sectors.

Net profit in the fourth quarter was \$541 million compared with \$1.4 billion in the year-ago period, while revenues fell 6.2 percent to \$8.1 billion. The latest quarter included a drop of \$165 million in face



ST PAUL, US: This file photo shows the 3M corporate headquarters building in St. Paul, Minnesota. — AFP

mask sales from the same period a year ago, as the measures taken against Covid-19 shifted. The company's results were also dented by its exit from Russia.

Executives described mixed conditions across their markets, with automotive electrification remaining a strong source of demand, but consumer electronics falling hard due to weak demand for televisions, tablets and smartphones. The company projected a drop of two percent to six percent in revenues this year, and lower profits per share compared with last year. Shares of 3M tumbled 5.5 percent to \$115.88 in early-afternoon trading. — AFP

German economy to avoid recession in 2023: Berlin

BERLIN: Germany is set to narrowly escape a recession this year, the government said Wednesday, as Europe's biggest economy weathers the fallout from the Ukraine war better than expected. Industrial powerhouse Germany is forecast to eke out growth of 0.2 percent in 2023, the economy ministry said in its latest projections.

Back in October, when fears were running high about soaring energy costs in the wake of Russia's war in Ukraine, Berlin was bracing for a contraction of 0.4 percent in 2023. "The government has fended off the economic crisis," Chancellor Olaf Scholz told lawmakers in Berlin.

"We have shown what we are capable of." Massive government intervention has helped keep the lid on energy costs for households and businesses after Russia cut deliveries of natural gas last year.

As well as criss-crossing the globe to find alternative suppliers, the German government has unveiled a 200-billion-euro (\$212-billion) support package to cushion the energy crisis, including a cap on electricity and gas prices. Mild winter weather and falling wholesale gas prices recently have further bolstered confidence that the expected downturn will not be as painful as initially thought.

"The German economy as a whole has proved resilient," the ministry said in its annual report. "Consumers have also done their part by making major energy savings."

Headwinds

The German economy already defied predictions by dodging a contraction in the final quarter of 2022, official data showed last week. Over the whole of 2022 output expanded by 1.9 percent, the data showed, better than analysts had predicted.



Lower energy prices have also helped bring down inflation from a peak of 10.4 percent in October, and the economy ministry expects the trend to continue. For 2023, consumer price growth is now tipped to reach six percent, down from an earlier estimate of seven percent.

But Europe's top economy is not out of the woods yet, analysts said. "Not falling off the cliff is one thing, staging a strong rebound, however, is a different matter," ING bank economist Carsten Brzeski said. On the bright side, he said, Germany's export-oriented economy will likely benefit from China's relaxation of COVID curbs, while lower inflation could boost consumer spending at home.

But industrial production remains below pre-pandemic levels, and uncertainty lingers about energy security during the winter of 2023-2024. Households and companies also have yet to feel the full impact of higher borrowing costs resulting from the European Central Bank's interest rate rises as it moves to cool inflation, Brzeski said. In the years ahead, Germany will also have to find ways to confront a major shortage of skilled workers—the country currently has two million vacancies and counting. The ministry acknowledged in its report that many "uncertainties" hung over the German economy, including the ongoing fallout from the war in Ukraine. — AFP



CAPE TOWN: A man and a woman threaten and shout at each other as protesters, mostly in the colors of the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA), march through the city past the offices of the ruling ANC, during a protest against prolonged energy crisis that has seen South Africans experience record power cuts, in Cape Town on January 25, 2023. — AFP

Thousands protest South Africa's energy crisis

CAPE TOWN: Several thousands of people took to the streets in South Africa on Wednesday to protest a prolonged energy crisis that has resulted in crippling power cuts for the continent's most industrialized economy. Protests took place at various locations nationwide, including the financial hub Johannesburg and the seat of Parliament, Cape Town.

In Johannesburg, an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 demonstrators marched on the headquarters of the African National Congress (ANC) party, which has been in power for almost three decades and is blamed by opposition parties for the crisis. The protesters were mostly dressed in blue, the color of the Democratic Alliance, the largest opposition group, which organized the rallies. Some held signs reading "Enough is enough", "Power to the people" and "Load shedding is killing jobs"—a reference to scheduled power cuts for some clients or areas to reduce strain on the electricity grid.

"We have to charge our phones at certain times. We have to cook at certain times. We shouldn't have to live this way in South Africa," Marino Hughes, a 22-year-old student, told AFP. The scheduled blackouts have burdened Africa's most advanced economy for years, with

the network operated by the debt-laden state energy firm Eskom failing to keep pace with demand as it struggles to maintain its ageing coal-powered infrastructure.

But the outages have reached new extremes over the past 12 months, with power often being cut several times a day for around 12 hours in total. "We are close to the breaking point, and communities across the country have run out of patience," DA leader John Steenhuisen told the protesters, describing the ANC headquarters as the "ground zero of our electricity crisis". A strong police presence prevented protesters from reaching the ANC building, where a few hundred party supporters had gathered for a counter-demonstration. Waving black, green and yellow ANC flags, some cracked traditional animal skin whips called "sjamboks" while others held signs reading "This is ANC offices not Eskom".

"The ANC is committed to fix the electricity crisis and things are being done. It will take time but ultimately the problem will be solved," said ANC lawmaker Collen Tlologolo Malatji, 29.

In Cape Town, around 1,500 protesters marched past a few hundred ANC supporters. "The government must take its head out of the sand and actually deal with the energy crisis," Cape Town's mayor, Geordin Hill-Lewis of the DA, told AFP. The outages cost the country up to hundreds of millions of dollars in lost output daily from the disruptions to commerce and industry, according to the opposition estimates. A 40-year-old poultry entrepreneur, Lloyd Peltier, said he had been forced to shutter four shops and lay off 20 workers. — AFP

Microsoft quarterly results saved by cloud computing

WASHINGTON: Microsoft on Tuesday said sales slowed and profits slumped in the last quarter of 2022 as a darkening economic outlook pushed it to lay off 10,000 workers. The Washington state-based tech giant-owner of LinkedIn, Xbox and Windows—said overall sales rose just two percent in the October-to-December period, to \$52.7 billion, the slowest rise in six years. Net profit landed at \$16.4 billion for the quarter, down 12 percent year-on-year, according to its earnings release. The results however met, or in some segments exceeded, expectations and Microsoft's share price was up by more than four percent in late trading after the results were announced.

Microsoft chief executive Satya Nadella last week said he was laying off about five percent of the company's workforce, just days before pumping several billion dollars into OpenAI, the company behind the controversial chatbot ChatGPT. The job cuts matched similar cuts at other tech giants as companies reversed a major hiring spree during the pandemic when demand for tech products exploded.

Nadella has said that ChatGPT, and other artificial intelligence breakthroughs by the OpenAI research company, would be integrated into Microsoft products that include the Windows operating system, Office and the Bing search engine. Microsoft is also trying to overcome major regulatory hurdles to complete its buyout of video gaming giant Activision Blizzard for \$68.7 billion. US and EU regulators are highly skeptical of the purchase and allege it would give an unfair advantage to Microsoft's Xbox console over rivals like Sony's PlayStation. The group's quarterly results were eagerly awaited by the market for the closer they offer at cloud computing, which is Microsoft's biggest business and a bellwether for the larger economy. — AFP

Democratic 'backsliding' slows development in Africa: Study

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast: Africa's progress in human and economic development has slowed against a backdrop of "widespread democratic backsliding" and worsening security in the last three years, an African foundation said Wednesday. The Mo Ibrahim Foundation said there had been "marginal improvement" in good governance across Africa since 2012 but the trend had "flatlined" since 2019.

"Improvements in human development and economic foundations are undermined by an increasingly perilous security situation and widespread democratic backsliding," according to the 2022 Ibrahim Index of African Governance. Tendencies have been reinforced by the struggle with external challenges such as the Covid pandemic and the climate crisis, it said.

"Governments have been increasingly prone to infringe on rights, curb freedom of expression and association, and impose restrictions on civic space," it said. It said the trend "rapidly accelerated" when elections were cancelled in many places and governments used COVID as "an excuse to clamp down on dissent." But the index said that more than 90 percent of the continent now live in a country where human development—health, education, social protection and other criteria—is higher than in 2012.

The five countries that performed best in good governance were Mauritius, Seychelles, Tunisia, Cape Verde and Botswana. South Sudan was in last place behind Somalia and Eritrea. It also said The Gambia, the Seychelles and some other countries were "bucking the continental trend," and cited broad improvement in the lot of women. — AFP

Business

Abu Dhabi to host prestigious Fortune Global Forum 2023

ADDED brings global platform for first time to MENA region

ABU DHABI: The Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development (ADDED) announced that the UAE's Capital will host the 2023 Fortune Global Forum from 27 to 29 November, for the first time in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

Forging ahead with efforts to bolster the Emirate's status as a leading business, economic, and cultural hub, Abu Dhabi is attracting world-class economic events and conferences including the 13th edition of the World Trade Organization's Ministerial Conference, UNCTAD's World Investment Forum, the Annual Investment Meeting, and the World Islamic Economic Forum in 2023 and 2024.

The Fortune Global Forum Abu Dhabi 2023 will serve as a valuable opportunity for CEOs of the world's biggest multinational companies, decision makers, and economists from around the globe to engage with their peers in the UAE and wider region. As geopolitical, economic, scientific, and technological developments rapidly reshape the global economy, the Fortune Global Forum, under the theme 'A New Era for Business', will address global agendas currently including market and trade dynamics, geopolitical tides, emerging technologies, talent in addition to workplace shifts, climate risk, and consumer trends.

To keep pace with new trends on a global level and deepen economic diversification, Abu Dhabi is focusing on knowledge-based, innovation-driven economic sectors by investing in clusters with high-growth potential including AgriTech, FinTech, Healthcare and Biopharma, Energy, Tourism, and ICT. The Emirate offers a vibrant, globally competitive, and entrepreneurial ecosystem to generate opportunities for all, enabling businesses and individuals to reach their full potential.

Rashed Abdulkarim Al-Blooshi, Undersecretary of ADDED, said: "Bringing the Fortune Global Forum to Abu Dhabi forms a critical part of our

strategic economic progression roadmap, especially as we roll out our contribution to the international business development and ESG agendas alongside other global cities and enterprises, building synergies and improving life for all stakeholders. November's discussions and analyses by the C-suites, economists, reporters and think tanks in Abu Dhabi will serve to identify mutually beneficial economic opportunities, with sustainability and the notion of stakeholder capitalism at its core.

Al-Blooshi further explains, "In an era characterized by multiple forces influencing all aspects of life, it is imperative that we keep mobilizing towards a viable economic and social goal, raising ambitions, and increasing the pace of implementation. Our mandate and objectives when representing Abu Dhabi and the UAE on the global centerstage, are to collaborate closely with everyone, complementing one another and improving coherence, thus creating greater and more impactful and self-sustaining economic models."

As part of preparations and agenda development leading up to Fortune Global Forum in Abu Dhabi 2023, Fortune will organize two events in key financial centers during the year.

Saoud Abdulaziz Al-Hosani, Undersecretary of the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi, said: "Abu Dhabi's progressive track record in hosting global business events of this caliber is testament to our proven capability, best-in-class infrastructure and year-round attractiveness of our destination. In these rapidly changing times for global business, we look forward to welcoming visionaries from government, the private sector and the media to take business dialogue to the next level while experiencing authentic Emirati hospitality in Abu Dhabi." Alan Murray, Fortune CEO, said "Abu Dhabi's growing role as a business, economic and cultural hub make it an ideal location for the 2023 Fortune Global Forum. The world is on the



ABU DHABI: (From left) Saoud Abdulaziz Al-Hosani with Alan Murray and Rashed Abdulkarim Al-Blooshi.

cus of a new era of globalization, requiring Fortune 500 companies to rethink their global footprints".

"Abu Dhabi's location, climate, culture, infrastructure and other assets make it a top contender for business operations, and I'm confident the leaders of the world's greatest companies will welcome the opportunity to assemble here in November," Murray added. Launched in 1995, the Fortune Global Forum has established itself as a prime global platform for leaders, chairpersons, presidents, and CEOs of the world's largest companies, including the Fortune Global 500TM, to discuss

trends and factors shaping the global economy and explore cooperation and mutual investments.

Participants in previous Fortune Global Forums have included heads of state including former US Presidents Bill Clinton and George H W Bush, and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau; and company chairmen and CEOs Jamie Dimon of J P Morgan Chase, Ginni Rometty of IBM, Robert Iger of The Walt Disney Company, Alex Gorsky of Johnson & Johnson, Ajay Banga of Mastercard Inc., Ma Yun of Alibaba, Frederick W Smith of FedEx, Kai-Fu Lee of Sinovation Ventures, and Carlos Brito of Anheuser-Busch.

Norway to offer record number of Arctic oil, gas blocks

OSLO: Norway on Tuesday said it plans to offer a record number of gas and oil exploration blocks in the Arctic, with environmental NGOs condemning an "aggressive" promotion of fossil fuels. The Scandinavian nation-Europe's primary natural gas supplier and a major oil producer-proposed 92 exploration blocks, including an unprecedented 78 in the Barents Sea in the far north.

The other 14 are in the Norwegian Sea near the Arctic Circle. "New discoveries remain necessary to continue to develop the Norwegian plateau" and are important for Europe, Oil and Energy Minister Terje Aasland said in a statement.

The announcement is part of the annual granting of oil licenses in so-called "mature" zones that have already been widely explored. The centre-left government, lacking a parliamentary majority, reached an agreement with the Socialist Left party last year to forbid prospecting in unexplored areas by 2025.

The government's propositions sparked outrage among environmental organizations. Truls Gulowsen, head of the Norwegian branch of Friends of the Earth, condemned an "extremely aggressive" cycle of concessions presented as the United Nations and the International Energy Agency discourage further oil exploration to achieve climate goals.

The NGO said the proposal would violate the commitment not to explore virgin territory as some blocks were to be located far from existing infrastructure. The right-wing opposition, a fervent defender of Norway's oil sector, said the move was a "tactical game" by the government to give itself bargaining chips to use in future negotiations with the Socialist Left.

Oil industry body Offshore Norge welcomed the fact that "attractive areas" would be opened to prospecting. The proposals will go to a public consultation. Oil companies must submit their applications later this year and licenses will be granted in January 2024. The Barents Sea has long been seen as a productive area for the energy sector, but oil and gas extraction is so far only taking place at two sites in Norwegian waters. —AFP

Yellen urges 'urgent' steps to ensure Africa's food security

LUSAKA: US Treasury chief Janet Yellen on Tuesday called for urgent and climate-resilient steps to boost food security in Africa in the wake of a changing climate as she toured Zambia. Wrapping up her two-day visit to the southern African nation, Yellen said the climate change-fuelled severity and frequency of storms, floods and droughts have hurt agricultural yields on the continent.

"We must take urgent action to adapt agricultural practices and technology to the changing climate," she said during a tour of a project that assists small-scale farmers better manage

DHAMAN wins best emerging healthcare unit award 2022

KUWAIT: Health Assurance Hospitals Company (DHAMAN) earning the award of Best Emerging Healthcare Unit on Public Private Partnership at the Annual Business Tabloid Awards 2022 in recognition of the role the company will play in supporting Kuwait's health sector.

This came during a recent ceremony in Dubai attended by a number of winning companies in various sectors, including Al-Rajhi Bank, Bahrain International Airport, Almarai Company, National Bank of Egypt, DAMAC Properties, Etihad Airways Group and other companies.

DHAMAN expressed appreciation for the award that valued the idea of establishing the Company and the services it would provide to Kuwait's healthcare sector through a health model applied for the first time in the Middle East region being the system of Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) and in cooperation with a globally recognized operator that possesses the expertise in managing such health networks.

DHAMAN is considered the largest project within the development plan with capital amounting to KD 230 million, and the first initiative to support

IMF chief confident Zambia debt deal is within reach

LUSAKA: IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva said on Tuesday she was "confident" an agreement to restructure Zambia's debt was within reach after engaging with China and other creditors. Georgieva, who was in the debt-ridden southern African nation this week, said a deal was in everyone's interest as otherwise Zambia was not in a position to start paying what it owed.

"I am confident that the creditors will reach agreement," the International Monetary Fund head told a press conference in Lusaka. "It is clear from my visit that Zambia is doing its part, so I strongly encourage creditors to move forward."

As the Covid-19 pandemic battered Africa in 2020, Zambia became the first country on the

impacts of changing weather patterns.

The project, situated some 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the capital Lusaka, is bankrolled by the Green Climate Fund, which has received \$1 billion from the US government. She said the United States was giving priority to "innovative projects" including supplying farmers with seeds that are more resilient to droughts, heat and extreme conditions.

Yellen slammed Russia's "unprovoked war of aggression against its neighbor (which) has hurt Africa by exacerbating existing food insecurity and creating an unnecessary drag on the continent's economy".

Yellen, who has been to Senegal, was due to travel to South Africa for the next leg of her African tour, just days after Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov visited Pretoria. —AFP

Kuwait's health sector in partnership between public and private sectors, which is considered one of the biggest sectors in consuming the national budget.

One of the objectives of the development plan is to reduce the national budget in general and to enable the private sector to contribute to providing services, including healthcare services. The provision to provide healthcare to more than 1.8 million residents working in the private sector and their families would alleviate the public health network for the benefit of citizens and residents alike.

The recognition comes as DHAMAN continues its preparedness to operate its health network by completing all the necessary requirements of licenses and agreements relating to the Ministry of Health and other official bodies.

DHAMAN added, "This award represents additional encouragement to continue working and complete all the steps required, as we are keen to provide the best quality healthcare through our network, which includes a number of hospitals and primary health care centers, in addition to providing screening services for expatriate workers inside and outside Kuwait."

DHAMAN has completed two hospitals in governorates of Ahmadi and Jahra with a capacity of 660 beds, as well as having throughout governorates a total of five primary healthcare centers that are operating as private centers that receive all seekers of healthcare in preparation of launching DHAMAN network and receive the segment of beneficiaries.

continent to default on its foreign debt-estimated at \$17.3 billion. It has sought help through a G20 mechanism, but implementation has been slow, with the United States accusing China—the main creditor to many African nations—of dragging its feet. US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, who was also visiting the country this week, said on Monday restructuring Zambia's debt was a "top priority".

Since the 2021 election of businessman-turned politician President Hakainde Hichilema, the country has made progress in restoring relations with donors. Last year, the IMF approved a \$1.3 billion loan to help Zambia restore fiscal stability. Georgieva said the IMF was impressed with the improvements Zambia was making in the use of public resources, saying as a result of prudent expenditure, the copper-rich nation was "redirecting" its funds "to much-needed spending on education and health".

"Zambia is making tremendous progress on reforms, at what is a particularly challenging time for the world economy" Georgieva said. —AFP



Evaluation for the Business Tabloid Awards is conducted by an awards committee consisting of the publisher, research team and the editorial team, whereby Business Tabloid recognizes companies according to merits and the expertise each company holds in its industry. Nominations are evaluated based on various elements, such as innovation, accomplishments, and the contribution of each organization.



LUSAKA: Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva (center), arrives to meet with Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema (not seen) at the State House in Lusaka. —AFP



LUSAKA: United States Secretary of Treasury Janet Yellen (center) is welcomed by Zambian president Hakainde Hichilema (right) during her visit to Zambia at the State House in Lusaka. —AFP

'You can do anything': Saudi model talks career, dreams

By Faten Omar

Kuwait's wealthy and growing fashion industry continues to attract new aspirants from inside and outside the country. Kuwait Times spoke with Saudi fashion model Faisal, known as Flame, during his recent visit to Kuwait, to learn more about the industry.

The 33-year-old is a fashion model and a kickboxer with Al-Shoulla, a Saudi Arabian professional boxing club. Faisal visited Kuwait in 2010, where he became interested in the latest fashion displayed in Kuwaiti stores. His frequent visits to

fashion. "Kuwait is dear to my heart. I consider it as family and that is why I often come here. I have high hopes for Kuwait to develop and improve at all levels. It has a lot of potential," he said.

Faisal revealed that being in the fashion industry is not easy, as models are bullied all the time for their appearance. "The bullying will always be there. The best advice is to be confident of yourself and do the right thing and what you are comfortable with. God will later grant you success," he pointed out.

The Saudi model revealed to Kuwait Times that his dream is to be involved in

my family." Faisal believes modeling is a long-term job. "The modeling profession is not a short-term career. If you take care of your appearance and body, you can survive in this industry for a long period of time. I also help young people to get into the fashion industry to be as famous and successful as me," he said.

When asked for advice about how to benefit on a professional level, Faisal quoted Denzel Washington: "To get something you never had, you have to do something you never did." He advises young models to dream big, because human capabilities have no limits. "You can do anything. If you put something in your head, you will do it and reach your goals and dreams. Work hard on yourself and strive, and it will happen, because this is the rule of life - work more to gain more," he added.



Saudi Model Faisal has represented global fashion brands such as Farfetch and New Balance. He was photographed during his visit to Kuwait Times.

— Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait since then to buy clothes and explore the latest fashion trends helped his passion grow, eventually turning into a career.

"In 2014, I began to develop a deeper interest in global fashion trends and international brands while following updated fashion news, and still do," he said. Faisal added that Kuwait was the reason behind his love of mixing streetwear, a style of casual clothing that became popular globally in the 1990s, and classic

streetwear runways. "I love streetwear fashion. I have been representing Farfetch since 2018. Also been a model for New Balance, Tommy Hilffiger, Boss Fragrances, Le Labo Fragrances, and soon with the global brand KENZO, in addition to Saudi and Kuwaiti brands," Faisal said.

Regarding the biggest sacrifice Faisal made to get to where he is today, he said: "I think the hardest part is having to travel continuously. I hate to be far from



The 33-year-old model became interested in fashion during a visit to Kuwait in 2010, and has since enjoyed exploring the latest fashion trends displayed in Kuwaiti stores.



Fashion designer Alaa Adel, 33, counts herself among a limited number of female entrepreneurs in a country where most women don't work outside the home.— AFP photos

Small businesses, big dreams: Iraq's women entrepreneurs

The sewing machines and fabric that surround Alaa Adel at her "Iraqcuture" studio in Baghdad are testament to her success in deeply patriarchal Iraq. Adel, 33, counts herself among a limited number of female entrepreneurs in a country where most women don't work outside the home.

"We have a social tradition that prevents many women from working," Adel said at her studio in Baghdad's Karrada commercial district. Even for those who do, "it is not always that easy," she added. The International Organization for Migration said in an October report that "prevailing customs and traditions... limit women's activities to their domestic and nurturing role".

Adel said such prejudices, as well as practical difficulties, posed a challenge to fulfilling her dream. A graduate of the University of Baghdad who specialized in fashion and design, Adel wanted to create her own fashion house. "I went to see the patrons of organizations that support art and culture. But my idea was systematically rejected because I had no experience in the conception of projects," she said. Thanks to an Iraqi foundation, The Station, and its "Raidat" (Female Entrepreneurs) program financed by the French embassy in Baghdad, Adel got training which, she said, gave her the confidence to start her own business.

Obstacles

Iraq's private sector is still embryonic, making more tedious and lengthier the steps to set up a company. The country, which is trying to move past four decades of war and unrest, is also plagued by



Shumoos Ghanem, entrepreneur and founder of the "Iraqi Women in Business" initiative, addresses participants during a workshop in Iraq's capital Baghdad, on January 10, 2023.

endemic corruption, widespread unemployment and a poverty rate of around 30 percent. Almost 38 percent of people with jobs work in Iraq's public sector—one of the highest rates in the world, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Adel eventually secured a loan from a private bank, and created her "Alaa Adel" brand last summer. At the beginning, she had to deal with sexism from some fabric suppliers who were reluctant to do business with a woman, she said. Then there was a lack of public childcare facilities, in a country where tradition says children should be taken care of at home-by the mother-until they go to school. Adel got help from family members who look after her two boys, aged nine and four, while she is at work.

'Complicated'

Iraq has 13 million employment-aged women "yet only around one million are working", said ILO country coordinator

Maha Kattaa, presenting a report in July last year. The female labor force participation rate "was particularly low" at 10.6 percent, the ILO report said, compared with 68 percent for men. In contrast, neighboring Saudi Arabia—until a few years ago one of the world's most restrictive countries for women—had a female workforce participation rate of 35.6 percent in the second quarter of 2022. Most of Iraq's working women are teachers or nurses. A rare few are members of the police or armed forces.

For Shumoos Ghanem, men "dominate numerous sectors whereas women are relegated to the margins". The 34-year-old is the owner of a dietary food business and founder of the Iraqi Women in Business initiative, which provides professional guidance to women online. She is also a mother to a 14-month-old son. Ghanem says most of those she advises are mothers who have been out of the workforce and "wonder if society will accept them" again as working women. Over the past five or six years, Iraqi women have had increased opportunities, she said, but the space for them "to develop is very limited still".

"Some regions are more traditional than others," she added, which further restricts women's chances to have "careers or to open projects". Surrounded by men, Ghanem said she herself experienced sexism and was worried about harassment. "When I went to see suppliers for the first time, I really saw how complicated it was," she recalled. Now she works from home, but she too has a dream—to have her own health-conscious restaurant where she can help bolster the ranks of female Iraqi businesswomen. "I want to make it a place to support women who want to work in this sector," she said. — AFP



Alaa Adel, an Iraqi fashion designer, poses for a picture at her "Iraqcuture" studio in the capital Baghdad, on January 11, 2023.

DIOR CELEBRATES JOSEPHINE BAKER AND THE ROARING TWENTIES

From cabaret feathers to sleek suits and velvet robes, Dior celebrated Josephine Baker and the wild freedom of the Roaring Twenties in a celebratory show on Monday to kickstart haute couture week in Paris. A parade of stars was in the front row, including Anya Taylor-Joy, Kirsten Dunst, Rosamund Pike and K-Pop's Jisoo, to see Chiuri's homage to the American icon who made Paris her home and recently became the first woman of color to gain a place in the Pantheon, where French greats are buried.

Singer, dancer, activist and member of the French Resistance, "Baker was a great artist... who used her clothes to establish herself and her position," Maria Grazia Chiuri, head designer for Dior womenswear, told AFP ahead of the show. Baker was a client and muse of Christian Dior himself—her athletic body and short hair representing a different femininity from the slim-waisted figure of his iconic "New Look" of the 1930s with its famous bar jacket and corolla skirt.

Baker came to Paris in 1925 to perform in the Revue Negre at the Champs-Elysees Theatre where she was expected to play up to the racial stereotypes of the day. But rapid success freed her to radically change her look, becoming an Art Deco style icon and later embracing modern suits. Chiuri's collection paid tribute to each of her manifestations, with feathers and silver fringes evoking her cabaret day, through the flowing sleek suits of her later style, and the more masculine suits evoking her swinging sexuality.

Baker fled France during World War II after the Nazis became (rightly) suspicious



that she was helping the resistance, but she returned to Paris after its liberation and dressed in a military uniform to help the rebuilding effort. "The images of her in uniform are extraordinary. She had an incredible awareness of what she could do with her notoriety, how to put it to the benefit of other women," said Chiuri. The collection also took inspiration from one of Baker's contemporaries, and another friend of Dior, actor Marlene Dietrich. Together, they "represent young women far ahead of their time," said Chiuri. The Roaring Twenties was "a particular historical moment," she added. "Especially in Paris where women had a great deal of freedom, silhouettes were simplified, corsets disappeared. Their way of dressing was comfortable while remaining feminine and very glamorous." — AFP



A model presents a creation for Christian Dior during the Haute-Couture Spring-Summer 2023 Fashion Week in Paris on January 23, 2023.

Lifestyle | Features

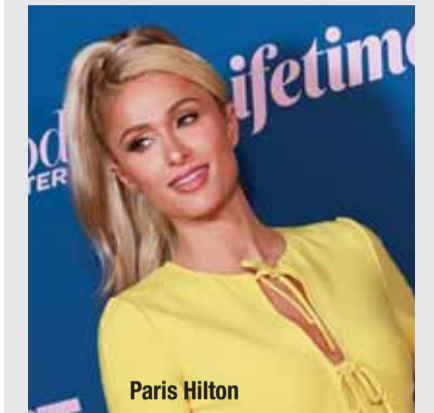


Actors perform in a production of William Shakespeare's Hamlet, in the Yemeni government-controlled southern city of Aden, on January 8, 2023. — AFP photos



Paris Hilton gives birth to first child

Media personality and hotel heiress Paris Hilton announced Tuesday that she and husband Carter Reum had welcomed their first child. Hilton posted a photo on Instagram of what appeared to be her newborn baby grasping her thumb. "You are already loved beyond words," Hilton wrote with a blue heart emoji.



Paris Hilton

US entertainment media reported that the baby boy had been born via surrogate. The former reality TV star, 41, had opened up in an interview last month about beginning an IVF process during the pandemic with her husband, an investor whom she married in 2021. She told People Magazine that "because the world was shut down" early in the COVID-19 pandemic, it was the "perfect timing" to "get all of the eggs stocked and ready." In a statement published Tuesday by People, Hilton said that her family's "hearts are exploding with love for our baby boy." — AFP

Shakespeare in Yemen: Tragedy offers respite from war

"To be, or not to be": on a stage in Yemen, William Shakespeare's "Hamlet" rings out in Arabic, a tragedy that resonates with an audience suffering from years of civil war. In the government-controlled city of Aden, battered by the conflict, the first performance of a Shakespeare play in many years has resurrected hopes of a cultural revival. "We are hungry for these kinds of events," said Heba al-Bakri, watching one of the 10 sold-out shows. "Our people are always distressed and exhausted, so we need this kind of entertainment."

As the actors took their bows, applause roared out and the audience rose for a standing ovation. The savage bloodshed, murder, revenge, power struggles and moral dilemmas told in the famous tragedy by the English playwright were written over 400 years ago-but on stage in Yemen today, the play holds power. Yemen, the poorest country on the Arabian Peninsula, has been at war since 2014 when Iran-backed Houthi rebels seized the capital Sanaa, prompting a Saudi-led coalition to intervene the following year. The country has been left in ruins, hundreds of thousands of people have died, and many more have been pushed to the brink of famine.

'Dream realized'

Director Amr Gamal, founder of the Khaleej Aden Theatre Troupe, feared there



might have been only "limited interest", but is now planning a second round of shows after its success. The three-hour performance has gripped the audience. "They do not leave the room before the play ends", said Gamal, who also directed the feature film "Ten Days Before the Wedding", a love story which Yemen named as their official submission to the 2018 Oscars.

Yemen, renowned for its rich cultural heritage, has a long history of performing Shakespeare in Arabic dating back over a century. In this version, "Hamlet" was translated first into classical Arabic and then into Aden's dialect to provide it with a unique Yemeni twist. Including characters

and the Volcano Theatre in Wales. The British Council said the "Hamlet" production showed its commitment to "building the capacity of young Yemenis to creatively express themselves".

'Sow love and peace'

But putting on the play posed not only logistical challenges. Nour Zaker, who plays the tragic character of Ophelia, said she had to both learn a challenging role on stage and overcome social taboos against female actors in the conservative country. "I faced many difficulties as a woman in Aden," she said. "My family did not object, but it was difficult because... society does not easily accept these things."

But her audience—which included women wearing the face-covering niqab veil, common in Yemen—were receptive. For those watching and those on stage, the hope is "Hamlet" may help start a wider revival. "As artists, we always have the hope that there will be great cultural productions, theatrical or cinematographic, which highlight Yemeni culture," said actor Omar Majalad, who plays Hamlet's friend Guildenstern. "We hope that there will be more attention given to art and music," said university student Fadi Abdulmalik, after watching a performance. "This will sow love and peace in Yemen." — AFP

Justin Bieber sells music rights for \$200m

Pop juggernaut Justin Bieber has sold his music publishing and recording catalog shares to the Blackstone-backed Hipgnosis Songs Capital for \$200 million, the company said Tuesday—marking the industry's latest blockbuster rights deal. The sale has been rumored for weeks, and sees the 28-year-old join a who's who of artists who have cashed out recently on their catalogs.



Justin Bieber

Hipgnosis did not publicly disclose terms of the deal, but a source close to the matter told AFP it was worth around \$200 million. Contemporary stars including Justin Timberlake and Shakira have sold large stakes in their work—both also struck deals with Hipgnosis—but the move has mostly been seen among legacy artists like Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen. The staggering sums—Springsteen's catalog went to Sony for a reported half billion dollars—are considered safe bets both for older artists getting their finances in order and investors who can count on consistent returns from time-tested music and the viability of streaming.

Younger catalogs are seen as riskier territory, but Bieber is among the best-selling artists ever, and now Hipgnosis has his share in some of the 21st century's biggest hits including "Baby" and "Sorry." Hipgnosis Songs Capital is a \$1 billion venture between financial giant Blackstone and the British Hipgnosis Song Management. Hipgnosis said they acquired Bieber's interest in his publishing copyrights to his 290-song back catalog—all of his music released prior to December 31, 2021. Bieber's longtime home Universal will continue to administer the catalog, another source close to the deal said, and still owns the artist's master recordings. Hipgnosis has acquired the artist's stake in his masters as well as his neighboring

rights—a royalty that sees its owner receive a payment every time a song is played publicly.

'Remarkable'

After the Canada native was discovered on YouTube as a teen, Bieber skyrocketed to global fame, selling more than 150 million records. He has charted eight number-one records on Billboard's top albums list, and his songs have streamed on Spotify alone more than 32 billion times. "The impact of Justin Bieber on global culture over the last 14 years has truly been remarkable," said Hipgnosis chief Merck Mercuriadis, a longtime music industry executive, in a statement.

"At only 28 years of age, he is one of a handful of defining artists of the streaming era that has revitalized the entire music industry, taking a loyal and worldwide audience with him on a journey from teen phenomenon to culturally important artist." Bieber's health has suffered recently, with the star going on an indefinite touring hiatus after he revealed he'd been diagnosed with Ramsay Hunt Syndrome, a rare complication of shingles that for him caused partial facial paralysis.

Lucrative asset class

Music catalogs have always changed hands, but the current publishing sales boom had escalated rapidly, with financial markets increasingly drawn to lucrative music portfolios as an asset class. Mercuriadis' Hipgnosis, which went public on the London Stock Exchange in 2018, has played a large part in publicizing the spike in sales. The sector had seemed to cool recently, but the Bieber deal shows investors are still hungry for music acquisitions.

Owners of a song's publishing rights receive a cut in various scenarios, including radio play and streaming, album sales, and use in advertising and movies. Recording rights govern reproduction and distribution. The flurry of sales came amid a wider conversation over artists' ownership of the work, amplified in large part by Taylor Swift, who has found resounding success as she re-records her first six albums so she can control their master recording rights. That move stemmed from Swift's very public feud with Scooter Braun, the music manager whose company once owned her original masters, and later sold them to the investment firm Shamrock Holdings. Braun has been Bieber's manager for 15 years, and in a statement said "when Justin made the decision to make a catalogue deal, we quickly found the best partner to preserve and grow this amazing legacy was Merck and Hipgnosis." — AFP

wearing traditional Yemeni dress, it has turned a centuries-old tale into a platform to reflect on the troubled times in the country today.

"It is an old dream realized after years of work", said assistant director Marwan Mafrag, noting the "lack of resources" in Yemen had led to a "very tight space" for artistic production. Backed by the British Council, a cultural and educational organization, the play is being performed in a former government building dating to when the southern port city was a British colony. For the past two years, the cast in Aden received support via video-link from Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London



(L-R) Roger Ross Williams, Nikole Hannah-Jones, and Shoshana Guy attend the 2023 Spotlight Initiative Awards Dinner Gala hosted by Tim Daly in Park City, Utah on January 21, 2023. Hannah-Jones won a Pulitzer Prize for her work producing the original "The 1619 Project". — AFP

Oprah to produce 'The 1619 Project' docuseries

"The 1619 Project," which began as a New York Times essay series about the impact of slavery on United States history and became a lightning rod for intense political divisions, will launch a new television docuseries produced by Oprah Winfrey this Thursday. The Hulu six-part series is fronted by journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones, who won a Pulitzer Prize for her work producing the original project—written mainly by Black scholars—including her own deeply personal introductory essay that viewed America's origins through the lens of enslaved Africans.

Slavery is ingrained "in the very structure of our politics, our economic system, our medical systems," Hannah-Jones told



This undated handout photo provided by the Dallas Zoo on January 24, 2023, shows Pin, a 35-year-old endangered vulture at the Dallas Zoo in Dallas, Texas. — AFP

a recent Television Critics Association panel discussion about the series. "These systems, because they were built into the foundation of our country, they replicate on their own, whether or not you are personally racist," she said. Two episodes will be released each Thursday, each based on different essays—"Democracy," "Race," "Music," "Capitalism," "Fear" and "Justice." They will follow "real stories, real people in real life who are experiencing challenges in each episode," said director Roger Ross Williams. "We got to work with Oprah, who was incredibly really involved in the development in the beginning and really passionate about it," he added.

Showrunner Shoshana Guy said the television series would expand on the project's writings through "listening to people and seeing their emotion on the screen." "The 1619 Project" takes its name from the year in which the first enslaved Africans were brought to mainland British America, and was launched by the New York Times on the 400th anniversary of that event. — AFP

Dead vulture, missing leopard: Mystery at the Dallas Zoo

What mysterious forces are at work at the Dallas Zoo? In recent days, the largest zoo in the southern US state of Texas has been the scene of suspicious incidents, most recently the death of a beloved vulture—and police are on the case. "Everything is under suspect at this point—internal, external—we're looking at every single option," zoo president Gregg Hudson told reporters Monday.

The 35-year-old endangered lappet-faced vulture named Pin was found dead

Sea spiders can regrow body parts, not just limbs

Sea spiders can regrow body parts after amputation and not just limbs, according to a study released on Monday that may pave the way for further scientific research into regeneration. "Nobody had expected this," said Gerhard Scholtz of Humboldt University in Berlin, senior author of the study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. "We were the first to show that this is possible."

It is well documented that many different types of arthropods such as centipedes, spiders, and other insects can regrow limbs after a loss. "Crabs can even automatically get rid of their limbs if they are attacked," Scholtz said. "They replace it with a new limb." What the researchers discovered with their experiments with the tiny eight-legged sea spiders is that they are able to regenerate body parts other than limbs. For the study, they amputated different hind limbs and posterior parts of 23 immature and adult sea spiders and monitored the results. There was no regeneration of body parts in the adult sea spiders but some of them are still alive two years later. — AFP



This undated handout picture provided by the University of Greifswald obtained on January 23, 2023 shows a fully regenerated adult male of the sea spider Pycnogonum littorale. — AFP

over the weekend and the zoo said "the death does not appear to be from natural causes." "Losing him is devastating not only to our Zoo family but also to the conservation efforts of this species," the zoo said on Twitter on Tuesday. "Pin will be missed dearly by everyone."

The zoo offered a \$10,000 reward for any information that helps the investigation. On January 13, a clouded leopard, Nova, escaped from her enclosure after a section of fencing had been cut. Nova was later discovered safe on zoo grounds, but staff found that the langur monkey enclosure had also been breached. Because the vulture is an endangered species, the matter was deemed serious enough for federal agents to join the investigation. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features

Generation Z finding time for second-hand luxury watches

Swiss watches are in high demand these days, but sales of second-hand timepieces are also booming, driven by Generation Z buyers who want luxury goods but are also sustainability-minded. The global second-hand watch market is estimated at nearly 20 billion Swiss francs (\$21.7 billion) and could reach 35 billion francs by 2030, according to a study out in October by the auditing and consulting giant Deloitte.



In this file photo taken on January 14, 2019, a model by Swiss watchmaker Richard Mille is displayed on the opening day of the 29th International Fine Watchmaking Exhibition SIHH, in Geneva. — AFP

Historically the province of collectors scouting for rare watches at auction, the second-hand market is turning increasingly professional with the proliferation of online sales sites that verify authenticity—with even the watch manufacturers themselves getting involved. “Nowadays, there is a realization that we need to consume more responsibly,” said Fabienne Lupo, the former head of the Foundation High Horology, who organized a second-hand luxury watch salon in Geneva in November. The event was attended by the online auction giant eBay, the watch sales platform Watchbox, and Swiss brands such as Zenith.

Never say new again

Lupo said the craze for second-hand watches could be explained by the consumer choices of Millennials (born between 1980 and the late 1990s) and Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2010) who are “very concerned about the future of the planet, and no longer want to buy new”. There is also the fashion for vintage objects “that you can’t find everywhere”, she said. And furthermore, buying certain Swiss luxury watches new is getting harder, as the booming market means longer waiting lists.

Swiss watch exports hit a new record in 2022, climbing 11.4 percent year-on-year to 24.8 billion Swiss francs, the Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry announced Tuesday. “And then there is the digitalization which has accelerated with the pandemic,” Lupo told AFP. The growth in the pre-owned watch market is such that the British online platform Subdial has developed an index tracking the 50 most-traded models. The average price fell from a record 45,000 Swiss francs in February 2022 to 35,000 francs in September, which Deloitte called a “correction” rather than a sign that the market was shrinking.

Sales platforms for certified pre-owned (CPO) watches are multiplying online, with the sector still attracting new entrants, including the US site Bezel, which counts former Disney president Michael Ovitz, comedian Kevin Hart and singer John Legend among its investors. The luxury giant Richemont—which owns the Cartier, IWC and Piaget brands—entered the field as early as 2018, buying the British platform Watchfinder. Rolex also took the plunge in December, pulling the rug from beneath the counterfeiters by launching a CPO program with the Swiss retailer Bucherer, which authenticates the watches. The program is set up in six countries, including Britain and France, with the aim of extending it to the United States in the future.

“Watch manufacturers typically have been worried about the secondary market as it was closely associated with the grey market, where discounted watches could be found,” said Jon Cox, an industry analyst with the Kepler Cheuvreux financial services company. “However, they realize there is a halo effect of having strong secondary prices, enhancing the brand value of the primary watches,” he told AFP. For top-end luxury brands like Richard Mille, where average watch prices exceed 260,000 Swiss francs, second-hand timepieces are even a way of enhancing their image. —AFP



Moviegoers pose for pictures in front of a poster of the Bollywood movie ‘Pathaan’ outside a cinema hall in Prayagraj on January 25, 2023. — AFP photos



Fans of Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan gather outside a cinema hall to watch his movie ‘Pathaan’ in Mumbai on January 25, 2023.

INDIA’S ‘KING KHAN’ FACING IRE ON RETURN TO BIG SCREEN

Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan returned to the silver screen Wednesday for the first time in four years with a big-budget action movie that has sparked ire from Hindu right-wingers. “Pathaan”, which hit cinemas a day ahead of India’s Republic Day celebrations, also features Bollywood heartthrob Deepika Padukone and action hero John Abraham—as well as songs and special effects galore.



Fans of Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan wearing t-shirts with images of his movie ‘Pathaan’, work at a roadside eatery stall in Mumbai on January 25, 2023.

release “Zero” in 2018 was a flop at the box office and his son was arrested last year in a drugs-related case which was later dropped.

The countdown to “Pathaan” has been mired in controversy with hardline Hindu groups protesting over one of its racy songs in which Padukone is seen in a saffron-colored bikini. Saffron is a color associated with Hindu religion and is considered sacred. Khan is from India’s Muslim minority. There were calls to ban the film unless the song was removed. The hashtag #BoycottPathaan also trended on Twitter, in line with recent repeated social media campaigns against certain films by Hindu right-wingers.

Fellow megastar Aamir Khan’s “Laal Singh Chaddha” and Ranbir Kapoor’s “Brahmastra” also faced boycott calls recently. On Wednesday, activists from a hardline Hindu group protested with “Boycott Pathaan” banners in Bengaluru, local media reported. Shouting slogans, they also burnt the posters of the movie. Similar protests were held in the eastern state of Bihar on Tuesday and in Assam last Friday.

Record bookings

Despite the negative publicity and controversial build-up, the movie opened to a massive response from the audience across the country. People wearing “Pathaan” T-shirts and banging drums gathered outside cinemas in Mumbai. NDTV news network said that record advance bookings of over 500,000 tickets had been made for its first day.



Moviegoers stand in a queue as they wait to watch the Bollywood movie ‘Pathaan’ at a cinema hall in Mumbai on January 25, 2023.

Khan, who plays the role of a suave spy with tousled long hair and washboard abs, said that 25 single-screen cinemas across the country were reopening Wednesday, thanks to the movie. “Growing up I only watched films in single screens. It is uniquely enjoyable,” he said in Hindi on Twitter on Tuesday. “I pray that you and I both are successful. Congratulations on your reopenings.”

Bollywood has been struggling in recent years to produce the kind of major money-spinning blockbusters that have made it so successful in India and further afield. Its Hindi-language output is also

facing a tough challenge from films made in other languages such as “RRR” which this month won a Golden Globe and was on Tuesday nominated for an Oscar for best original song. Taran Adarsh, a film critic and business analyst, praised “Pathaan” as the first reviews started trickling in. “#Pathaan has it all: Star power, style, scale, songs, soul, substance and surprises...” he tweeted. “And, most importantly, #SRK, who’s back with a vengeance... Will be the first #Blockbuster of 2023.” — AFP

Award-winning Indian architect Doshi dies at 95

Pioneering modernist architect Balkrishna Vitthal Das Doshi, India’s only winner of the prestigious Pritzker Prize and a staunch advocate of low-cost housing for the poor, has died at the age of 95. Doshi died at his home in Ahmedabad on Tuesday, a residence with a facade dominated by the imposing concrete formwork beloved of his post-war contemporaries.

He never completed a formal degree in his profession but trained with the legendary European architect Le Corbusier, whose titanic influence on urban planning and design would become a lifelong source of inspiration. Corbusier is best known in India for designing from scratch the concrete-clad city of Chandigarh which, like his other most famous works, was occasionally criticized for its perceived indifference to the natural environment and human needs.

Doshi proved more adept than his mentor at blending modernist styles with functionality, producing what he called a “holistic habitat”. His chief commissions, beginning in the 1960s with a university

campus in his hometown, helped define newly independent India, while his residences aspired to raise living standards at a time of widespread poverty. “My projects have been participatory in nature and relevant to the people for which it was designed,” he told AFP in a 2018 interview. “India is transforming fast and we need to do a large number of things which have to be ecologically sustainable and that would empower the people.”



Pioneering modernist architect Balkrishna Vitthal Das Doshi poses at his residence in Ahmedabad.

‘Glimpses of greatness’

The Aranya Low Cost Housing project, one of his best known projects, accommodates 80,000 people with houses and courtyards linked by a maze of pathways in the city of Indore. His Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore, opened in 1977 and now the country’s top business school, is celebrated for its ample gathering spaces and rabbit warren of exterior



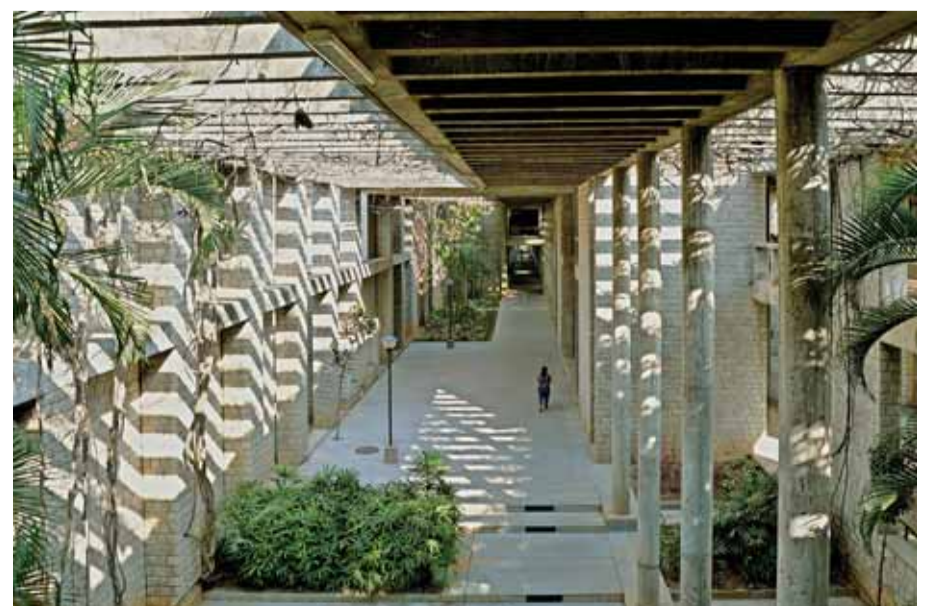
corridors facilitating chance encounters between faculty and students.

Doshi won the 2018 Pritzker Prize, architecture’s equivalent of the Nobel, with the jury lauding him for his masterful treatment of “climate, site, technique, and craft, along with a deep understanding and appreciation of the context in the broadest sense”. Prime Minister Narendra Modi led tributes to “a brilliant

architect and a remarkable institution builder”. “The coming generations will get glimpses of his greatness by admiring his rich work across India,” Modi said. Doshi’s works are preserved and displayed at Sangath Studio in Ahmedabad, run by one of his granddaughters. — AFP



This file photo taken on March 8, 2018 shows a view of the campus of the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) designed by the pioneering modernist architect Balkrishna Vitthal Das Doshi in Bangalore. — AFP photos



Sports

India top ODI rankings after 3-0 sweep of New Zealand

INDORE, India: Blazing centuries from skipper Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill powered India to a 3-0 series sweep of New Zealand and go top of the one-day international rankings on Tuesday. The hosts hammered the Kiwis by 90 runs in the third match in Indore after Rohit (101) and Gill (112) put on 212 for the opening wicket to guide the hosts to 385-9 in Indore. In reply, Devon Conway's 138 was in vain as India bowled out New Zealand for 295 in 41.2 overs for their second successive whitewash.

The victory takes India to the top of the ODI rankings ahead of World Cup holders England and New Zealand who slip from second to fourth behind Australia. Qualification for the World Cup in India later in the year is unaffected, however, as the Kiwis have already qualified. But Rohit, who recorded his first ODI century since January 2020, and Gill stood out in the highest opening partnership by any team against the Kiwis in the 50-over format, surpassing the 201-run stand of Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir in 2009.

"In the last six games we've done most things right in ODIs," said Rohit, whose side whitewashed Sri Lanka in three matches before this. "We're consistent in our approach with the bat and ball." Fast bowler Shardul Thakur was

named man of the match for his three wickets and crucial 25 runs batting down the order. "Shardul has been doing it for a while," said Rohit. People call him magician in the squad and he came and delivered."

New Zealand's bowlers hit back after the pair's departure as India slipped to 293-5 before Hardik Pandya took charge, boosting the total with a 38-ball 54. It all started with Gill smashing Lockie Ferguson for four fours and a six in a 22-run eighth over and Rohit joined the party with a few big hits over the fence. Gill recorded his third 100-plus score in his last four ODI innings, taking off his helmet and basking in applause from the stands when he reached the milestone.

Michael Bracewell bowled Rohit and Blair Tuckner sent back Gill in the next over and India soon lost regular wickets, despite a brisk 36 from Virat Kohli. The left-handed Ishan Kishan was run out after a mix-up with Kohli, who soon fell to Jacob Duffy. Pandya put on 54 for the seventh wicket with Thakur.

Eye on World Cup

In reply, New Zealand lost Finn Allen on the second delivery of their chase after Pandya bowled the opener for nought. Conway stood firm to add 106 for the second wicket with Henry Nicholls, who hit 42, and 78 for the third



INDORE: India's players pose with the trophy after winning the third and final one-day international cricket match against New Zealand at the Holkar Cricket Stadium on Jan 24, 2023. —AFP

with Daryl Mitchell (24). The left-handed Conway fought hard as wickets fell at the other end as he raised his third ODI hundred with a six off leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal.

Thakur dented New Zealand's chase when he struck twice with successive deliveries. Mitchell caught behind and then skipper Tom Latham caught at mid-

off. Conway, who smashed 12 fours and eight sixes in his 100-ball blitz, looked unstoppable until tearaway quick Umran Malik got the batsman caught at mid-wicket. Bracewell, who hit 26, and Mitchell Santner, who made 34, attempted to keep up the fight but Bracewell's wicket off Kuldeep Yadav, who picked three wickets, spelt the end for the Black Caps.

Latham, a wicketkeeper-batsman, said the experience would help them in the World Cup. "It's our last experience in India before the World Cup so the guys are exposed to these conditions in the three games and hopefully it'll be helpful in October," said Latham. The two teams will now play three Twenty20 internationals starting Friday in Ranchi. —AFP

McIlroy plays down storm in a 'tee' cup with Reed

DUBAI: The feud between two of the world's top golfers continued Wednesday with Rory McIlroy saying he did "not feel the need to acknowledge" Patrick Reed, who reportedly threw a tee towards the world number one on the practice range of the Dubai Desert Classic. The incident, which occurred on Tuesday and was first reported by Spanish website TenGolf, saw Reed apparently standing behind McIlroy while he was hitting balls.

When McIlroy did not turn and speak to him, Reed left and threw a tee on the ground in anger. The two have been at odds since McIlroy criticised players, including Reed, who joined the Saudi-backed LIV Golf circuit, although McIlroy played down the incident. "It was nothing," the 33-year-old told a press conference.

"Patrick came up to say hello and I didn't really want him to. From my recollection, that was it. I didn't see a tee. I didn't feel a tee. Obviously, someone else saw that. But it's definitely a storm in a teacup. I can't believe it's actually turned into a story. I didn't see him. I was down by my bag and he came up to me, and I was busy working and sort of doing my practice, and I didn't really feel the need to acknowledge him. I didn't see a tee coming in my direction at all but apparently that's what happened.

"And if roles were reversed and I'd have thrown that tee at him, I'd be expecting him to bring a lawsuit," added McIlroy who was served a subpoena by Reed to appear as a witness in his case against the Golf Channel, Brandel Chamblee and the PGA Tour. "I was subpoenaed by his lawyer on Christmas Eve," said four-time major champion McIlroy. "I was trying to have a nice time with my family and someone shows up on your doorstep and delivers that, you're not going to take that well. You can't pretend like nothing's happening, right? So again, I'm living in reality. I don't know where he's living. If I were in his shoes, I wouldn't expect a hello or a handshake."

McIlroy said he felt mentally drained towards the end of last season because of everything going on outside the ropes, supporting the PGA Tour against the rise of LIV Golf. "On reflection, I felt like I needed to take on quite a lot," said McIlroy. "But I think getting the wheels in motion of how hopefully the new system and the new structure of professional golf will be, it took a lot of effort last year. "But now those wheels are in motion and we just have to try to tidy up the schedule for 2024. But I feel like most of the heavy lifting was done last year." —AFP

Indian hockey dreams of return to glory days

SANSARPUR, India: Kids with sticks dribble balls, weave and bob in Sansarpur, the cradle of Indian field hockey. But the village's glory days, as well as those of the national team, are a thing of the past. India crashed out of the World Cup at the group stage on Sunday, the latest in a series of humiliations for a country that won six consecutive Olympic golds between 1928 and 1956.

Watching the children train and ruing the sport's sad decline is medal-winner Balbir Singh Kular, one of no fewer than 14 Olympic hockey players produced by Sansarpur in northern India. "We failed because we didn't change ourselves and we thought we have been winning gold," 79-year-old Balbir told AFP. "Starting with grounds, equipment, infrastructure and rules, they all keep changing. Another big change was when astroturf came but you can't make excuses," he said. India has won eight Olympic gold medals, but its last was in 1980. In the 2008 Olympics, India failed to even qualify. The team has won just one World Cup since the competition began in 1971.

CAN holds padel tourney for youth

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Head of the Youth Early Awareness Initiative Dr Mariam Abdulmohsen Al-Otaibi announced Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) organized a padel tournament under the theme "sport is prevention". Dr Otaibi, who is member of CAN, said this is the first activity of its kind within CAN's youth cancer awareness campaign that aims to attract youth and draw their attention to the importance of sports to prevent cancer, adding the tournament has a good turnout.

CAN is keen to organize such activities, as the number of diagnosed cancer cases in those under 40 reached 532 according to latest statistics of Kuwait Cancer Control Center, making up 20 percent of the number of cases diagnosed annually. Hidou team, the sports arm of CAN, said sports events encourage youth to practice sport, adding this maiden event had 16 doubles teams (32 players), and the winning team was of Hussein Bebbhani.

the Gulf initiative, and we were keen on providing all safety needs for all participants," she said.

Hubail said the initiative's theme is to promote social responsibility and its importance to individuals and society. She said it also aims at promoting investment in personal goals and value of appreciating the abilities we have, adding each team has its own humanitarian message for the society.



Sarah Al-Hubail

Decline

Until the 1980s hockey packed out stadiums and was played in streets across India, but it has now become a single-column story in national newspapers. It has been eclipsed by cricket and faces competition for eyeballs from football and even kabaddi, a traditional village sport with its own franchise tournament and glamorous stars.

The reasons for the decline of Indian hockey are many and include poor administration and a lack of facilities, particularly artificial astroturf pitches. This new surface, as well as changes to the rules, put Indians at a disadvantage with their style of play and favored better-funded and equipped nations like Australia and Belgium.

In Sansarpur, former player and author Popinder Singh Kular blamed the decline of talent from the village on families moving abroad in search of better economic opportunities than hockey can provide. "The rise and fall comes in life and in hockey. There is improvement in Indian hockey but in Sansarpur it so happened that families, which produced top players, moved out of this village and many went overseas," Popinder told AFP.

'Bright future'

But there is hope for the future of Indian hockey on the other side of the



SANSARPUR, India: In this photograph taken on Jan 18, 2023, students play on a hockey pitch in this village in Punjab state. —AFP

country in the eastern state of Odisha. There, state-of-the-art hockey stadiums in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela - which hosted recent World Cup matches - have become the new breeding ground of young players. Coupled with the arrival of foreign coaches - although several were sacked - this has reaped dividends, with India winning bronze in the previous Olympics and a Commonwealth Games silver last year.

Current coach Graham Reid, who took up the Indian job in 2019 and

oversaw the team's bronze-winning show in Tokyo in 2021, said having a "mental coach" is the way ahead. Hockey India secretary Bhola Nath Singh insists his team's early World Cup exit was just a "bad day" and the current crop will bring a lot more medals for the country. "We were just unlucky," Nath told AFP. "A bad day on the field does not mean the team is not good. This bunch of players won us an Olympic bronze and will bring in many more medals. We have a bright future." —AFP

Large participation in cycling initiative

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The first stage of the Gulf cycling initiative will start on Thursday from Shaab seaside, going through Jaber Causeway to Subbiya, and will conclude in the free trade zone, covering a total distance of 120 km, with 90 participants from 11 countries.

Chairwoman of the organizing committee Sarah Al-Hubail said she was pleased with the participation of a large number of teams from the Gulf countries. "We overcame many challenges that threatened the continuity of

100 riders ready for showjumping event

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Competitions of Kuwait International Showjumping festival will on Thursday at Kuwait Riding Center in Subhan with the participation of more than 100 female and male riders and around 150 horses, as more than KD 77,000 in prize money will be awarded. The event is backed by the Public Authority for Sport (PAS), Kuwait Olympic Committee (KOC) and the Showjumping Federation.

CEO of the Showjumping Federation and

member of the Asian federation Waleed Al-Jassem said the festival has two championships, the first which starts on Thursday and continues until Saturday in the two-star category with riders from Kuwait, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Jordan and Britain. The second tournament will be held next Thursday (Feb 2) for three days in the three-star category, with Arab League competitions that lead to qualification for the World Championships.

Jassem said Kuwait Equestrian Federation headed by Masoud Hayat is honored to organize the showjumping festival with the participation of elite riders from several countries, including Kuwait. He said the festival is held under the patronage of the International Equestrian Federation. The refereeing committee is headed by Sharon Al-Quoud from Kuwait.

Djokovic, Sabalenka roll into semis



MELBOURNE: Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates his victory against Russia's Andrey Rublev at the Australian Open on Jan 25, 2023. — AFP

MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic was two wins away from a 22nd Grand Slam crown after bulldozing into the Australian Open semi-finals on Wednesday, while Aryna Sabalenka was equally impressive in reaching the women's last four. Serbia's Djokovic delivered a masterclass to crush Russian fifth seed Andrey Rublev 6-1, 6-2, 6-4 on Rod Laver Arena and set up a meeting with Tommy Paul for a place in Sunday's final.

Djokovic's quest to go level with great rival Rafael Nadal on a leading 22 major titles carries an air of inevitability. The 35-year-old struggled with a hamstring injury in the early rounds at Melbourne Park but was dominant during his fourth-round demolition of Alex de Minaur and was equally clinical against the outclassed Rublev.

"Last two matches, playing against two guys who were in form and to beat them dominantly in three sets is something that I definitely want in this moment, something that sends a message to all my opponents," said a buoyant Djokovic. "With this kind of game the

confidence level rises, so I feel better on the court as the tournament progresses."

Victory for the red-hot favorite propelled him into a 44th Grand Slam semi-final to close the gap on Roger Federer's all-time record of 46. Anything other than a rampant win for Djokovic against unseeded Paul would amount to a massive upset, albeit at a tournament that has seen numerous shocks in the men's and women's draws.

Paul defeated his fellow American Ben Shelton 7-6 (8/6), 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 to reach his first major semi-final. But former world number one Djokovic, who can return to the top of the rankings if he wins the Australian Open for a record-extending 10th time, will be a whole new prospect. Paul, ranked 35, and the Serb great have never played each other before.

"I saw him in the locker room after I finished my match. He said, 'congrats,'" said the 25-year-old, adding they had practiced together before. "Obviously he's pretty comfortable here in Australia,"

the American added. "It's going to be a challenging match but I'm playing some of my best tennis, so it's a good time." The other semifinal is between third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas and Russian 18th seed Karen Khachanov.

Ominous Sabalenka

Sabalenka set up a semifinal with surprise-package Magda Linette after once again displaying the kind of form and finesse that have made her favorite for the women's title. The Belarusian fifth seed defeated Croatia's Donna Vekic 6-3, 6-2 as she closes on a first Grand Slam title. The match was closer than the score suggested, but Sabalenka is playing scintillating tennis - she is yet to drop a set so far this year.

It is a far cry from a year ago, when she struggled badly with her serve and was reduced to tears at an Australian Open warm-up tournament. The 24-year-old is benefiting from a different approach when facing adversity on court. "Before I was trying

to go for aces, go for crazy shots to get easily out, to get out easily from those situations," she said. "Right now I keep saying: 'No, work for it, it's not going to be easy.'"

Sabalenka will play unseeded Linette for a place in Saturday's final after the Pole marched into her first major semifinal at the age of 30. Linette stunned former world number one Karolina Pliskova 6-3, 7-5 to continue flying the flag for Poland after the shock exit of world number one Iga Swiatek. "I'm so emotional, I can't really believe it," said Linette, ranked 45 in the world. "It's a dream come true. I'm super grateful and happy. Thank you for cheering and supporting, I really needed this. So we keep going. I don't want to get too excited because we are still in the tournament," added the Pole. Two-time Melbourne champion Victoria Azarenka, also from Belarus, will face Moscow-born Kazakh Elena Rybakina in the other semifinal. Both women's semifinals are on Thursday. — AFP

Record-hunter Shiffrin blows away rivals

PLAN DE CORONES, Italy: Mikaela Shiffrin said Wednesday she was skiing better than ever after destroying the competition in the Kronplatz giant slalom and moving one step closer to becoming the most successful alpine World Cup skier of all-time. A day after breaking the women's record for most wins on the elite circuit she shared with retired fellow American Lindsey Vonn, Shiffrin took her tally of victories to 84 with a combined time of 2 minutes, 3.28 seconds.

The 27-year-old had been over half a second ahead of the pack after her first run on Wednesday morning and made no mistake in the afternoon sunshine of the Italian Dolomites, finishing a comfortable 0.82sec in front of Ragnhild Mowinckel. The Swede Sara Hector was third, 1.19sec behind the woman who is now within two of the overall wins record of 86 held by Ingemar Stenmark after her 19th career World Cup giant slalom triumph.

"I think between the second race in Kranjska Gora

(where she equaled the women's win record) and these two races yesterday and today, is the best two days of skiing I ever did," said Shiffrin. "I feel so good with it. I love the feeling I have on GS skis right now so it's a pleasure to race. After yesterday I was quite tired, today... I just want to sleep! At the end of the day these are just two runs that are one minute long. You always have energy to do that... I feel like if I focus on one good turn and then the next good turn and then keep going with it, it should be OK."

Shiffrin could very well move level with Stenmark before next month's World Championships in Courchevel and Meribel as this weekend come two races at Spindleruv Mlyn in her favoured slalom-the discipline in which she has claimed 51 victories. Swedish icon Stenmark dominated the men's slalom and giant slalom disciplines for a decade from 1975 before retiring in 1989.

A 10th win of the season also pulled Shiffrin further away in both the giant slalom and overall standings, leaving Lara Gut-Behrami, who finished fifth on Wednesday, trailing by 118 and 611 points in the respective rankings. "I don't have a goal for the numbers. This season I was thinking if I could get four wins, five wins, maybe six, then that's the most I could possibly get. And that would be a great season," added Shiffrin. — AFP



KRONPLATZ, Italy: USA's Mikaela Shiffrin competes in the first run of the Women's Giant Slalom on Jan 25, 2023. — AFP

James masterpiece in vain as Clippers sink Lakers

MIAMI: LeBron James took another stride towards the NBA's all-time scoring record with a dazzling 46-point performance but could not stop the Los Angeles Lakers falling to a 133-115 blowout against the Los Angeles Clippers on Tuesday. The 38-year-old basketball icon rolled back the years with the latest in a string of virtuoso performances, draining a career-best nine three-pointers in what was ultimately a futile effort against a Clippers side led by Paul George and Kawhi Leonard.

James left the court immediately after the Clippers completed a wire-to-wire victory that saw them lead by as much as 23 points at half-time. James threatened to inspire a fourth-quarter comeback to get the Lakers within 10 points but the Clippers regrouped around George and Leonard and pulled away. The only consolation for James was that he is now within touching distance of surpassing Lakers legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar as the NBA's all-time points scorer.

James needs another 178 points to eclipse Abdul-Jabbar's tally of 38,387 points, one of the most coveted and longstanding records in basketball. On current form, James is on track to break the record sometime in the next fortnight. Lakers coach Darvin Ham admitted his team was not giving James the support his blistering form deserved.

"I'm happy for him, but we've got to get better," Ham said. "We've got to give some help in other areas. He's playing at an unbelievable level right now - it's amazing to be able to watch. But having said that, we want to win games. So everyone can do something a little bit better - myself and my staff included." The Lakers fell to 22-26 and are 13th in the Western Conference standings while the Clippers improved to 26-24 to move to fifth. George led the Clippers scoring with 27 points while Leonard added 25 and Norman Powell 22.

In other games, Bam Adebayo led a fourth-quarter fightback as the Miami Heat shrugged off an



LOS ANGELES: LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers takes a shot against Norman Powell and Ivica Zubac of the LA Clippers at Crypto.com Arena on Jan 24, 2023. — AFP

injury to Jimmy Butler to edge the pace-setting Boston Celtics 98-95. Miami were rocked by the withdrawal of Butler shortly before tip-off in Florida as they prepared to face the Eastern Conference leaders and most bookmakers' favorites for this year's NBA crown. But Adebayo stepped up with a 30-point performance as Miami sent Boston spinning to a second straight loss following Monday's reverse to Orlando.

Adebayo's haul included a crucial contribution down the stretch as Miami overturned a 10-point deficit with just over eight minutes remaining to close out a hard-fought victory. The Celtics looked set for a morale-boosting road win as they opened up an 87-77 lead midway through the fourth quarter. But back-to-back three-pointers from Haywood Highsmith got Miami to within four points. — AFP