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\$10,000 trade-in support



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Kuwait urges Iran maritime talks as gas row flares anew

Kuwait rejects Iranian activities in Durra • Saudi extends oil cuts, Russia reduces exports

NEWS IN BRIEF

Flag desecrator sought

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah gave orders to relevant authorities at the interior ministry to contact the foreign ministry to take legal action against a person accused of desecrating Kuwait's flag in a video posted on social media, the interior ministry announced on Monday.

Tunis Street partially closed

KUWAIT: The interior ministry on Monday announced Tunis Street in Hawally will be partially closed for one month for roadworks. The part of the road from the Fourth Ring Road's entrance to the Beirut Street intersection will be closed for one month starting from July 3 for maintenance, the traffic department explained.

Mullet fishing season opens

KUWAIT: Fishing for mullet, locally known as 'maid', is allowed in Kuwait's territorial waters from July 1 to Nov 30, the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources announced on Monday. Fishing is still banned in Kuwait Bay, three miles offshore and around Kuwait's islands, it pointed out. The fishing period is open daily from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, it added.

UK saw hottest June on record

LONDON: The UK this year has seen its hottest June on record, both in terms of mean temperature and the average maximum temperature, the British Meteorological Office said Monday. "The average mean temperature of 15.8 degrees Celsius for June 2023 in the UK is the highest in a series since 1884," the Met Office said in a statement. On the hottest day in June, the temperature reached 32.2 degrees Celsius. — AFP

Iran executes 354 in 6 months

PARIS: Iran has hanged at least 354 people in the first six months of 2023, Norway-based Iran Human Rights group said Monday, adding that the pace of executions was much higher than in 2022, when 261 people were executed. It said 20 percent of all executions were of members of the Sunni Baluch minority, adding 206 people were executed for drug-related charges, a 126 percent rise. — AFP (See Page 8)

Saudi executes 5 for terrorism

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia on Monday put to death five people convicted of carrying out a deadly attack on a house of worship, state media said, the biggest group execution this year. The five men — four Saudis and one Egyptian national — were tried for an attack that killed five people and injured an untold number of others in the kingdom's east. — AFP

KUWAIT/RIYADH: Kuwait reinvited Iran on Monday to talks on their sea borders after Tehran said it was ready to start drilling in a disputed gas field in the resource-rich Gulf. Kuwait said it held "exclusive rights" to the maritime field along with Saudi Arabia, after the neighboring countries agreed to jointly develop it last year. The field, known as Arash in Iran and Durra in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, is also claimed by Tehran in a dispute which dates back several decades.

"The State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia... alone have exclusive rights to the natural wealth in the Al-Durra field," a Kuwaiti foreign ministry statement said. "The State of Kuwait renews its invitation to the Iranian side to start negotiations on the demarcation of the maritime borders," it added.

Kuwait later on Monday said it "categorically and totally" rejects purported Iranian activities in the Durra field. "We categorically and totally reject Iran's planned activities around the Durra offshore gas field," Minister of Oil Saad Al-Barrak said in a statement, emphasizing that only Kuwait and Saudi Arabia own "exclusive rights" to the field. Kuwait was "surprised" by Tehran's plans and intentions, which "contravene the basic principles of interna-



Saad Al-Barrak

tional relations", the minister underlined. Last year, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia signed an agreement to develop the field, despite objections from Tehran which branded the deal as "illegal". Mohsen Khojsteh Mehr, managing director of the National Iranian Oil Company, said last week that "there is full preparation to start drilling in the joint Arash oil field". "Considerable resources have been allocated to the board of directors of the National Iranian Oil Company for the implementation of the development plan for this field," he said in remarks carried by Iranian state media.

His comments came as Saudi Arabia and Tehran boost cooperation after a shock decision to resume ties, announced in March, ended seven years

Continued on Page 8

9 Palestinians killed in 'open war' by Zionists

JENIN: Zionist forces killed nine Palestinians in a large-scale operation Monday in the occupied West Bank in what the army labelled an "extensive counterterrorism effort" involving drone strikes and hundreds of troops. The raid launched under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-right government targeted the northern city of Jenin and was the biggest in the West Bank for years, featuring armored vehicles, army bulldozers and drones.

Firefights and explosions rocked the city and adjacent refugee camp, a militant stronghold, as Palestinians threw rocks at soldiers and smoke from blasts and burning barricades darkened the sky, an AFP correspondent said. "There is bombing from the air and an invasion on the ground," said Mahmoud Al-Saadi, director of the Palestinian Red Crescent in Jenin. "Several houses and sites have been bombed... smoke is rising from everywhere."

Continued on Page 8



JENIN: Smoke billows during a Zionist military operation in the occupied West Bank on July 3, 2023. — AFP

MPs propose civil rights for children of Kuwaiti women

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly resumes its regular sessions on Tuesday after the Eid Al-Adha break with a number of reform draft laws high on the agenda, including several bills to reform the law gov-

erning the constitutional court. The Assembly's legal and legislative committee held a lengthy meeting on Monday to study several draft laws dealing with the constitutional court. The meeting was attended by the justice minister and a number of constitutional experts. Constitutional expert Ibrahim Al-Humoud said after the meeting he believes the committee intends to stop the court's authority over elections.

Meanwhile, five MPs submitted a draft law calling to grant children of Kuwaiti women from foreign husbands a host of rights to make their life more comfortable, as they are not automatically granted citizenship. The bill calls for granting these children the right to government jobs immediately after Kuwaiti nationals,

in addition to granting them equal pay and benefits like their Kuwaiti counterparts. Under the bill, they are also entitled to government assistance if they get jobs in the private sector, like Kuwaitis.

These children should also enjoy the right to permanent Kuwaiti residency from birth and a Kuwaiti civil ID valid for five years, renewable for similar durations. The proposed bill also provides children of Kuwaiti women the right to establish companies without a Kuwaiti partner, as is required for foreigners. They should also be entitled to free education, healthcare and the right to inherit one property from their Kuwaiti mothers.

Continued on Page 8

Dead fish wash up ashore in drought-hit Iraq

AL-MAJAR AL-KABIR, Iraq: Thousands of dead fish have washed ashore in southeast Iraq, prompting an official investigation into the wildlife disaster that officials said Monday may be linked to drought conditions. An AFP photographer saw thousands of small fish washed up on the banks of the Amshan river in Majar al-Kabir, an area in Maysan province that borders Iran.

The region is home to famed marshes in the floodplain of the Tigris river, already suffering from the effects of global warming. Iraq's agriculture ministry on Sunday announced it was forming a committee to look into the causes of the fish deaths, according to state news agency INA. Environmental campaigner Ahmed Saleh Neema said "a rise in temperatures" leading to increased evaporation, coupled with reduced water flow contributed to "a lack of oxygen and high salinity" in the river.

Largely arid Iraq is ranked by the United Nations as one of the world's five countries most impacted by some

Continued on Page 8



AL-MAJAR AL-KABIR, Iraq: Fishermen stand in a boat as they inspect thousands of dead fish floating by the bank of the Amshan river in Iraq's southeastern Maysan governorate on July 3, 2023. — AFP



Local

Extreme heat can trigger irritability, decrease productivity: Experts

Planning your day to avoid high temperature makes summer more tolerable

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: High temperatures can have a significant impact on people's behaviors. As global warming intensifies, extreme heat events become more frequent and intense, leading to numerous challenges for individuals and societies, especially in a country like Kuwait that experiences high temperatures during the summer months that can exceed 45 degrees Celsius. Kuwait Times spoke to Senior Specialist Psychiatrist Najat Al-Saidi and international certified coach Zahraa Abdulsalam to learn more about the effect of Kuwait's heat on people's psyche and behavior.

Saidi said the discomfort and frustration caused by excessive heat can trigger irritability in individuals, making them more prone to engage in conflicts or violent outbursts, as the heat can amplify tensions. "The continuous increase in temperatures usually leads to quick anger and feelings of stress, fatigue and unease," she explained.

Individuals may struggle to make rational decisions, assess risks and react appropriately to different situations. Hence, they may risk their safety and well-being. "There is no doubt that the weather has a significant impact on improving or affecting a person's mood swings. We also notice tension and quick anger while driving due to the high temperatures, which can reach 50 degrees," Abdulsalam said.

Moreover, due to the extreme heat during the day in summer in Kuwait, people's daily routine is disrupted, which in turn can compound feelings of irritability



Zahraa Abdulsalam

ty and impatience and disturb their overall mood, thus negatively impacting their productivity and mental health. They are also less likely to engage in physical activities or exercise often. "A person becomes weak and exhausted, facing difficulties in the simplest work tasks or movements, which negatively affects their behavior and interactions with others," Saidi said. The overwhelming heat can make it uncomfortable and even dangerous to do some activities, limiting opportunities for recreation.

"Many people do not prefer to spend the summer in Kuwait due to biological clock disturbances. The majority of people who remain in Kuwait prefer going out at night, knowing that high temperatures can cause lethargy and a lack of desire to engage in daily activities during the day. Additionally, many people lose body fluids, which leads to dehydration, making individuals more cautious about maintaining a constant balance in their bodies, unlike winter, where people feel warmth, tranquility and relaxation, all of which improve their mood," Abdulsalam said.



Thus, high temperatures can have a detrimental impact on people's physiological comfort and lead to increased aggression. It is essential to acknowledge the hot weather's impact on our emotions in order to avoid being exposed to any triggers of misbehavior. "To avoid feelings of anger and tension, we try in

various ways to overcome these problems by being flexible in scheduling and prioritizing according to the weather conditions in Kuwait," Abdulsalam said. By doing so, we can minimize the negative impact of high temperatures on people's behaviors and enhance overall quality of life in a hot country.

In my view

What happens after oil runs out?



Dr. Khalid Al-Saleh

Local@kuwaittimes.com

All of us, with all our classes and levels know that oil is a commodity that will run out, and this carries risks that threaten next generations future.

Our worries increase each time oil prices drop, a justified worry for us Kuwaitis, as oil is our only source of income, and we, ever since know oil luxury, did not hear or know any alternative plan that reduces our dependence on this lonely source.

All of us, with all our classes and various cultural and economic levels, know that oil carries inevitable risks with it, most important of which is that its price may drop to below the benefit from it, or even to less than the cost of its production and the second danger is for it to run out just like any commodity that is withdrawn from.

Of course, our beloved decision makers, who have the future of our children in their hands, did not have plans against the risks and the reason is that they, our beloved leaders, do not feel the risks, as the collapse of oil prices does mean anything to them at all, as they all secured themselves and their next generations against the risks of need and shortage of prosperity until judgement day.

But for us, the rest of the people, if they viewed us as part of the people, we are of no value, we write and scream for many long years, but no one cares for us and no one listens to us.

Today, we see most oil countries succeeded in having other sources of income and we are still walking in place, our future is uncertain, statements are many and shootings are deafening and knives are near our necks and we do not know when the importance of oil will decrease or its prices will drop. All that we know that we once again are dealing with anxiety, the anxiety that is only felt by the people who do not own palaces in the European and American resorts with huge accounts that are enough to send reassurance in the hearts of those who longer feel us, individuals who became like guests who do not feel the people, they are among us for a certain coming time only, guests until the last drop of oil.

What is the solution for this anxiety that surround us each time and reflects on the Psyche of Kuwaitis, so complaints increase, groaning rises, and a cloud of frustration shrouds our country? I have my opinion the solution is to withdraw the balances of all leaders abroad, be them legislators or executives, selling their properties abroad in favor of the state's treasury, the states treasury that will be at the hands of the people when need arises, then anxiety will get them like us, and they will think with us about alternative plans for the source of our income.

There is no solution other than that, but for the screams of the educated, economists and others, which became chronic, has no effect or benefit, as the hearts of our leaders do not know anxiety, and the last interest in them is having alternative plans for issues they do not think it threatens their future.

Share our worries with them so they see what we see.



Kuwaiti and Hungarian officials discuss renewables at a meeting attended by Minister Marton Nagy and Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah.

Kuwait, Hungary discuss Schengen, clean energy

BUDAPEST: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held official talks on Monday with Hungarian counterpart Peter Szijarto within the Kuwaiti delegation's official visit to Budapest. Exempting Kuwaitis from Schengen visa requirements and rallying European support for such move was of the main topics discussed in the meeting, according to a foreign ministry statement.

The Hungarian top diplomat, noted the statement, underlined his country's "full" support for the Kuwaiti request, pointing to his country's efforts in this regard, within its partnership with the European Union. Both sides saw eye-to-eye and exchanged views on a host of vital issues, including a neutral and peaceful approach to solving conflicts that would respect and reserve countries' sovereignties; a matter that would reflect on international peace and security. Other files discussed included Iraq, Iran, Syria, the Palestinian cause, the Middle East peace process, the Russia-Ukraine conflict and combating terrorism and extremism.

Student shares ups and downs of studying medicine

By Munirah Al-Fayez

KUWAIT: Zahraa Abdulsalam's childhood dream had always been to study medicine, since she loved learning about the human body and various disorders and diseases. Every time she had the chance to work on a school project, she would always try to link it to the human body. Abdulsalam, a fourth-year medical student at Kuwait University, told Kuwait Times even though she felt prepared academically and is passionate about what she is studying, "medicine is not easy at all".

"It is very challenging. You will get stressed to the point where you will reach a level where you will think that you cannot last anymore," she said. This pressure is not only felt by a small group of people — it is felt by all students. From the amount of stress you are going through, Abdulsalam said you feel like you are emotionally drained, but you do not have time to be emotionally drained.

"You do not have time to treat yourself or give yourself a break, because you have a lot to study for, which makes it a cycle. The problem is not with understanding the content; this is what any student



BUDAPEST: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (left) signs a memorandum of understanding on tourism with Hungarian counterpart Peter Szijarto. — KUNA photos

A memorandum of understanding on tourism was signed at the end of the talks, reflecting the friendly countries' keenness to sustain and further bilateral relations, noted the statement.

Kuwait's Foreign Minister also held talks on Monday with Hungarian Minister for Economic Development Marton Nagy, focusing on economic and investment cooperation. The talks revolved around common endeavors in the field of clean energy and renewables, according to a foreign ministry statement. — KUNA

would say, because most of us know how to understand these complex topics and how to study and memorize, but the problem is always with the amount of content we need to study," Abdulsalam explained. "It is not easy, but this is part of studying medicine, no matter who you are or where you are studying in the world," she said, adding this is a sign of a good doctor — someone who has a lot of knowledge and can work under a lot of pressure.

"I would not say university is bad; however, there is a lot of room for improvement, and honestly, the university is trying its best. If I could change one thing, it would be that the professors would all use the same resource and specify it. If they want to use multiple resources, they can, but there needs to be one resource they all go back to," Abdulsalam said. She would also like to see a change in the exam structure — there should be either exams for modules or exams at the end the year, not both. This will help students be able to study in a more organized manner.

Abdulsalam said having the emotional support of her family, friends, community and other students is what helps her ease the pressure and keep up with the workload, as well as motivating herself and managing her thoughts and perceptions. "People around you should know that it is going to be hard," Abdulsalam noted. She explained her routine helps her keep going, because it makes her study even when she is not motivated. So she stays disciplined, explaining she does not need to be motivated to study — she just needs to be disciplined. Abdulsalam added it is

Minister calls for more exam supervisors at private schools

KUWAIT: Minister of Education Dr Hamad Al-Adwani called for the need to delegate a sufficient number of assistant directors and heads of departments who are not participating in the examination committees to supervise the proper conduct of private school exams, prepare reports on the results of supervision and record violations related to confronting cases of cheating.

After the great success achieved by the ministry in controlling the examination committees, said a press statement from the ministry, Minister Al-Adwani stressed the need to activate control over final and midterm exams in private schools starting from the next academic year 2023/2024. Reports of the General Administration of Private Education regarding the existence of violations or negligence in the committees are referred to authorities for investigation, Adwani stressed, adding that necessary measures are taken against the violating school.

Scholarships for expats unchanged

In other news, informed sources said Kuwait University rejected a request by some embassies in Kuwait to increase the number of scholarships for students of their communities residing in Kuwait. Sources said the scholarships given currently to embassies are enough, and in fact exceed Kuwait University's capacity. According to sources, some embassies had asked Kuwait University to increase the number of scholarships for their students due to the large number of outstanding students coming from these communities. The university said scholarships are not awarded based on the number of outstanding students in a given year, but according to scientific exchange agreements between Kuwait and other countries.

Kuwait University also accepts 50 expat students selected by the education minister based on their grades. Students must apply to be on this list. Sources added that Kuwait University will not accept expat students in some colleges like medicine, dental, pharmacy, engineering and administrative sciences as those colleges are sought by Kuwaiti students in large numbers. Meanwhile sources said Public Authority for Applied Education and Training will not accept expat students in the next term because the number of Kuwaitis students who meet conditions is large and exceed available seats.



Photo for illustrative purposes only

also very important for students to give themselves a break and learn how to divide their time wisely, which is something she is "still learning how to do".

Abdulsalam, who stood 24th overall among Kuwaiti high school graduates in 2019, has some advice for students. "Do not go into it scared — there are many who graduate. However, do not go into it thinking it would be easy like high school, just because you were a top student in high school. Believe in yourself and believe that Allah will support you. When you feel like you cannot handle it, remember Allah is with you and there are people around you who support you. Ask for help from other students who are older than you. Everyone helps everyone — you cannot go through it without asking for help. We all ask for help and we all support each other in this university," she concluded.

Local

Zain welcomes returning pilgrims at Kuwait International Airport

Initiative held in collaboration with DGCA to mark completion of hajj journey



KUWAIT: DGCA Operations Department Manager Mansour Al-Hashemi is seen with Zain's team at the airport.



A member of Zain's team hands gift bags to pilgrims.

KUWAIT: In a step to share the spiritual moments of these blessed days, Zain joined in welcoming returning pilgrims at Kuwait International Airport to congratulate them on their safe return from the holy hajj journey. The initiative came in collaboration with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and was attended by DGCA Operations Department Manager Mansour Al-Hashemi.

Zain's team was present at the Arrivals Hall in Kuwait International Airport to share this special occasion with returning pilgrims and their families as soon as the first flights arrived from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The company presented gifts that were specially prepared for the pilgrims to congratulate them on completing their sacred duty, a step that sprung from Zain's social responsibility to join in celebrating the community's most joyful occasions.

Zain thanked the Civil Aviation team for supporting and facilitating this initiative, which enabled the company's team to interact with the returning pilgrims and their families with utmost ease. Zain also took this opportunity to express its gratitude to the DGCA and other government entities who

exert tremendous efforts to serve travelers during the summer season, which witnesses heavy traffic at the airport, especially this year as it coincided with hajj season.

Zain recently announced a new collaboration with the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs to present its annual complimentary roaming promotion for the hajj season, where the company offered its top roaming plan for free to all postpaid and prepaid customers who were registered in Kuwait's certified hajj campaigns. With this initiative, the company kept pilgrims in touch with their loved ones at no cost by allowing them to enjoy Internet and voice calls at hajj locations in Saudi Arabia.

Zain presents this initiative every year to keep customers who travel to the Sacred House connected to each other and to their loved ones for free during hajj season. The company continuously offers services that are tailored to match its customers' expectations and needs during their travels and to keep them connected to their loved ones and businesses with more convenience and around the clock, especially during the most cherished occasions and seasons like hajj.



KUWAIT: Pilgrims receive souvenirs from Kuwait Airways staff.



Kuwait Airways CEO Maan Razouqi and Director of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation Emad Al-Jalawi are seen as they receive pilgrims.

Kuwait Airways preferred by 3,500 pilgrims for travel

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways Company received pilgrims' flights coming from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at T4, where Kuwait Airways transported about 3,500 pilgrims to and from Kuwait on 30 flights, and the company provided souvenirs to pilgrims, for their safe return to the homeland.

On the sidelines of the reception, Kuwait Airways CEO Maan Razouqi said: "We are pleased and honored to receive pilgrims on Kuwait Airways flights coming from the Holy Land after performing hajj, as Kuwait Airways receives the honorable pilgrims as part of the company's constant keenness to provide them with all amenities during their safe arrival to the homeland."

Razouqi added: "We appreciate the role of all concerned authorities, especially the Director of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Eng. Emad Al-Jalawi, for their tireless efforts in providing flexibility and fluidity for the honorable pilgrims, as all pilgrims completed the passport stamping procedures in less than 10 minutes, which indicates the professionalism and accuracy followed by Kuwait Airways in transporting the



Kuwait Airways CEO Maan Razouqi and Director of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation Emad Al-Jalawi are seen with Kuwait Airways employees.

honorable passenger to and from his destination." "As usual, Kuwait Airways prepared well for the hajj season, as the company forms a permanent committee for hajj and umrah consisting of the most important departments of the company. The committee keeps track of hajj and umrah flights permanently throughout the year to provide the best experience for pilgrims traveling on board the national carrier of Kuwait. The company also works to meet all the needs of its valued customers according to their preferences," Razouqi continued.

"Kuwait Airways pays great attention to making the procedures smooth, comfortable, easy and simple for the honorable pilgrims, in addition to the

distinguished services that the company recently launched for customers, which facilitate the process of completing travel procedures," he said.

Director of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation Emad Al-Jalawi, expressed his sincere thanks and gratitude to all concerned authorities at Kuwait International Airport for their tireless efforts and effective role in serving pilgrims, whether in departure or arrival and seeking to clear any obstacles they might face. Jalawi said: "We are here today at T4 to ensure that all facilities and flexibility are provided in completing travel procedures for the honorable pilgrims, wishing them an accepted pilgrimage and forgiven sins."

Final pilgrims arrive home following successful hajj season

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Information Minister Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi on Sunday praised the success of hajj season. In a press statement, Al-Mutairi, also minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, appreciated the tireless efforts of the Kuwaiti hajj mission and agencies to facilitate the spiritual journey and rituals for pilgrims. He admired the impeccable organization of the religious journey and coordination between Kuwaiti agencies and relevant Saudi authorities in serving pilgrims. He congratulated the pilgrims for the completion of their hajj journey. Minister Al-Mutairi thanked the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the great efforts and tremendous services it offered to pilgrims. Over 1.8 million people performed hajj this year.



KUWAIT: Pilgrims arrive at Kuwait International Airport on Sunday. — KUNA

46 flights

The General Directorate for Civil Aviation announced that all of Kuwait's pilgrims have returned home on 46 flights after completing their hajj rituals.

Kuwait International Airport received on Sunday 21 flights carrying the pilgrims from Jeddah and Madinah airports, the directorate of Civil Aviation said. The last one arrived in the early hours of Monday morning at

the T4 terminal, said Mansour Al-Hashemi, Director of Operations Department at the Civil Aviation, said. Kuwait Airways Company had the largest number of return flights at 10, while Jazeera Airways flights had five flights arriving at the T5 building. The number of incoming flights to the T1 terminal was six distributed as follows: three flights for Saudi Arabian Airlines, two flights for Adeal and one flight for Nas Airlines. — KUNA

High prices burden some during Eid

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Many people marked Eid Al-Adha last week with the traditional sacrifice of sheep and other Eid expenses, despite the burden of day-to-day needs that are weighing heavy on the shoulders of breadwinners. Citizens and residents told Kuwait Times that the expenses of celebrating Eid Al-Adha can vary depending on the size of the animal being sacrificed, clothes and Eid visits, in addition to eidiya (cash gifts) and personal preferences.

Due to higher demand, prices of sacrificial sheep increased during Eid. According to Talal Al-Fadhli, one sheep cost him KD 150. "You also have the expense of skinning and cutting the meat of KD 10 per sheep. There are some customs and traditions after slaughtering the sheep, which is inviting relatives and neighbors for lunch or dinner. Cooking lamb in restaurants during the feast days reaches KD 40 to KD 50, while on regular days it costs KD 25, in addition to the costs of drinks and sweets," he said.

"Some of my family members prefer to slaughter outside Kuwait in poor countries due to lower prices. The price of sheep in Kuwait is 3-4 times the price abroad, as it costs KD 30 to KD 70 abroad, while in Kuwait prices range from KD 150 to KD 180, in addition to KD 10 to slaughter it," he noted.

Fadhli explained the Eid Al-Adha budget this year was higher due to it coinciding with the graduation of university and school students. "There was an extra burden of giving gifts to graduates and eidiya to children, between KD 1 to KD 5 and more depending on their age."

Apart from the cost of the sacrificial animal, others spent on buying new clothes for the occasion, preparing special meals, giving gifts to family and friends and participating in community events and charitable activities. Hani Khedir said Eid clothes for his family of four exceeded KD 250. "The joy of Eid is the joy of my children with new clothes. This Eid, KD 250 was spent on my wife and two children. These prices are considered average due to the high prices in the market during the festive period," he said. Khedir revealed he also spent KD 300 on eidiya for his children and wife, and KD 100 on entertainment during Eid.

Meanwhile, Zeyad Shaddad said his family only bought the bare necessities. "Along with the cost of the sheep of KD 130, we only spent on basic needs to receive our guests due to obligations we have toward our children. As for Eid clothing, I spent KD 60 on my son's clothes, as there were a lot of sales at clothing shops. We also avoided popular brands," he said.

News in Brief

Fire fighters control
Shuaiba Industrial blaze

KUWAIT: A fire has erupted in a storage in Shuaiba Industrial area on Monday afternoon, the public relations department at the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) announced. The Central Operations Department directed fire brigades from the Mina Abdullah and Um Al-Hayman centers to the fire site. Upon arrival, the teams found that the fire broke out in a room and spread to wood in an open yard, and the fire was controlled and extinguished without causing injuries, the KFF said.

Allowance increase approved
for some female prison staff

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Council agreed to increase the special allowances paid to Kuwaiti Interior Ministry employees who have direct contact with inmates at the Central Prison. The increase was proposed by Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, the Interior Ministry said in a statement Monday.

Fire at Zour refinery had
no effect on operations: KIPIC

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) said Sunday that fire-fighters extinguished a fire that broke out earlier at Unit No 12 of the Al-Zour Refinery. In a post on its Twitter account, KIPIC confirmed that the blaze did not result in any casualties, and cooling of the unit has begun. It added that production and export operations have not been affected, adding that the relevant emergency health, safety, security and environment measures were activated to deal with the accident. — KUNA

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: The moon nears the end of its waxing gibbous phase as seen from Kuwait city, on July 2, 2023. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

After COVID-19, Kuwait explores ways to enhance response to zoonotic diseases

Meeting held to establish cooperation framework among GCC countries

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) organized a meeting to discuss the preparations and capabilities of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to respond to threats of zoonotic diseases.

"This meeting is a vital step towards coordinating efforts and strengthening capacities to address these diseases, which pose significant threats to human health and global economies," IAEA's national liaison officer Dr Nader Al-Awadhi said in a press release on Monday.

More than 70 percent of emerging infectious diseases in humans are zoonotic diseases, meaning that they have jumped from animals to humans, added Awadhi. Zoonotic pathogens may be bacterial, viral or parasitic, or may involve unconventional agents and can spread to humans through direct contact or through food, water or the environment.

"We need scientific and practical infrastruc-

ture for cooperation in the Gulf region to confront these diseases, whether endemic such as brucellosis, or emerging diseases such as SARS and Corona, or re-emerging such as tuberculosis and rabies," he said.

Dr Abdulaziz Al-Ateeqi, a veterinarian at the Environment and Life Sciences Research Center at the KISR and the national coordinator of the IAEA's Integrated Action for Common Animal Diseases (ZODIAC) initiative, said that the meeting aims to exchange knowledge and plan for a future where we have a stronger, faster and more effective response to such threats.

Ateeqi pointed out that each member state of the GCC presented during the meeting its main concerns and needs regarding zoonotic diseases.

He added that the meeting delved into the details of the ZODIAC initiative, which lays down comprehensive strategic pillars for enhancing detection, diagnosis and surveillance capabilities and developing new technologies for disease detection and surveillance.



Dr Nader Al-Awadhi



Dr Abdulaziz Al-Ateeqi

ZODIAC is an initiative established in 2020 to help countries prevent epidemics caused by bacteria, parasites, fungi or viruses that originate in animals and can be transmitted to humans, using a systematic and integrated approach. It also helps enhance the readiness and capacity of member states to rapidly detect and respond to outbreaks of such diseases in a timely manner. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Officials discuss their concerns regarding GCC countries' response to zoonotic diseases at a meeting held Monday. — KUNA photos.

Abandoned vehicles towed, hygiene violations issued in Ahmadi

KUWAIT: The Public Hygiene and Road Works Department at the Ahmadi Governorate Municipality issued 165 public hygiene violations during field tours held this week across the governorate, the Public Relations Department in Kuwait Municipality announced Monday.

Officials also towed 103 abandoned cars, boats, mobile convenience stores and scrap containers. They placed 189 stickers on cars and boats in preparation for their removal after the end of the specified period.

"The aim of the intensive field tours is to monitor violators and take all legal measures against them," said Director of the Department of Public Hygiene and Road Works at the Governorate Municipality Branch Nawaf Al-Mutairi.



He said his supervisory team pays great attention to raising the level of cleanliness and removing all that distorts the aesthetic view and blocks the roads through the field tours that he implements to preserve the civilized landscape of the governorate in areas under his jurisdiction.

"The supervisory team will not hesitate to take all legal measures against violators of the public hygiene and road occupancy regulations," he said.



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AUK Graduates Class of 2023



Closing Ceremony

The American University of Kuwait (AUK) celebrated the graduation commencement of the class of 2023 on Wednesday, June 21st. The ceremony, held at The Arena Kuwait (TAK), marked a significant milestone for 340 accomplished graduates. Among them were 142 graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences, 103 from the College of Business and Economics, and 95 from the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. The distinguished class included 10 summa cum laude, 23 magna cum laude, and 27 cum laude graduates.

Distinguished guests in attendance at the graduation ceremony included Sheikhha Dana Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, founder and chair of AUK's Board of Trustees, members of the AUK board of trustees, diplomats, dignitaries, and families of the graduates.

The ceremony commenced with the national anthem and the Holy Quran recitation, followed by a thought-provoking speech by AUK President, Dr. Rawda Awwad. In her address, Dr. Awwad emphasized the values cultivated by the graduates during their time at AUK, such as perseverance, collaboration, empathy, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. She encouraged the graduates to carry these lessons as guiding principles throughout their future endeavors.

The keynote speech was delivered by H.E. Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, head of the Kuwait Olympic Committee and an AUK alumnus from the class of 2014. Sheikh Fahad inspired the graduates to embrace continuous learning, unlock their potential, and make choices that may surprise them. He concluded by urging the graduates to savor the summer and celebrate their hard-earned achievements.

The class valedictorian, Amal Kahwaji, who earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing with a remarkable 3.99 GPA, was announced by Ms. Hala Al-Abdulrazzaq, AUK's dean of student affairs. Amal delivered a memorable speech, acknowledging the role failures played in shaping their successes. She emphasized the importance of celebrating the journey as a whole, learning from both victories and failures, and gaining the confidence to tackle the next phase of life.

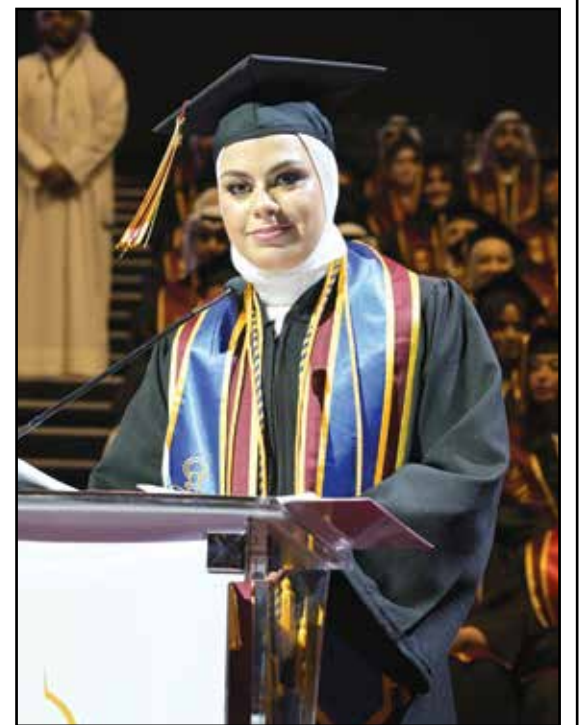
The highlight of the ceremony was the distribution of degrees. President Awwad conferred the degrees upon the graduates based



**Keynote Speaker, H.E. Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah
Head of Kuwait Olympic and AUK alumnus from the Class of 2014**



**AUK President,
Dr. Rawda Awwad**



**Amal Kahwaji,
Class Valedictorian Bachelor of
Business Administration in Marketing**

on the recommendations of the deans—Dr. Ali Charara, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Dr. Ralph Palliam, dean of the College of Business and Economics; and Dr. Mohamed El-Abd, interim dean of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Each graduate was presented with their diploma by President Awwad and their respective college deans.

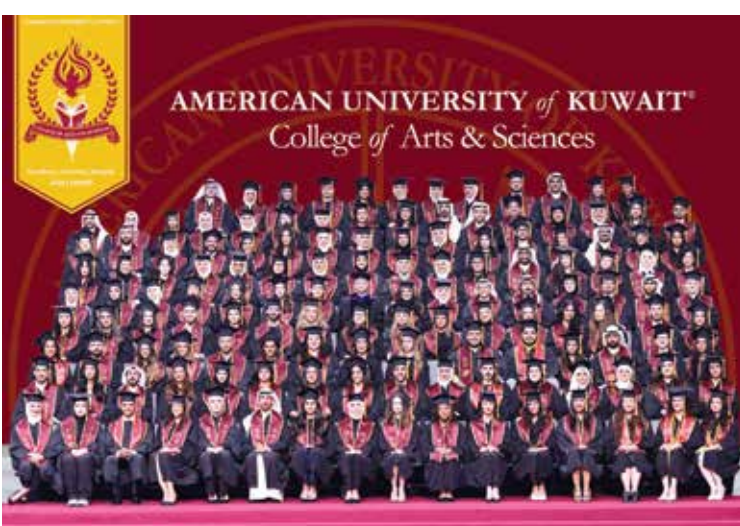
In a symbolic gesture, the graduates shifted their tassels from right to left, signifying their official graduation from AUK. As the ceremony concluded, the graduates joyfully celebrated the momentous occasion and captured memories with their proud parents.

Recognized for its commitment to academic excellence, the American University of Kuwait (AUK) offers a diverse range of accredited

undergraduate programs. AUK's state-of-the-art facilities include modern classrooms equipped with cutting-edge technology, research laboratories, and recreational amenities such as the gymnasium and lounge. The institution is dedicated to empowering students with knowledge, skills, and experiences that transcend the classroom, nurturing future leaders and change-makers.

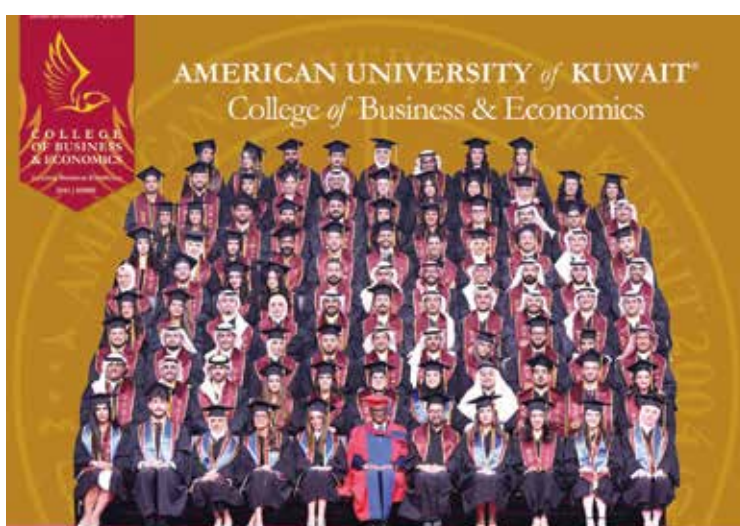


(From left) Mr. Meshal Ali, AUK Co-Founder and Vice Chair; Chargé d'Affaires Jim Holtsnider, H.E. Ambassador Abdullah Bishara, AUK Board Members Mr. Samer Khanachet and Dr. Jawad Behbehani



Class of 2023

Class Photo: College of Arts & Sciences with Dean Ali Charara



Class of 2023

Class Photo: College of Business & Economics with Dean Ralph Palliam



Class of 2023

Class Photo: College of Engineering and Applied Sciences with Interim Dean AlAbd



HK police offer bounties for 8 overseas activists

Putin to address Shanghai alliance with Iran expected to join

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THE HAGUE: (Left to right): Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court Karim AA Khan KC, European Commissioner for Justice Didier Reynders, President of Eurojust Ladislav Hamran, Prosecutor General of Ukraine Andriy Kostin and Assistant US Attorney General Kenneth A. Polite Jr address a press conference in The Hague. — AFP

Ukraine war probe office opens in Hague

Special tribunal for Russian leadership was now 'inevitable'

THE HAGUE: An international office to probe Russia for the war crime of aggression opened in The Hague on Monday in what Ukraine called a "truly historic" first step towards a tribunal for Moscow's leadership. The centre will investigate and gather evidence for any future trial that could bring Kremlin and Russian military figures to justice for invading their pro-Western neighbor.

Its aim is to plug a legal gap left by the fact that the International Criminal Court (ICC) currently has no mandate to prosecute aggression — the core war crime of launching a war against another country. The new International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression Against Ukraine (ICPA) features prosecutors from Kyiv, the European Union, the United States and the ICC.

Speaking as the centre opened, Ukraine Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin said a special tribunal for the Russian leadership was now "inevitable".

"We are gathered here on the occasion of a truly historic moment — I would say an epoch-defining moment," Andriy told a news conference at the EU judicial office Eurojust, where the ICPA is based.

Kostin said the opening of the centre was a "clear signal that the world is united and unwavering on the path to holding the Russian regime accountable for all its crimes." He added that the "crime of aggression is an original sin, the commission of which opened the floodgate for 100,000 other international crimes." Kyiv has been pushing for a special tribunal since the discovery of hundreds of bodies after Russian troops withdrew from the town of Bucha near the Ukrainian capital in April 2022.

'Unlawful war'

International support has grown steadily, and the European Commission then announced the creation of the ICPA in February. The United States then announced that it would join last month — despite the fact that, like Russia, it is not a member of the ICC.

US Assistant Attorney General Kenneth Polite said justice officials have now handed over the first tranche of evidence to the centre.

Polite told the news conference that Washington was "proud to stand with our European partners" in prosecuting "Russia's unlawful war of aggression against the people of Ukraine." The United States also backed a special tribunal for aggression, he added. EU Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders said Monday's launch showed Kyiv's allies would "stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes."

"We cannot tolerate the gross violation of the prohibition of the use of force," he told the news conference. Calls for a special tribunal on Ukraine have mounted because of the inability to prosecute aggression by the ICC, a war crimes court which is also based in The Hague. The ICC is probing more specific war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine, and issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin in March over alleged child deportations. Fundamental questions remain over how a special tribunal would work, when it could be created and who would support it. The most likely option appears to be a hybrid court under Ukrainian law with Ukrainian and foreign judges. But Eurojust chief Ladislav Hamran said it was "not important at this stage... where the trial will happen". "As far as investigation of the crime of aggression goes, it's important that we start now," he said. — AFP

Blasts in Khartoum as army renews call for volunteers

WAD MADANI: Explosions again rocked Sudan's capital Khartoum on Monday as the army rallied civilians to take up arms against a renewed onslaught by its paramilitary foes. The sound of artillery fire shook the dawn in northwest Khartoum and progressed towards the centre and east of the city, witnesses told AFP. The fighting "began at 4:00 am and is still going," one resident said. The war-torn capital barely saw a few hours of respite after heavy clashes on Sunday between troops loyal to army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

The army announced Monday it was ready to "receive and prepare" volunteer fighters, after Burhan last week urged Sudanese "youth and all those able to defend" to join the military. War-weary civilians have largely rejected the call, pleading for an end to the relentless war between Burhan and his former deputy, RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.



STRASBOURG: Mayor of Strasbourg Jeanne Barseghian addresses participants as they take part in a nationwide action in Strasbourg, eastern France on July 3, 2023, after France's mayors have called on the population and elected representatives to gather in front of all town halls at midday. — AFP

Call for anti-riot rallies in France

PARIS: Demonstrations began at French town halls Monday opposing nearly a week of violent protests over a teen's fatal shooting by police, even as the first signs emerged that the unrest was beginning to ease. The government has battled riots and looting since 17-year-old Nahel M. was shot dead by a police officer during a traffic stop on Tuesday, reviving longstanding accusations of racism against the French police force.

During a sixth consecutive night of unrest, a fireman died while seeking to douse burning vehicles north of Paris but it was unclear if there was a link to the violent protests, the interior ministry said.

Monday's demonstrations — called a "mobilization of citizens for a return to republican order" — came after the home of the mayor of a Paris suburb was rammed with a flaming car, prompting widespread outrage.

In a statement, an association of the country's mayors noted that areas "everywhere in France are the scene of serious unrest, which targets republican symbols with extreme violence". Seeking to quell what has become one of the biggest challenges to President Emmanuel Macron since he took office in 2017, the interior ministry again deployed 45,000 police and gendarmes nationwide overnight Sunday to Monday, the same figure as the previous two nights.

A total of 157 people were arrested in relation to the unrest nationwide, according to the interior ministry — a fraction of the number taken into custody the night before. Three police officers were also wounded. Among 3,200 people arrested in rioting since Tuesday, the average age was 17 and some were "children, there is no other word, of 12 or 13," Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said on a visit to eastern city Reims.

Internal affairs investigators on Monday began interviewing a passenger in the car Nahel was driving without a licence, a police source told AFP.

Meanwhile, a collection for the family of the 38-year-old policeman who fired the fatal shot — now charged with voluntary manslaughter — topped 930,000 euros (over \$1.0 million).

Threatened with death

Vincent Jeanbrun, the conservative mayor of L'Hay-les-Roses outside Paris, had his home rammed with a burning car with the aim of setting it on fire, breaking the leg of his wife who was at home with their children aged five and seven.

The attack was condemned across the spectrum including by the hard left, while prosecutors have opened an attempted murder investigation. "There is no doubt that they wanted to burn the house" and, when "they realized that there was someone inside, far from stopping, they set off a broadside of fireworks mortars," Jeanbrun told TFI late Sunday.

"I never would have imagined that my family would be threatened with death," he added. The 24-year-old fireman who died was fighting a fire in an underground car park in the suburb of Seine-Saint-Denis north of the capital, Darmanin said. "An investigation is underway" to determine the circumstances of the vehicle fires, the interior ministry added.

A police source, who asked not to be named, indicated there was likely no link to the riots: "It would be going too far. Likely this is not the case, it is not an area affected by urban violence."

Nadia, the grandmother of Nahel, who was of Algerian origin, said Sunday that rioters were only using his death as a "pretext" and called for calm.

Although the violence appears to be diminishing, questions remain about its origins. "I can't support people smashing and burning things, who would?" said Fatiha Abdouni, 52, founder of a women's association in Nahel's home town Nanterre. Nevertheless, "now we have to listen to the young people, their frustration and anger," she added. Youths in Paris' deprived suburbs face "daily difficulties, unequal access to study, to work, to housing," Abdouni said — needing only the "spark" of Nahel's death to trigger the violence. — AFP

Million euros pledged for French policeman

PARIS: A collection for a French policeman who sparked nationwide riots by shooting a teenager dead topped one million euros (\$1.1 million) Monday, dwarfing donations to the victim's family. More than 40,000 people have pledged money to the online appeal set up by a far-right media commentator on the Gofundme.com website.

It easily outstripped the 200,000 euros gathered for the family of the dead 17-year-old, Nahel, who was of north African origin. Nahel's grandmother said she was "heartbroken" by the support shown for the policeman.

"He took the life of my grandson. This man must pay, the same as everyone," she told the BFM channel on Sunday. "I have confidence in the justice system. I believe in justice." Tuesday's shooting during a traffic stop in a suburb west of Paris has exposed deep political divisions in France.

Many right-wing figures have defended the security forces, while those on the left see the death as a consequence of systemic racism in the police. Widespread rioting and looting since appear to have deepened the polarization.

'Doing his work'

Politicians from the left and the ruling centrist party have condemned the collection for the policeman, which was launched by far-right media commentator Jean Messiha. "Jean Messiha is playing with fire," ruling party MP Eric Bothorel wrote on Twitter, calling it "indecent and scandalous".

The head of the Socialist party, Olivier Faure attacked Gofundme, saying it was facilitating a "shameful" collection. Senior hard-left MP Mathilde Panot highlighted how a collection for a former boxer who had punched police officers during "Yellow Vest" anti-government demonstrations in 2019 had been quickly closed by authorities.

"Killing a young North African in France in 2023 can earn you a lot of money," she wrote. Messiha, a former advisor to far-right leader Marine Le Pen, celebrated on Twitter when his fund overtook the one for the family of Nahel at the weekend. When launching the appeal, he said it was for an officer who was "doing his work and is paying a heavy price".

The head of the right-wing Republicans party, Eric Ciotti, defended the collection on Monday and said he might contribute. The officer's family was "facing difficulties", he said. The 38-year-old policeman, named by French media as Florian M., has been detained and charged with voluntary manslaughter. — AFP

Field trials

The RSF has been accused of intentionally targeting civilians in Darfur, including by shooting people fleeing towards the Chadian border. The paramilitaries have also been identified as the main perpetrators of conflict-related sexual assault by survivors in both Darfur and Khartoum. According to the governmental Combating Violence Against Women and Children Unit, most of the 42 survivors in Khartoum — and all of the 46 survivors in the Darfur cities of Nyala and El Geneina — said they were assaulted by RSF fighters.

Late on Sunday, the RSF announced it was cracking down on "looting and vandalism, particularly the theft of civilian cars". Since the conflict began, RSF fighters — highly mobile and embedded in densely populated neighborhoods — have been accused of widespread break-ins and looting. Residents have been forcibly evicted from their homes, had their vehicles stolen or learned after fleeing Khartoum that their homes were being used as bases. — AFP

International

HK police offer bounties for 8 prominent overseas activists

'They have committed very serious offences that endanger national security'

HONG KONG: Hong Kong police offered on Monday HK\$1 million bounties for information leading to the capture of eight prominent democracy activists based abroad and wanted for national security crimes. All eight fled Hong Kong after Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law on the financial hub in mid-2020 to quell dissent after huge, sometimes violent pro-democracy protests in 2019 were quashed.

"They have committed very serious offences that endanger national security," said Steven Li, chief superintendent of the national security department. The group includes former pro-democracy lawmakers Nathan Law Kwun-chung, Ted Hui Chi-fung and Dennis Kwok Wing-hang, and veteran unionist Mung Siu-tat.

The remaining four are activists Elmer Yuen Gong-yi, Finn Lau Cho-dik, Anna Kwok Fung-yee and Kevin Yam Kin-fung. All eight are alleged to have colluded with foreign forces to endanger national security—an offence that carries a sentence of up to life in prison. Some have also been accused of subversion, incitement to subversion and secession. "They advocated for sanctions to damage Hong Kong's interests and intimidate Hong Kong's officials with some targeting specifically some judges and prosecutors," Li said.

He added that police cannot arrest the eight if they remain overseas. "But we will not stop (chasing them)", he said. A reward of HK\$1 million (\$127,644) was offered for each activist to anyone providing information on their whereabouts "leading to the arrest or satisfactory prosecution".

The national security law—which has reshaped

Hong Kong society and busted down the legal firewall that once existed between the special autonomous region and the mainland—has the power to hold accused people across the world accountable.

Under the law, security cases are handled by designated police officers, prosecutors and judges in Hong Kong, and Beijing can take over certain cases to try them in the mainland's opaque, Communist Party-controlled justice system.

The announcement of the wanted list came two days after the city celebrated the 26th anniversary of its handover from Britain to China. It was also the third anniversary of the promulgation of the national security law.

'Ridiculous'

In Hong Kong, 260 people have been arrested under the law, with more than 160 individuals and five companies charged. The bulk of the accused are prominent pro-democracy politicians, activists, unionists and journalists.

One of the accused activists Yam—a former lawyer in Hong Kong and an Australian citizen—told AFP he was saddened for Hong Kong. "This reflects how far Hong Kong has fallen," Yam said. "The Hong Kong and China authorities are trying to say that their laws have global reach."

Another accused, Ted Hui, who is in exile in Australia, said the bounty was "ridiculous and hilarious" but would add to the weight of China's persecution against the Hong Kong diaspora. "It even makes it clearer to the western democracies that China is going towards a more extreme authoritarian (direction) and (is posing) more of a threat to the world," Hui



HONG KONG: Hong Kong police patrol near a carnival at Victoria Park. Hong Kong police offered on Monday HK\$1 million bounties for information leading to the capture of eight prominent democracy activists based abroad and wanted for national security crimes – AFP

told AFP in a written response. In Hong Kong, Eunice Yung, a serving legislator and the daughter-in-law of accused activist Elmer Yuen, supported the police move against Yuen and emphasised that she had openly severed ties with him last year.

"All his acts and deeds have nothing to do with me," Yung wrote on her social media page. UK-based advocacy group Hong Kong Watch urged the British, American and Australian governments to guarantee the safety of the accused as well as the wider Hong Kong community in their countries.

The organisation's chief executive Benedict Rogers also called on foreign governments to suspend extradition treaties with Hong Kong and China, and to introduce an Interpol early warning system to protect activists overseas.

After Beijing imposed the security law, 10 countries suspended mutual legal assistance in criminal matters with Hong Kong, including the United States, Britain, Australia and Canada. AFP has reached out to the US, UK and Australian governments, as well as Interpol for comment. – AFP

Taiwan conducts live missile firing test

TAIPEI: Taiwan kicked off a two-day missile live-firing test on Monday ahead of its largest annual military exercises as the island ramps up preparations against an increasingly assertive China. The 23 million Taiwanese people live under constant threat of invasion by Beijing, which views the island democracy as part of its territory to be seized one day.

Soldiers fired US-made TOW 2A anti-tank missiles in southern Pingtung county on Monday in an exercise aimed at "enhancing defence operations based on practicality", defence ministry spokesman Sun Li-fang said.

"So our soldiers could have the confidence and capability at wartime, and execute their responsibility to defend the country," he told reporters. The missile firings come as relations between Taipei and Beijing are increasingly strained, with China conducting two major military exercises around Taiwan in the past year. The latest was in April, when Beijing

simulated targeted strikes on Taiwan and encirclement of the island. State media also reported dozens of planes practising an "aerial blockade". Those war games were in response to President Tsai Ing-wen's meeting with US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy in California that month.

Monday's and Tuesday's missile tests come against the backdrop of aerial and naval manoeuvres by Beijing in and around the Taiwan Strait, a 180-kilometre-wide (122-mile-wide) passage between the island and mainland China.

Eight Chinese warplanes approached Taiwan's contiguous zone, the band of sea within 24 nautical miles (44 kilometres) of its coast, last month. In May, China's Shandong aircraft carrier group sailed through the Taiwan Strait in a rare voyage.

Relations have not fared better in the diplomatic sphere. Since the election of Tsai, who rejects China's claim to Taiwan, Beijing has refused to speak with her government. Taiwan's immigration department announced last week it had rejected applications by Chinese tourism officials to visit the island for a mid-July international travel fair. Citing the "overall cross-strait situation", the immigration agency said there were doubts about the "necessity, urgency and irreducibility" of the participation of Chinese tourism officials. Only tourism operators from China had their visas approved. – AFP



PINGTUNG: Military vehicles queue to launch US-made TOW A2 missiles during a live firing exercise in Pingtung county on July 3, 2023. – AFP

the presidential tenure. The constitution stipulates that a president cannot serve more than two terms—but Sall's supporters argue the counter has been reset to zero thanks to the 2016 revision. Sall once campaigned against a third term by his predecessor, Abdoulaye Wade, who was in power from 2000 to 2012. He also repeatedly said he would not seek a third mandate. But he has no designated political successor and in recent months has been coy about another term, a position that has stoked tensions.

Unrest

Sonko, a fiery orator popular with Senegal's disaffected youth, paints Sall as corrupt and a would-be dictator. "It's incumbent on all the Senegalese people to stand up, to face him," Sonko said on Sunday night.

"If we have to put up a fight, it must be definitive... the days and weeks to come will be crucial," he said in a video posted on social media. Sonko was sentenced on June 1 to two years' jail for "corrupting" a young beauty salon worker, sparking protests which led to 16 deaths according to the government, 24 according to Amnesty International, and 30 according

to Sonko's party. The conviction makes him ineligible to stand in 2024. Sonko says the case was crafted to prevent him from running, a charge authorities deny. He has been blocked in by the authorities at his home since May 28.

'Praying for peace'

Residents of the Senegalese capital Dakar returned to work on Monday after a long weekend break for the Muslim festival of Tabaski. Abdou Diagne, a 38-year-old car washer, said: "I don't want him (Sall) to stand again. We've already given him 12 years—it's time for him to go and let somebody else take over. If he says otherwise, it's not a given that people will stand by with their arms folded," Diagne said. "Either way, we are praying for peace." Samba Fall, 50, said he believed Sall "will keep his word." "I expect him to say 'I thank the people for the trust they have invested in me over these last 12 years. I have made my contribution towards building a harmonious Senegal and I won't be standing again, in line with the constitution.'" But, he predicted, if Sall announces a bid for a third term, "that will shake the country up." – AFP



BANGKOK: Live images on a television show Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn and his wife Queen Suthida arriving at the Thai parliament, as seen on a TV set at a medical clinic in Bangkok on July 3, 2023. – AFP

Thai King opens parliament after election result

BANGKOK: Thailand's king opened parliament Monday following a shock election result in which the pro-democracy opposition trounced army-backed parties that have ruled the kingdom for nearly a decade. The Move Forward Party (MFP) won the largest share of votes in the May 14 election but their radical platform, which includes reformation of the strict royal defamation law, may see them struggle to form a coalition government.

Their eight-party coalition bloc, including the second-largest party Pheu Thai, remains short of the required majority in the lower house to surpass the non-elected Senate chamber and successfully nominate a prime minister.

The election was seen as a national rejection of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha, a former army chief who came to power in a 2014 coup. King Maha Vajiralongkorn, accompanied by his wife Queen Suthida, reminded the rows of white-uniformed MPs of their duty to represent the people of Thailand.

"The progress of the nation will be up to your intellectual ability and your honesty," he said in brief prepared remarks. "If everyone realises this, the work will achieve success smoothly," he said.

It was the first time the king has opened parliament in its new home, a gigantic structure on Bangkok's riverside. Nominations for the powerful house speaker position will be submitted on Tuesday.

Although there is no set timeline, the house speaker will select the date when MPs will vote for the prime minister. MFP leader Pita Limjaroenrat, who swept his party to victory on a wave of reformist promises and grassroots activism, is the front-runner but he faces an investigation that could see him disqualified. – AFP

Tension in Senegal as president to reveal election plan

DAKAR: Senegal braced for a potential showdown on Monday as President Macky Sall prepared to make a long-awaited announcement on whether he plans to seek a controversial third term. On the eve of Sall's nationwide address, his fiercest critic, Ousmane Sonko, urged the public to "come out en masse" and oppose him. The president is due to make the announcement on national television at 8:00 pm (2000 GMT). Deadly clashes erupted last month between Sonko supporters and the security forces, claiming at least 16 lives.

The turbulence has stained Senegal's image as a beacon of stability in West Africa, a region notorious for coups and civil war. Sall, 61, was first elected in 2012 for a seven-year term and again in 2019 for a five-year term, following a constitutional revision of

News in Brief

Fire injures four in Tokyo

TOKYO: Four people were injured in a blast and a blaze in a central Tokyo building, the city's fire department said, with footage showing flames and smoke emerging from a second-floor business. The fire started in a building in a restaurant area of the bustling Shimbashi district around 3:20 pm (0620 GMT). "The sound of an explosion was also heard. A total of 32 fire trucks are at the scene," a fire department spokesman told AFP, declining to be named. "Four people are injured, three of whom are conscious," he said, adding no details were yet available on the fourth person. Officials are investigating the cause of the fire. "The sound was deafening. It was as if something huge was dropped from the top of the building—it was an incredible bang," a male eyewitness told public broadcaster NHK. "Pieces of paper were scattered all over at the nearby intersection. From the way they were scattered, I immediately knew it was an explosion," he said. – AFP

New migrant pushbacks

ISTANBUL: Turkey has rescued 95 migrants from three overloaded boats in the Aegean Sea, the interior ministry said on Monday, accusing Greece of "pushing back" the dinghies from its shores. Two inflatable boats carrying 37 people and 47 people respectively were rescued off the Greek island of Lesbos on Saturday, the interior ministry said. Another boat carrying 11 people was spotted near Turkey's western port city of Izmir the same day, the interior ministry said. The ministry described all 95 people as "irregular migrants" but provided no details of their countries of origin. Ankara regularly accuses Greece of pushing migrant boats back into Turkish waters in violation of international law. Greece accuses Turkey of turning a blind eye to irregular migrants leaving its shores. Turkey's latest accusations came just weeks after a fishing trawler carrying hundreds of migrants capsized in Greek waters, leaving at least 82 dead. -- AFP

Egyptian dissident's release

LONDON: Over 100 British lawmakers on Monday expressed concern at the lack of progress in the case of a jailed British-Egyptian activist and urged the UK government to adopt "fresh approaches" to secure his release. Alaa Abdel Fattah—a key figure in the 2011 revolt that toppled Egyptian autocrat Hosni Mubarak -- was given British citizenship in 2022 through his British-born mother. The pro-democracy and rights campaigner is serving a five-year prison sentence for "spreading false news" by sharing a Facebook post about police brutality. "Private lobbying of the Egyptian government even at the highest levels is yet to deliver results. This calls for fresh approaches," the lawmakers from the lower and upper house of the UK parliament say in a letter to Foreign Secretary James Cleverly. The lawmakers want the UK to "take the lead on a joint statement on Egypt" at the UN Human Rights Council and to update the UK's travel advice to align it with the United States government's advice. The US government warns that US citizenship does not provide protection from detention or arrest in Egypt and that those detained may be subject to "prolonged interrogations and extended detention". The letter, which will be delivered later Monday, says that the British embassy in Cairo has been prevented from visiting Abdel Fattah in jail for the past 18 months. – AFP

Business

Putin to address Shanghai alliance with Iran expected to join

Chinese President Xi will also attend the virtual summit of the eight-member SCO

NEW DELHI: India on Tuesday hosts the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, with Iran expected to join the Asian grouping and Russian President Vladimir Putin addressing his first summit since a short-lived mutiny, officials said.

Chinese state media reported President Xi Jinping will also attend the virtual summit of the eight-member SCO—headquartered in Beijing but hosted by India which holds the rotating chair—alongside the leaders of Central Asian countries.

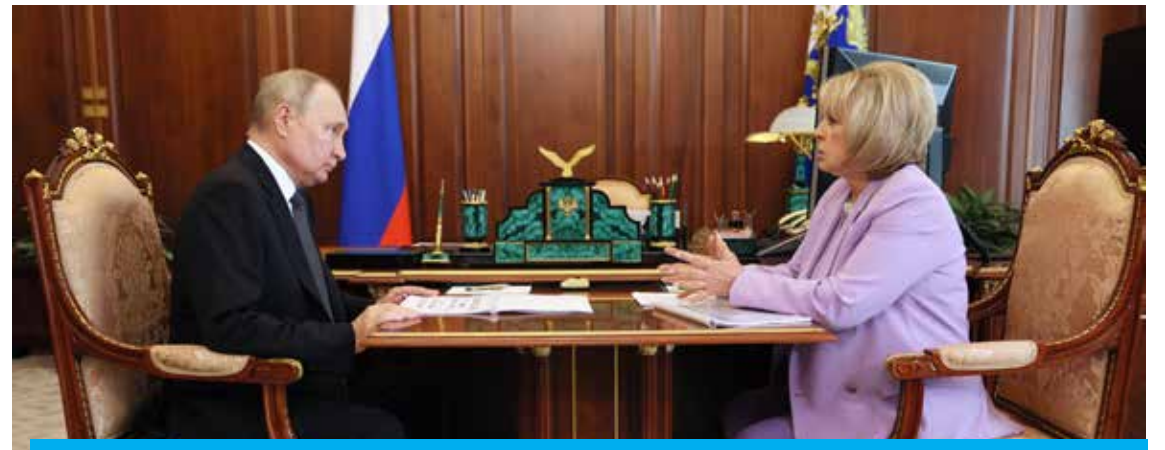
The Kremlin on Monday said Putin would attend and address the summit, without giving further details. Last month the head of the Wagner mercenary group, Yevgeny Prigozhin, led his forces in a failed rebellion against Russia's top military brass, in a huge embarrassment for the Kremlin.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Friday said "the full membership of Iran" would be ap-

proved at the summit, which will be chaired by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Tehran has intensified its diplomacy with friends and foes alike in recent months, seeking to reduce its isolation, improve its economy and project strength.

"This membership is beneficial both for Iran and for the organisation," Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said Monday, saying it would have "positive effects on economic development" between member nations.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will also take part, calling it an "important forum for regional security and prosperity", Islamabad's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement. Created in 2001 to discuss security and economic matters, other SCO members are Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with countries including Belarus and Mongolia invited as observers. — AFP



MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin meets with the country's Central Election Commission head Ella Pamfilova at the Kremlin in Moscow on July 3, 2023. — AFP

Iran executes 354 in first half of 2023

PARIS: Iran has hanged at least 354 people in the first six months of 2023, a rights group said Monday, adding that the pace of executions was much higher than in 2022. Rights groups have accused Tehran of increasing the use of the death penalty to spread fear across society in the wake of the protest movement that erupted last September over the death of Mahsa Amini, who had been arrested for allegedly violating strict dress rules for women.

Norway-based Iran Human Rights said the 354 people figure for the first six months up to June 30 was up 36 percent on the same period in 2022, when 261 people were executed. Emphasising concerns that non-Persian ethnic groups are disproportion-

ately affected by executions in Iran, it said 20 percent of all executions were of members of the Sunni Baluch minority. It said 206 people were executed for drug-related charges, a 126 percent rise compared to the same period last year. Six women were among those executed in the period while two men were publicly hanged, it added.

"The death penalty is used to create societal fear and prevent more protests," said IHR director Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam. "The majority of those killed are low-cost victims of the killing machine, drug defendants who are from the most marginalised communities." IHR earlier this year had reported that Iran carried out 582 executions in 2022, the highest figure in the Islamic republic since 2015. Iran is the world's second biggest executioner after China for which no data is available, according to Amnesty International. Iranian authorities have executed seven men in cases related to the protests, with rights groups warning at least seven more arrested over the demonstrations are at imminent risk of execution. Meanwhile, Iran's foreign ministry lambasted

France on Monday for hosting a meeting of an exiled Iranian opposition group that Tehran considers a "terrorist" organisation. On Saturday, the Albania-based People's Mujahedin of Iran, or Mujahedeen-e-Khalq (MEK), held a meeting outside Paris as thousands of the group's supporters held a rally in the centre of the French capital.

Former US vice president Mike Pence and British ex-prime minister Liz Truss attended the meeting which French police had initially banned. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani "strongly condemned" the decision by the French government to host the meeting, in a tweet on Monday.

"Instead of compensating for the gross mistakes of the past in supporting the murderers of the Iranian people... the French statesmen are providing the arena for the gathering of the terrorists," Kanani said in a separate statement.

He urged the French government "to heed the demands" of its own people instead of "supporting terrorist groups." France has been gripped by a wave of violent street protests sparked by the fatal

police shooting of a 17-year-old of Algerian origin, identified only as Nahel M., in the Paris suburb of Nanterre on Tuesday.

The MEK has been exiled from Iran since the early 1980s. It is held in deep suspicion by many Iranians, including in the diaspora and those opposed to the clerical authorities. In 2013, Albania agreed to take in members of the group at the request of Washington and the United Nations, with thousands settling there over the past decade.

Last month, Albanian authorities raided a MEK camp amid allegations that the group was suspected of orchestrating cyber attacks against foreign institutions. On Sunday, Iran hailed the move by Albania as "commendable".

The MEK backed Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in the 1979 Islamic revolution that ousted the western-backed shah before they fell out with the new authorities and have since sought to overthrow the government. The group later fled to Iraq and sided with former president Saddam Hussein in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. — AFP

Wagner boss 'gone off the rails' over money: Russian TV

MOSCOW: A top Russian propagandist on Sunday accused the Wagner boss of going "off the rails" after receiving billions in public funds, as Moscow's new narrative takes shape after Wagner's brief mutiny. Last weekend the head of the Wagner mercenary group, Yevgeny Prigozhin, led his forces in a short-lived rebellion against Russia's top military brass, in a huge embarrassment for the Kremlin.

"Prigozhin has gone off the rails because of big

money," Dmitry Kiselev, one of the main faces of the Russian propaganda machine, said on his weekly television show on Sunday. "He thought that he can challenge the defence ministry, the state itself and the president personally."

Kiselev said that Wagner's operations in Syria and Africa had given Prigozhin a feeling of impunity that was later reinforced by his rag-tag forces' battlefield successes in eastern Ukraine. Without providing any evidence, Kiselev said Wagner had received more than 858 billion rubles (\$9.7 billion) in state funds.

In a stunning admission earlier this week, President Vladimir Putin said for the first time that Russian authorities "fully" financed the paramilitary outfit. Between May 2022 and May 2023, Wagner received more than 86 billion rubles from the Russian state, Putin said.

Private mercenary groups are banned under Russian law. The Wall Street Journal reported Sunday that agents from the Federal Security Services have raided the headquarters of the Wagner Group in St. Petersburg to find evidence against Prigozhin.

The headquarters said Saturday on Telegram that it was moving but would remain operational albeit under a "new format." Targeted by sanctions from Washington and Brussels, Prigozhin had for years operated in the shadows but has catapulted into the limelight since Putin sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022.

In profanity-laced diatribes, he accused the Russian military of attempting to "steal" victories from Wagner in eastern Ukraine and slammed Moscow's "monstrous bureaucracy" for slowing military gains. Prigozhin was allowed to recruit fighters from prisons and in March, Russian lawmakers approved leg-

islation introducing lengthy prison terms for those who criticise "volunteer groups" such as Wagner. Last month Prigozhin abandoned his advance on Moscow and struck a deal with the Kremlin under which he accepted exile in neighboring Belarus.

Many political observers saw Prigozhin's attempt at insurrection as a sign that Putin's grip on power is weakening. Moscow officials and propagandists insist, however, that Russians have rallied around Putin.

On Sunday, Vyacheslav Volodin, the speaker of Russia's lower house of parliament, wrote that Putin emerged out of "this very difficult situation" even stronger. "He did everything to prevent bloodshed," Volodin wrote on messaging app Telegram. "If there had been people like Putin at the helm of the state in 1917 and 1991, there would have been no revolution and no collapse of the USSR." — AFP

Kuwait urges Iran maritime...

Continued from Page 1

of enmity between the major Gulf powers. The row over the Durra field stretches back to the 1960s, when Iran and Kuwait each awarded an offshore concession, one to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the forerunner to BP, and one to Royal Dutch Shell. The two concessions overlapped in the northern part of the field, whose recoverable reserves are estimated at some 220 billion cu m.

Iran and Kuwait have held unsuccessful talks for many years over their disputed maritime border area, which is rich in natural gas. Saudi Arabia is also a part of the dispute since it shares with Kuwait maritime gas and oil resources in the area. Iranian drilling of the field in 2001 spurred Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to agree on a maritime border deal which stipulated that they jointly develop the offshore zone.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia said on Monday it was extending a voluntary oil production cut and Russia said it was slashing exports, as major producers tried to prop up slumping prices. The cut by Riyadh of one million barrels per day was first announced after a June meeting of oil producers and took effect at the weekend. Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman noted at the time that it was "extendable".

In a report on Monday announcing that the cut would continue through August, the official Saudi Press Agency said it "can be extended" further, citing an energy ministry source. "The source confirmed that this additional voluntary cut comes to reinforce the precautionary efforts made by OPEC+ countries with the aim of supporting the stability and balance of oil markets," SPA said.

Also on Monday, Russia unveiled its export cut of 500,000 bpd for August "as part of efforts to

ensure that the oil market remains balanced". The announcement by Alexander Novak, Russian deputy prime minister responsible for energy policy, came on the back of cuts to Russian oil production this year by the same volume as part of Moscow's response to Western sanctions levied over the conflict in Ukraine.

Recent efforts by OPEC+ to bolster prices by reducing output have not succeeded, and analysts expressed doubt this one would be any different despite initial increases recorded Monday. "It's the usual knee-jerk reaction to reports of production cuts," said IG analyst Chris Beauchamp. "But given... it's not a coordinated move from all (OPEC+) members it seems hard to imagine there's much more upside in this."

The initial market reaction was muted. Brent was up 0.98 percent to \$76.15 per barrel, and West Texas Intermediate was up 1.02 percent to \$71.36 per barrel. Since the beginning of the year, Brent is down 11 percent and WTI is down 7 percent, as a sluggish recovery in China and worries about the US economy weigh on demand forecasts.

The average price of Russian Urals was \$52.17 per barrel during the first half of 2023, down from \$84.09 during the same period last year, the Russian finance ministry said Monday. That drop reflects the effects of a price cap imposed in December by a coalition involving the Group of Seven leading economies, the European Union and Australia. Saudi Arabia is counting on high oil prices to fund an ambitious reform agenda that could shift its economy away from fossil fuels.

Oil giant Saudi Aramco, the jewel of the kingdom's economy, said it recorded profits totaling \$161.1 billion last year, allowing Riyadh to notch up its first annual budget surplus in nearly a decade. Analysts say the kingdom needs oil to be priced at \$80 per barrel to balance its budget, which is well above recent averages. — Agencies

elections because they were convicted by court of charges deemed offensive to HH the Amir. Other MPs have already submitted draft laws calling to amend the law by cancelling provisions that bar convicts from political life.

Also, MP Marzouq Al-Ghanem on Monday met Narjes Ahmad, a bedoon or stateless girl who scored 99.4 percent in the recently-concluded higher secondary examination. Ahmad wanted to study medicine but was unable because she is a bedoon, but Ghanem pledged he will enable her to study at the medical college by bearing all the costs. The girl thanked Ghanem for his gesture.

9 Palestinians killed in 'open...

Continued from Page 1

Eight people were killed and 50 wounded, 10 seriously, the Palestinian health ministry said — exceeding the toll of seven dead in a Zionist raid in Jenin two weeks ago which saw the rare use of helicopter missile fire. In a separate incident, Zionist fire killed a Palestinian youth near the West Bank city of Ramallah, the Palestinian health ministry said. The Palestinian foreign ministry said the Zionist army had launched "an open war against the people of Jenin".

Jenin resident Badr Shagoul told AFP: "I saw them taking bulldozers into the camp, they were destroying buildings ... These were people's homes." At a hospital morgue some bodies were covered in blankets and others were heavily bandaged, an AFP correspondent reported, adding that the fighting continued late Monday. "We have many injured from explosives dropped from airplanes and many having bullet injuries," nurse Qasem Benighader said. "In the

last five years this is the worst raid."

Jenin camp resident Mahmoud Hawashin called the situation "catastrophic", and predicted that "for every action there is a reaction. If there is more Palestinian bloodshed, there will be more (Zionist) bloodshed." The Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad said "all options are open to strike the enemy in response to its aggression in Jenin".

The Arab League said it will convene an emergency meeting Tuesday to discuss "an Arab mobilization to counter the (Zionist) attack on Jenin". The Zionist entity has occupied the West Bank since the Six-Day War of 1967. Excluding annexed east Jerusalem, the territory is now home to around 490,000 Zionists in settlements considered illegal under international law.

The Palestinians, who seek their own independent state, want the Zionist entity to withdraw from all land it occupied in 1967 and to dismantle all Jewish settlements. However, Netanyahu has pledged to "strengthen settlements" and expressed no interest in reviving peace talks, moribund since 2014. Jordan called the raid "a clear violation of international humanitarian law, as well as (the Zionist entity's) obligations as the occupying power". — AFP

Dead fish wash up ashore in...

Continued from Page 1

effects of climate change. It endures blistering summer heat and frequent dust storms. Declining rain over the past four years as well as upstream dams have reduced the flow of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers where ancient civilizations flourished.

Khodr Abbas Salman, a Maysan province official overseeing its marshes for the Iraqi environment ministry, told AFP that "according to terrain analyses we have conducted, the level of oxygen (in the water) is zero, in addition to a rise in salinity levels". He joined a mission on Monday to inspect the deaths of "tons" of fish, he said, noting the Amshani's waters are home to nine species. The fish "keep dying even now", he said.

Samples from both the fish and the water will be "analyzed... to determine if there is any presence of chemical substances", Salman added. But the high salinity levels may be enough to cause considerable damage. The water can no longer "be used for agriculture. It would scourge the land if farmers use it for irrigation", Salman said.

He warned of further risks of pollution in the water and surrounding lands the more animals die. "Any dead animal rots... which raises the level of pollution," he said. "The water's toxicity might increase and infiltrate the land too." In a similar phenomenon in 2018, fishermen in the central province of Babylon found dead carp in their thousands, but an investigation failed to discern what had caused it. — AFP



AL-MAJAR AL-KABIR, Iraq: A dead turtle lies upside down near other dead fish by the bank of the Amshani river, which draws its water from the Tigris, in Iraq's southeastern Maysan governorate on July 3, 2023. — AFP

MPs propose civil rights for children...

Continued from Page 1

Five MPs also submitted a draft law calling to abolish a law that deprives persons convicted of offending HH the Amir from running for public office. The bill calls to re-register all Kuwaitis who had been barred from contesting the National Assembly

Business

TUESDAY, JULY 4, 2023

UAE pledges to triple renewables

COP28 host announces a raft of environmental initiatives

DUBAI: The oil-rich United Arab Emirates said it would triple renewable energy production as part of a raft of environmental initiatives announced on Monday, months before it hosts UN climate talks.

The UAE, one of the world's biggest exporters of emissions-producing crude oil, also unveiled national strategies on hydrogen and electric cars. Few details were revealed about the new policies, announced five months before the COP28 talks in Dubai where nearly 200 nations will wrestle with how to tackle global warming and its impacts.

Ministers approved an "updated national energy strategy" that aims to "triple the contribution of renewable energy over the next seven years", Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, Dubai's ruler, said after a cabinet meeting. Up to 200 billion dirhams (\$54 billion) will be invested over the same period to meet growing electricity demand, he said in a statement.

Another initiative "aims to consolidate the country's position as a producer and exporter of low-emission hydrogen over the next eight years" by developing supply chains and infrastructure,

and setting up a research and development centre, Sheikh Mohammed said.

The UAE, a desert nation of about 10 million people, most of them expatriates, will also build a national network of charging stations as part of a "national policy for electric vehicles". Chinese-based WeRide will receive the country's first national license for self-driving cars, the statement added.

The UAE's hosting of the November-December COP negotiations has been criticized by climate activists who question whether one of the world's biggest oil producers should have such a key role in the fight against global warming. The Gulf monarchy argues that oil remains indispensable to the global economy and is pushing the merits of carbon capture — the process of removing carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, as fuel is burned, or from the air.

In 2021, ahead of COP26 in Glasgow, the UAE said it was targeting net zero domestic carbon emissions by 2050 — a calculation that does not include pollution from exported oil. — AFP



Volvo Cars switches to renewable fuels for ocean freight

KUWAIT: Every year tens of thousands of containers of production material destined for Volvo Cars factories are carried across the world's oceans on container ships. From now on, most of these seafaring journeys are made with renewable fuel instead of traditional fossil fuel.

As the first global car maker to announce such a switch, we'll achieve an immediate reduction in fossil CO2 emissions from intercontinental ocean freight by 55,000 tons over a year. Thanks to the renewable fuel, CO2 emissions are reduced by at least 84 per cent compared to fossil fuel. The reduction is equivalent to the CO2 emissions of a full truck driving around the equator about 1,200 times.

The fuel used is Fatty Acid Methyl Esters (FAME) and is based on renewable and sustainable sources, mainly waste cooking oil. No feedstock related to palm oil or palm oil production is used.

We will use renewable fuel for inbound ocean container transports of production material destined for manufacturing plants based in Europe and the Americas, as well as all spare parts distribution made globally by ocean container transports.

"Renewable fuel is not the end game for removing CO2 from the world's ocean freight needs," says Anders Karrberg, our head of sustainability. "Yet this initiative shows that we can act now and implement solutions that achieve significant results during the wait for long-term technological alternatives."

"We don't view this initiative as a competitive advantage," Anders adds. "On the contrary, we want to spark other car makers into action as well, to increase demand for carbon efficient ocean transports and to establish renewable fuels as a mid-term solution that works. We all have a responsibility to act."

We have been working on this initiative together with our logistics partners Maersk, Kuehne+Nagel and DB Schenker. These logistics service providers have from 1 June, 2023 switched to renewable fuel for equivalent energy needed for all container transports done for Volvo Cars.



When renewable fuel is not available on a specific shipment, our renewable fuel allocation is instead used by the logistics partner for another customer's route elsewhere, so the overall cut in fossil fuel use is kept on par with actual use in container vessels. The methodology, called mass-balancing, is third-party audited regularly. The renewable fuel itself is certified and not produced in competition with food crops. It is therefore sustainable in accordance with the EU Renewable Energy Directive.

"We're continually exploring sustainability opportunities across all aspects of our supply chain, and across our overall business," Anders says. "Our list of initiatives keeps growing as we work towards our ambition of becoming a climate neutral company by 2040."

Our ambition is to reduce our lifecycle carbon footprint per car by 40 per cent between 2018 and 2025, which requires a 25 per cent reduction in operational emissions, including logistics. We're also aiming for climate-neutral manufacturing by 2025. Both these milestones are important steps toward our climate neutral ambitions.

Comparison of fuels include emissions from production and use of the equivalent amount of energy, so called Well-to-Wake (WTW).

ular lens. The micro-OLED displays were reportedly supplied by Sony and TSMC for the prototypes, but it is not known who is supplying them at scale. As a result of production challenges, Apple is preparing to make fewer than 400,000 units in 2024, according to the report, citing sources close to Apple and Luxshare, the Chinese contract manufacturer that will initially assemble the device.

Meanwhile, two China-based sole suppliers of certain components for the Vision Pro reportedly said Apple was only asking them for enough for 130,000 to 150,000 units in the first year.

"Both projections imply a significant cut to production from an earlier, internal sales target of one million units in the first 12 months," wrote the FT. "The forecasts for low volumes reflect Apple's lack of confidence in being able to scale production, according to analysts and industry experts, following years of missed deadlines in launching the device," the report added. Meanwhile, Apple is said to have pushed back plans to launch a more affordable version of the headset that it hopes will appeal to the mass market. Apple is reportedly working with Korean display makers Samsung and LG on the sec-

ond-generation headset, and has explored using mini-LED for the displays to drive the price lower. However, FT's sources claimed Apple was insisting on using micro-OLED even for the non-Pro headset, despite suppliers failing to match expectations.

Bloomberg's Mark Gurman previously reported that Apple plans to launch a more affordable version of its Vision Pro headset by the end of 2025, likely to be called "Apple Vision One," or more simply, "Apple Vision." — Agencies

Volvo Cars in 2022
For the full year 2022, Volvo Car Group recorded an operating profit of SEK 22.3 billion. Revenue in 2022 amounted to SEK 330.1 billion, while global sales reached 615,121 cars. Volvo Cars was founded in 1927. Today, it is one of the most well-known and respected car brands in the world with sales to customers in more than 100 countries. Volvo Cars is listed on the Nasdaq Stockholm exchange, where it is traded under the ticker "VOLCAR B".

Volvo Cars aims to provide customers with the Freedom to Move in a personal, sustainable and safe way. This is reflected in its ambition to become a fully electric car maker by 2030 and in its commitment to an ongoing reduction of its carbon footprint, with the ambition to be a climate-neutral company by 2040.

As of December 2022, Volvo Cars employed approximately 43,200 full-time employees. Volvo Cars' head office, product development, marketing and administration functions are mainly located in Gothenburg, Sweden. Volvo Cars' production plants are located in Gothenburg, Ghent (Belgium), South Carolina (US), Chengdu, Daqing and Taizhou (China). The company also has R&D and design centers in Gothenburg, Camarillo (US) and Shanghai (China).



global gallium production, according to a 2020 report by the European Commission.

Germanium, in turn, is essential for making optical fibers and infrared camera lenses, with 80 percent of it also coming from China, according to the same report. The export curbs follow Washington blacklists of Chinese companies in recent years aimed at cutting them off from access to American technologies, including the most advanced chips. China, which is seeking to become self-sufficient in semiconductor design, says those moves are aimed at maintaining US supremacy in the industry. — AFP

Yellen to visit China on July 6 in mission to stabilize relations

WASHINGTON: Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is set to visit Beijing this week, the United States said Sunday, marking the second trip by a cabinet official to China since ties between the world's top two economies deteriorated earlier this year.

Yellen is expected to discuss with her counterparts the importance for both countries "to responsibly manage our relationship, communicate directly about areas of concern, and work together to address global challenges," said the Treasury Department in a statement. Yellen's planned July 6-9 trip comes just weeks after Secretary of State Antony Blinken met China's top leader President Xi Jinping and Foreign Minister Qin Gang in Beijing in June. Blinken was the highest-ranking US official to visit the Chinese capital in nearly five years, and Xi said on the rare trip that he saw headway in the strained relationship between Washington and Beijing.



WASHINGTON: In this file photo taken on April 20, 2023 US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen speaks about the US-China economic relationship at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC. — AFP

In Beijing, Yellen will discuss how the United States views its economic relationship with China, a senior Treasury official said Sunday. She will meet with senior Chinese officials and leading US firms, the American spokesperson said without providing specifics. While the US seeks to secure its national security interests and protect human rights, actions to this effect are "not intended to gain economic advantage over China," the official added.

Washington also looks towards "healthy" ties with Beijing and does not seek to decouple the economies, while pursuing cooperation on urgent challenges like climate change and debt distress, the American official said. The United States does not expect "significant breakthrough" from this initial trip, but it does aim to build longer-term channels of communication with China, the Treasury official added. "I think the US government is clearly trying to put some floor under the deterioration of the economic relationship," Edward Alden, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) told AFP, speaking on the Treasury secretary's intentions to visit China.

A Yellen trip could "restart a steady pattern of engagement at lower levels," he said, adding that the US has shifted from being ambiguous about how far it was supporting decoupling to explicitly adopting a strategy of "derisking" instead. This means "focusing on a narrower range of items that have strategic importance, trying to build fences around those items, but otherwise trying to continue to nurture a reasonably robust US-China economic relationship," Alden said. But observers do not expect a quick resolution to tensions.

President Joe Biden's administration is considering a program to restrict certain US outbound investments involving sensitive technology with key national security implications — an issue that has riled Chinese officials. Other possible sticking points include amendments to China's anti-espionage law which recently broadened the definition of spying while banning the transfer of information relating to national security — a move that has spooked foreign and domestic businesses. — AFP

Apple making drastic cuts to Vision Pro production forecasts

SAN FRANCISCO, CA: Apple has been forced to make drastic cuts to production forecasts for the mixed-reality Vision Pro headset, unveiled last month after seven years in development hailed as its most significant product launch since the iPhone, according to the Financial Times. Apple's \$3,500 headset is set to go on sale early next year, but analysts have suggested the lengthy gap between its unveiling at WWDC in June and official launch could be more to do with supply chain problems than a way to give developers time to create apps for the device, reports said.

Apple is reported to have been unhappy with the productivity of manufacturing partners tasked with supplying the two micro-OLED displays for the wearer's eyes and the outward-facing curved lentic-

China slaps export curbs on essential chip-making metals

BEIJING: China said on Monday it would slap export controls on two rare metals essential for the manufacture of semiconductors over security concerns, as Beijing and Washington tussle over the global market

Business

EU sees 'contradiction' between China's climate goals, coal plants

Ambassador regrets lack of progress with China on trade

BEIJING: A top EU climate official said Monday there is a "contradiction" between China's ambitious goals to combat global warming and its continued building of coal-fired power plants. European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans said in a speech at Tsinghua University. "And that seems to be in contradiction."

"But at the same time, it's also true that... more coal-fired power plants are opened," Timmermans said in a speech at Tsinghua University. "And that seems to be in contradiction."

China is also the biggest emitter of the greenhouse gases driving climate change, such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), and its emissions pledges are seen as essential to keeping global temperature rise well below two degrees Celsius. However, China relied on coal for nearly 60 percent of its electricity last year.

Greenpeace said in April that China has approved a major surge in coal power so far this year, accusing it of prioritizing energy supply over its pledge to reduce emissions from fossil fuels. The jump in approvals for coal-fired power plants has added to concerns that China will backtrack on its goals to peak emissions between 2026 and 2030 and become carbon-neutral by 2060.

Timmermans' comments come on the heels of record-setting heatwaves and flooding across China in recent weeks that have underscored the potential impacts of continued upticks in global temperatures. He also warned of the consequences of not restricting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, saying this would lead to a "significant and widespread increase in adverse impacts of climate change, including in extreme weather events".

China's top climate centre announced at the weekend that 2023 has seen a record number of high-temperature days over a six-month period.

Beijing logged its hottest June day ever recorded, the national weather service said last month, as swaths of northern China sweltered in 40-degree heat.

Heavy sustained rainfall in central and southern China has also led to severe flooding in recent days, with more than 14,000 people forced to evacuate in Hunan Province, according to state news agency Xinhua. The United Nations has warned it is near-certain that 2023-2027 will be the warmest five-year period ever recorded, as greenhouse gases and the El Niño climate phenomenon combine to send temperatures soaring.

Beijing has repeatedly urged developed nations in recent years to honor their climate finance pledges. China has rejected the idea that it should no longer be considered a developing country, even though it is now the world's second-biggest economy.

Meanwhile, the European Union's ambassador to China expressed regret on Sunday over the lack of "substantial progress" with Beijing on trade talks, as EU countries seek to reduce their economic dependence on the Asian giant.

The European Commission has suspended its efforts to get member states and parliament to ratify an investment agreement reached with China at the end of 2020, after seven years of talks, following differences over human rights in the Muslim-majority region of Xinjiang. With relations cooling, the EU also decided in May to "readjust" its position towards China to reduce its economic dependence at a time when Beijing is suspected of giving Moscow tacit support for its war in Ukraine. "I'm sorry to say that we have a dialogue on economic (issues) and trade which has not made any progress, or at least substantial progress, in the last four years," EU Ambassador Jorge Toledo said at a forum in Beijing.

"We want to engage with China, but we need



BEIJING: European Commission Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans delivers a speech about climate change to students at Tsinghua University in Beijing on July 3, 2023. — AFP

progress, and we need it this year," Toledo said, adding that a high-level economic dialogue between the two sides would be held in September.

For the EU, China is "simultaneously a partner, a competitor and a systemic rival", he said. The European Commission unveiled a strategy last month to respond more decisively to economic security risks, with China in particular in its sights.

The Commission put forward proposals in March to secure supplies of materials, such as lithium or nickel, needed for the production of key technologies such as batteries and solar panels. Germany, France and Italy said last week they would cooperate more closely on the procurement of raw materials as Europe aims to reduce its reliance on imports from countries such as China. — AFP

Mercosur summit opens; EU trade deal in balance

BRASILIA: The South American trade bloc Mercosur opened a two-day summit Monday with a deal with the European Union on the agenda, but few expect leaders to reach consensus on how to fulfill EU demands on environmental protections.

The EU and the Mercosur countries—Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay—are trying to finalize a trade deal after reaching an agreement in principle in 2019, following two decades of negotiations. But ratification by the EU's 27 members has stalled, notably over European concerns about Mercosur countries' environmental protections—particularly in the Amazon rainforest.

The EU has proposed a "side letter" to the agreement, with extra environmental guarantees, ranking South American leaders and slowing down progress to notching a final agreement. Brussels wants any deal with Mercosur nations to include compliance with various commitments made as part of the 2015 Paris climate accords, which are currently voluntary.

The Mercosur summit, to be held in Puerto Iguazu, Argentina, will bring together Argentine President Alberto Fernandez and the presidents of Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil: Luis Lacalle Pou, Mario Abdo Benitez and Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who will take up the bloc's pro-tempore presidency until the end of the year. The bloc represents 62 percent of South America's population and 67 percent of the continent's gross domestic product. — AFP

Brussels looks to relax curbs on GM crops

BRUSSELS: The European Commission will on Wednesday put forward a proposal to ease current restrictions on genetically modified crops, which is already being denounced by environmental groups and leftwing lawmakers.

The plan could create a new frontline in the EU's Green Deal, elements of which centre-right European lawmakers are already seeking to stall, arguing they would harm farmers.

The commission says the rules on GMOs (genetically modified organisms) need to be relaxed to grow crops that require fewer pesticides, are better adapted to climate change and need less water.

It wants to allow gene editing within a plant's existing DNA—which is different from transgenic techniques that introduce a foreign DNA strands and create a distinct species.

"Plants produced by new genomic techniques can support sustainability," EU health commissioner Stella Kyriakides said in April. "We are designing a regulatory framework that will strongly signal to farmers, researchers and industry that this is the way forward in the EU," she said.

In this area, the commission wants to reduce the tough restrictions that apply to GMOs, which include authorizations, labeling and monitoring. The text of the project, seen by AFP, calls for the existing GMO rules to not apply to genetically edited crops where the modifications could have come about nat-



BRUSSELS: European Council President Charles Michel (center) gestures next to Swedish Prime minister Ulf Kristersson (left) and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen (right) during a final press conference on the second day of a meeting of the European Council at The Europa Building in Brussels. — AFP

urally or through traditional blending procedures of plant species.

Such new crops would be considered "equivalent" to conventional varieties, subject to conditions on the type and number of mutations, a publicly accessible listing, and labeling for the sale of seeds.

No produce coming from these new genomic techniques (NGT) will be able to carry the "bio" label however, and those with herbicide properties would be excluded from the light-touch regulatory approach. Those that are pesticide resistant would remain in the restrictive regime governing GMOs.

Brussels currently has received 90 authorization requests for NGT crops, a third of which are in advanced research stages. A few have reached the level

of testing in open fields, such as corn in Belgium and potatoes in Sweden. Powerful agri-groups such as Copa-Cogeca have been calling for simplified rules to speed up sales of their products. Some EU member countries and lawmakers in the European Parliament's centre-right EPP grouping back that stance.

"We need to boost productivity and take into account the limited level of natural resources," Spain's agriculture minister Luis Planas said in mid-June, ahead of his country taking over the EU's rotating presidency. He is looking to weigh this lifting of controls on NGTs against another EU text that aims to reduce the use of pesticides in European farming, but which has become bogged down in arguments over a feared reduction in crop yields. — AFP

Oil prices get small lift from output cuts

LONDON: Oil prices rose on Monday after key producers Saudi Arabia and Russia further cut crude output in a bid to protect their precious revenues, but quickly gave up most of their gains. Asian stock markets meanwhile advanced as easing inflation data fuelled hopes central banks could be nearing the end of their interest rate hiking cycle.

But both European and US equities were mixed, with investor sentiment was subdued on Wall Street on the eve of the Independence Day holiday in the United States. Brent crude, the international benchmark, and US counterpart WTI jumped after Riyadh extended a voluntary oil production cut of one million barrels per day, while Moscow—whose invasion of Ukraine last year sparked oil market turmoil—said it was slashing exports by 500,000 bpd.

Much of the gains evaporated as traders continued to digest the news from the two biggest members of the OPEC+ producers' alliance. "It's the usual knee-jerk reaction to reports of production cuts," IG analyst Chris Beauchamp told AFP.

"But given... it's not a coordinated move from all (OPEC+) members it seems hard to imagine there's much more upside in this." He also warned that "the outlook for oil demand remains firmly under pressure" with many analysts forecasting recession next year. Recent efforts by OPEC+ to bolster prices by reducing output have not succeeded.

In April, several OPEC+ members opted to slash production voluntarily by more than one million bpd—a surprise move that briefly raised prices but failed to bring about lasting price recovery. — AFP



LONDON: Activists take part in a morning rave outside the International Maritime Organization (IMO) at the start of the 80th Marine Protection Committee (MEPC) conference in London on July 3, 2023. — AFP

Activists protest over ship pollution at maritime meet

LONDON: Environmental campaigners protested Monday outside the London-based International Maritime Organization, which is meeting to discuss curbing carbon dioxide emissions from the high-polluting shipping sector. Several dozen activists, including some dressed as jellyfish, demonstrated outside the headquarters of the UN's global shipping regulator, as they urged greener freight to help tackle climate change and protect the oceans.

Protestors chanted "clean freight now" as they staged a colorful flashmob-style protest. The hefty carbon footprint of global shipping networks will

come under scrutiny at the event, as countries wrestle over measures to slash planet-heating pollution.

Participants are under pressure to agree ambitious emission reduction targets and consider a tax on pollution by the sector. Shipping currently belches out roughly the same level of greenhouse gases as aviation. The IMO's Marine Environment Protection Commission (MEPC) meeting, held in British capital from Monday to Friday, is likely to pit climate-vulnerable nations—particularly Pacific islands—and richer countries against big exporters like China.

The vast majority of the world's 100,000 cargo ships—which carry 90 percent of the world's goods—are powered by high-polluting diesel. Shipping, which is responsible for around two percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, is judged to be off course in the fight against climate change. Efforts to decarbonize so far centre around a 2018 IMO decision that instructed shipping firms to reduce CO₂ emissions by 50 percent by 2050, from 2008 levels. — AFP

Total and Shell accused over Russian gas trade

LONDON: Energy giants TotalEnergies and Shell on Sunday defended activities linked to Russia after a critical report into their trading in natural gas despite the war in Ukraine. The campaign group Global Witness said TotalEnergies was the third-biggest player in Russian liquefied natural gas (LNG) last year and Shell the fourth, behind two Russian companies.

The report focused on Britain's Shell, after Global Witness said it had looked previously at TotalEnergies of France. "Russia's LNG exports are helping to finance the country's war in Ukraine and in 2022 were worth an estimated \$21 billion," it said. "Few companies have helped this trade more than Shell, and Global Witness estimates that Shell has made hundreds of millions trading Russian LNG last year."

"Yet despite the war crimes this trade helps finance, it is legal. Shell, the UK, and the EU should immediately halt it." Both companies said they were tied to ongoing contracts despite pulling out of Russian partnerships after Ukraine was invaded last year.

"Shell has stopped buying Russian LNG on the spot market, but still has some long-term contractual commitments," a Shell spokesperson said, insisting that all laws and sanction restrictions were being respected. "There is a dilemma between putting pressure on the Russian government over its atrocities in Ukraine and ensuring stable, secure energy supplies," it said.

"It is for governments to decide on the incredibly difficult trade-offs that must be made."

In Paris, TotalEnergies emphasized "its duty to contribute to the security of Europe's gas supply from the Yamal LNG plant [in Siberia] under long-term contracts that it must honor as long as European governments do not impose sanctions against Russian gas". — AFP

Business

Pakistan inflation eases for first time in seven months

\$3bn IMF deal could help reduce country's ballooning foreign debt

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's headline inflation eased for the first time in seven months in June, figures released Monday showed, a bright spot for a beleaguered government that must call an election this year.

Year-on-year inflation was 29.4 percent last month, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics data showed, compared with a record 38 percent in May. Years of financial mismanagement have pushed Pakistan's economy to the limit, exacerbated by the COVID pandemic, a global energy crisis and record floods that submerged a third of the country last year.

Pakistan struck a \$3 billion standby deal with the International Monetary Fund on Friday, which could provide temporary relief for the country's ballooning foreign debt. To meet the demands of the deal — which will be considered by the IMF's board by mid-July — Pakistan scrapped popular subsidies on gas and electricity, which had cushioned the cost-of-living crisis.

With elections due in October, campaigning is likely to be driven by promises of development and vows to fix the economy. The latest data shows poor Pakistanis are still feeling the brunt of the economic turmoil.

Food prices have risen 40 percent over June 2022, while transport costs have increased 20 percent in the same period. Pakistan's poverty rate is expected to reach 37.2 percent this year, according to a World Bank

report released in April. The rupee has plunged to record lows against the dollar this year, making imported goods more expensive. The country's central bank raised its benchmark interest rate to a record-high 22 percent in an emergency meeting last week.

Economist Ashfaq Hasan Khan, a former special secretary at the ministry of finance, warned the latest inflationary easing would likely only be temporary.

"I fear inflation will increase in July as the state bank has increased the rate of interest and fixed it at 22 percent. 'The (inflation) rate will also increase in case the currency is devalued as a result of any understanding between the government and the IMF.'"

Economist Farrukh Saleem said the "temporary relief" should not distract from systemic issues. "The major problem remains there in the form of big borrowings by the government. 'This situation will keep impacting people indirectly as it will lead to increased poverty, inflation and unemployment in the country.' Pakistan's stock market rose by the most in more than three years on early trade Monday, on the back of last week's IMF deal. Pakistan failed to meet any economic growth targets for the fiscal year 2022-23, with GDP growth at 0.3 percent. Foreign exchange reserves have dwindled to just \$3.5 billion, roughly enough for three weeks of imports. — AFP



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's food prices have risen 40 percent over June 2022, while transport costs have increased 20 percent in the same period. — AFP

Vietnam farmers planting in the dark as heatwave looms

HANOI: It's 3 am and pitch black when rice farmer Tran Thi Lan heads into water-logged fields on the outskirts of Hanoi to begin planting, desperate to finish before the day's brutal heat arrives. Planting in the dark has become a savior for countless farmers in north and central Vietnam during increasingly hot summers as South and Southeast Asian nations battle record-high temperatures this year.

"It's so hard to plant the rice when the strong sun is directly on my back and the warm water in the field splashes my face," Lan, 47, told AFP. Lan had managed a few days of daytime planting during a brief respite from the heat.

But she switched to night work as another heatwave descended on northern Vietnam in early July, with forecasters predicting a long stretch where daily temperatures would exceed 37 degrees Celsius (98 degrees Fahrenheit). "With not enough light, the planting might not be on a straight line," Lan acknowledges,

as she quickly buries some roots into a patch of paddy illuminated by her head lamp.

Like Lan, 62-year-old farmer Nguyen Hung Phuong will now work from 4 pm to 9 pm and again from 3 am to 9 am. "With extremely high temperatures, it's very uncomfortable and exhausting to work during daytime, although of course I can see more clearly," Phuong said.

Working at night made him "more productive and less distracted", he said. Night planting began a few years ago at Nguyen Thi Hanh's farm.

"Our parents did not have head lamps. The weather was also not as hot," 56-year-old Hanh said. Night planting has its advantages for the rice, which Hanh said is sensitive to extremes in temperature.

"It's in fact much better because the water is cooler, and more suitable for the young plant", Hanh said. Day or night, farmers such as Lan and Phuong can earn up to \$40 a day, a large sum in a country where laborers in rural areas normally earn around \$250 each month.

But the work is so tough that hardly anyone wants to do it, Lan said. "Planting in the dark takes much more time compared to during the day," she said. "But we just need to keep going," Lan said, worrying that, in a few years, no one would be left to do this work. "The younger ones have all quit for less hard jobs." — AFP



HANOI: This photo taken on July 1, 2023 shows farmers planting rice in a paddy field at night-time in Hanoi. — AFP

'Mine above ground'

Emptied of electricity, the imposing battery packs — they weigh half a ton each — are methodically taken apart to recover up to 95 percent of the materials. The aluminum is recycled by Norsk Hydro, while the "black mass" powder is sold to battery makers. "This is the black gold that gives us life", said Glenn Ostbye, the acting head of Hydrovolt, leading a tour of the plant clad in a safety helmet and goggles.

The "black gold" is touted as eco-friendly as it comes from the recycling process rather than being mined in faraway countries. "Battery recycling is, in many ways, an alternative to mines. We have sort of built a mine above ground", Hydrovolt's director of operations Andreas Frydensvang said.

"A battery can be transformed into a new battery to infinity", he said. The recycling also helps boost Europe's independence when it comes to critical minerals, with the COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine highlighting the continent's problematic dependence on imported raw materials. In Europe, "we

have big markets for products but we don't actually have so much of our own resources", Julia Poliscanova, head of electric mobility at the non-governmental organization Transport & Environment. "Globally speaking, we're not a mining superpower for copper, cobalt or nickel", she said, adding that recycling waste was an obvious option. "And you can recycle a lot quicker than you can start up a new mine".

European independence

According to Transport & Environment, a European clean transport campaign group, recycling old batteries could cover between at least eight and 12 percent of Europe's critical mineral needs in 2030, and between 12 and 14 percent in 2035. The European parliament recently adopted regulations aimed at making batteries more sustainable and more easily recyclable.

But, insisted Poliscanova, Europe also needs to stop exporting its precious "black mass" to third countries, primarily China and South Korea, and develop its own hydrometallurgical processing plants.

This other crucial link in the recycling chain, which makes it possible to extract the metals contained in the powder, is still low-scale in Europe, handled only by a few companies such as Revolt in Sweden and Eramet in France. Government subsidies are also needed so that the many planned battery plants can see the light of day, creating an ecosystem favorable to recyclers, Poliscanova said.

The Fredrikstad plant is a pilot project and the blueprint is expected to be exported, with Hydrovolt planning a second site "in a year or two".

"The most important thing for us is the degree of adoption of electric cars, so that there is a reservoir of end-of-life batteries," said Frydensvang. "We're therefore looking at countries like Germany, France and a little in the United States." — AFP



FREDRIKSTAD, Norway: Ole Jorgen Gronvold, lab operator at battery recycling company Hydrovolt, poses for a photo at their plant in Fredrikstad, southeastern Norway on June 20, 2023. — AFP

Business confidence improves in Japan

TOKYO: Confidence among Japan's largest manufacturers rose as business conditions have improved for the first time in seven quarters, a key survey showed Monday. The Bank of Japan's closely watched quarterly Tankan survey is considered the broadest indicator of how Japanese businesses are faring. It reports the difference between the percentage of firms that are upbeat and those that see conditions as unfavorable.

A positive figure means more businesses feel optimistic than pessimistic. Among major manufacturers, business confidence rose to plus five from plus one three months earlier. The reading came after the fifth quarterly drop in sentiment and an unchanged figure in December 2021, and beat market expectations of plus three.

Optimism also grew slightly among non-manufacturers, from plus 20 to plus 23, against market expectations of plus 22. The better-than-expected large manufacturer confidence was due to "improvement in the auto sector, which reflected an easing chip shortage and a lull in import price rises thanks to falling fuel costs," Tsuyoshi Ueno, senior economist at NLI Research Institute, told AFP ahead of the data release.

Improvement in confidence among non-manufacturers reflects recovery in the service sector after the lifting of COVID-related regulations and a recovery in inbound tourism, he said.

Looking ahead, the survey "will likely weaken slightly over a potential worsening in the US and European economies following central bank rate hikes and a delay in the recovery of the Chinese economy." The latest reading "could be a factor in encouraging the BoJ to tweak" a policy tool known as the yield curve control, which sets the band in which rates for 10-year government bonds fluctuate, he said.

But he expected no change in this month's policy meeting, "as there is no reason for the BoJ to rush." Ueno and most other observers also expect the Bank of Japan to stick to its long-standing, ultra-loose monetary policy for the time being, in an attempt to boost economic growth.

The BoJ's two-percent inflation target, which it hopes will lead to sustainable growth in the world's third-largest economy, has been surpassed every month for more than a year. — AFP

Norway's quest for 'black gold' from used car batteries

OSLO: Wearing a white lab coat and with a gas mask within reach, Ole Jorgen Gronvold measures the humidity of an intriguing dark powder touted as the planet's next "black gold". But this "black gold" — a term that usually refers to oil — is actually good for the Earth.

In southeastern Norway lies Europe's biggest plant for recycling used or defective electric car batteries, turning them into a powder, or "black mass", made up of nickel, manganese, cobalt, lithium and graphite. These so-called critical minerals — essential components in many clean energy technologies — will be reused to make new batteries, key cogs in the transition to a decarbonized economy.

"The higher the quality of the components, the easier it is to use them for recycling," said Gronvold, a laboratory technician at Hydrovolt, a joint venture between Norwegian aluminum giant Norsk Hydro and Swedish electric battery maker Northvolt.

The Hydrovolt plant opened last year in the port city of Fredrikstad.

Within the next few months, the site is expected to be able to process 12,000 tons of lithium-ion battery packs per year, the equivalent of 25,000 electric car batteries. Industry leader Norway, where electricity is almost exclusively generated by renewable energies, is the uncontested world champion of zero-emission electric cars, with the latter accounting for more than 80 percent of new car registrations.

PwC culls senior execs in Australia after tax scandal

SYDNEY: Accounting giant PwC said Monday a raft of Australian senior partners would be forced to leave the company, as it battles to contain the fallout from a damaging tax leak scandal.

PwC Australia has been mired in controversy since January this year, when it emerged that staff had leaked information from a confidential government tax briefing in an attempt to drum up new business. The company, part of the Big Four accounting firms, on Monday named eight partners who had "enabled poor behaviors to persist with no accountability" — including former Australian chief executive Tom Seymour.

"They are now being held accountable for their misconduct," interim chief executive Kristin Stubbins said, as the firm released the findings from an internal investigation.

A total of 12 PwC partners have now left the company since the leak came to light. PwC will drastically restructure its Australian arm in an attempt to move on from the scandal, recently announcing plans to sell its lucrative government consultancy business to a private equity firm for Aus\$1 (\$0.67 billion).

The company held Aus\$255.2 million (\$167 million) in government contracts last financial year, according to officials. Australian police have been investigating the leak since late May, while the parliament's powerful finance committee is gearing up to grill executives at a series of public hearings.

PwC Australia has previously admitted that it suffered from "poor decision making" and that "aggressive behavior" in parts of the business allowed "profit to be placed over purpose".

The Australian government in 2015 introduced a series of new tax rules, designed to stop foreign firms shaving their tax obligations by shifting profits to offshore havens. A government inquiry earlier this year found that a senior PwC staffer who was briefed on these reforms shared this information with other partners, breaching confidentiality rules. The firm then used this knowledge to "aggressively market" itself to new customers, the inquiry said. The leak came to light after a lengthy investigation by the Tax Practitioners Board. — AFP

Australian coal earnings likely to plummet

SYDNEY: Australia on Monday predicted its coal exports will halve in value over the next two years, as prices fall and consumers look to alternative sources of energy. The Department of Industry forecast shipments of thermal coal — used in electricity production — would be worth US\$20 billion, down from US\$43 billion this year. The forecasts show a spectacular drop for a sector long championed by politicians and industry figures as a mainstay of the Australian economy.

Australia is currently the world's second-largest exporter of thermal coal, after Indonesia, and the largest exporter of metallurgical coal, which is used in steel making.

"Global supply and demand for thermal coal have peaked," the department said, forecasting price declines after spikes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Demand from China — the world's largest coal importer — is expected to begin a "long-term decline" starting in 2024. But the Australian forecast noted that the pace of the declines in the coal market "is likely to be uneven" and volatile.

"The gradual withdrawal from thermal coal usage is likely to affect lower grade and higher-polluting blends in the first instance." The Department of Industry report also predicted a continued boom for materials such as nickel, manganese, cobalt and lithium used in batteries.

Exports of those commodities are expected to pass US\$27 billion per year, eclipsing the value of thermal coal exports, a sign of how new technologies and emission reduction targets are changing energy markets. — AFP

Lifestyle



French luthier Rachel Rosenkrantz poses for a portrait with her "Mycocaster," a mycelium and paper guitar in her studio.



French luthier Rachel Rosenkrantz holds a sample made of mycelium in her studio.



The "Mycocaster," a mycelium and paper guitar is seen in French luthier Rachel Rosenkrantz's studio.



French luthier Rachel Rosenkrantz holds her "Pawtuxet," a guitar made using honeycomb in her studio.



A bag of mycelium and cornhusks used to mold a guitar body sits in French luthier Rachel Rosenkrantz's studio.

MEET THE FRENCH LUTHIER MAKING MUSIC OUT OF MUSHROOMS

Leave mushroom spores in a mold for a couple weeks and they'll bloom into a puffy material akin to brie, says Rachel Rosenkrantz, a sustainability-minded guitar-maker innovating with biomaterials. Once her mycelium, the root-like structure of fungus that produces mushrooms, mimics the rind of a soft-ripened cheese Rosenkrantz dehydrates it into a lightweight, biodegradable building material — in this case, the body of a guitar.

The musician trained as an industrial designer embarked on her career as a luthier — maker of string instruments — about a decade ago, and over the past several years has integrated mycelium and other biomaterials in her quest to create more environmentally friendly, plastic-free instruments. Rosenkrantz chuckles as she delivers her brie analogy that's also a nod to her French roots; the designer was raised in Montfermeil, an eastern suburb of Paris, and now resides near Providence where she teaches at the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design.

The basement atelier below her sunny apartment full of plants and books is home to her craft and doubles as a science lab, where she's growing materials like kombucha leather to make banjo heads, and using fish leather to make pickguards. "In the design world, everybody's working with biomaterial, it's exponential," the 42-year-old told AFP from her workshop.

"It's not, like, a hippie solution anymore," she continued, pointing to BMW which has used flax fiber in dashboard

construction, or Hermes, which has used mushroom-derived leather in their purse linings. "It's not a pie in the sky like just five years ago. It's actually very tangible."

'Potential'

Traditionally luthiers construct guitars with woods including cedar, rosewood, mahogany and ebony, depending on the tonal qualities sought. Wood of course is also biodegradable, but issues including overforestry have led makers like Rosenkrantz toward more sustainable options, reclaiming wood and sourcing from local woods. "Do we really need to use the same species as 400 years ago, because who really plays music like 400 years ago? A few students at Juilliard," she said, referring to the elite Manhattan conservatory.

"This is an industry where I feel because it's craft-based, there's a lot of 'how things are supposed to be,'" she continued, adding that woods like poplar or bamboo were long ignored but could offer new opportunities. "What if it's frankensteining parts of guitars that are still good, so we don't discard the whole instrument?" Rosenkrantz said. "We have to keep our eyes peeled and see the potential in different things."

'Mushroom sound'

Cue mycelium, the fungal network that lies beneath the fruit we know as mushrooms. It's easy to grow, easy to mold and easy to replace even if it begins to disintegrate, and can be made into both acoustic and electric instruments. And sound-wise? Rosenkrantz's mushroom

guitar is layered and fine-tuned, and doesn't sound just like a traditional guitar. It's a bit nasal — but rife with possibility.

"The idea came about when I was looking at packaging, since mushroom has been used to replace polystyrene" which "is known to be a good sound conductor, because it's full of air," she said. The designer found that her mycelium also conducted sound — "but it has a different timbre. So it doesn't sound like something else before."



A sample of dried tilapia fish leather is displayed on an unfinished guitar at French luthier Rachel Rosenkrantz's studio.

"It's just a new sound," she continued. "It won't replace cedar because it's not cedar." She's found the mushroom materials generally work best with electric formats: "There's a regular pickup, so it sounds like a normal electric guitar, and there's also another microphone that's in the mushroom." "So then you can switch how much mushroom sound you want."

'Help the cause'

Some of Rosenkrantz's custom-made guitars are made completely out of wood, and others integrate the more experimental biomaterials. Given the time it takes to make a unique guitar from scratch, her instruments start at about \$6,000. But when it comes to the mushroom-based prototype, "my dream is for a big company to say, 'Let's produce it, 50 bucks, every kid can have one,'" Rosenkrantz said. "Some students cannot afford an in-



The "Honfleur", a semi-hollow guitar decorated with eggshells hangs on the wall of French luthier Rachel Rosenkrantz's studio.

strument... what if that could be a solution? Hello Fender, if you hear that," she said with a smile. Much of Rosenkrantz's work is driven by curiosity: she keeps bees, and trained them to build an art piece of a guitar by providing them the instrument's bracing — the part "that guides the sound and give some stiffness to the instrument."

The bracing mimics the top bars of a hive, and "the bees communicate through the comb at 309 hertz, which is in the guitar range," she explained. "So we're gonna make a honeycomb that is a natural sound diffuser." And it worked: the bees built their comb along her structure, ate their honey over the winter, and left Rosenkrantz with a cleaned-out guitar that resonated.

The project was less about future use and more about "the poetry of it," she



Before and after molds of a mycelium grown guitar body in French luthier Rachel Rosenkrantz's studio.

said, another test to find biomaterials with acoustic qualities. It's exploration she hopes can help build a more sustainable future: "I'm experimenting to help the cause in some way." — AFP



Screenwriter David Corenswet arrives for the Netflix premiere of "The Politician" at the DGA theatre in New York City. — AFP

US actor David Corenswet cast as next Superman

Rising US star David Corenswet will become the latest actor to don Superman's famous red cape, director James Gunn confirmed Tuesday. The 29-year-old, best known as the lead of recent Netflix series "Hollywood," will take on the iconic role for "Superman: Legacy," due in 2025 from Warner Bros. The news was first reported by various Hollywood trade publications, which also revealed that Rachel Brosnahan, star of multiple Emmy-winning comedy "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel," is set to play Lois Lane.

"Accurate! (They are not only both incredible actors, but also wonderful people)," wrote Gunn, retweeting the Hollywood Reporter's article. Given Superman's status in pop culture, the role is considered one of the most high-profile, and highly scrutinized, going in Hollywood. Superman has previously been played on the big screen by Christopher Reeve, Brandon Routh and, most recently, Henry Cavill. British actor Cavill, star of Superman films such as 2013's "Man of Steel," briefly returned to the role for the post-credits scene of last year's "Black Adam." But last year, Warner — itself under new leadership after merging with Discovery — placed "Guardians of the Galaxy" director Gunn in charge of all movies tied to DC Comics superheroes, alongside "Aquaman" producer Peter Safran. — AFP

South Koreans get younger as traditional age system dropped

Lee Jung-hee was set to turn 60 next year but South Korea dropped its traditional age counting system, so the Seoul-based housewife just got a year younger — and she's thrilled. South Korea is the last East Asian country to officially still use a method of calculating age that determines babies are aged one at birth, counting their months in the womb as their first year of life. Under that system everyone gets a year older with the turn of the year rather than on their actual birthday, meaning a baby born on December 31 would be considered two years old on January 1 in Korean age.

From Wednesday South Korea will use the international system that calculates age according to a person's actual date of birth, meaning everyone will officially become a year or two younger. "It feels good," Lee, a Seoul-based housewife, told AFP. "For people like me, who were supposed to turn 60 next year, it makes you feel like you're still young," she laughed.

China, Japan, and even North Korea dropped the system decades ago but it has endured in the South, even as the land that gave the world K-pop and kim-

chi played a larger role on the international stage. "It's confusing when a foreigner asks me how old I am as I know they mean international age, so I have to do some calculations," office worker Hong Suk-min told AFP.

Hong added, after a thoughtful pause, that he was 45 in international age and 47 under the Korean system. The official change will have limited practical impact: many legal and administrative functions, including the age listed on a passport, the age at which one can be prosecuted as a juvenile, retirement benefits, or health-care services, already uses date-of-birth rather than Korean age. The government hopes the change will ease confusion and cites, for example, the issue of older Koreans who may believe they are eligible for pensions and free travel benefits several years before they legally are.

Complex calculation

"There is a difference between the age Koreans use in their daily lives and their legal age and because of that, various legal disputes may arise," Seoul's Minister of Government Legislation Lee Wan-kyu told AFP. Lee, who is overseeing the offi-

cial age change, opened a media briefing on Monday by attempting to teach the assembled Korean journalists how to determine how old they are.

"Subtract your birth year from the current year. If your birthday has passed, that's how old you are, and if your birthday has not passed, subtract one to get your age," he said. Some key areas, including the school year, eligibility for compulsory military service, and the legal drinking age, are determined by another separate age system — known as "year age" — and this system will remain in place for now, Lee said. This means that, for example, everyone born in 2004 — whether January or December — is eligible to begin the military enlistment process from January 1, 2023, because they are all legally considered to have met the minimum required age of 19. The government might consider revising the use of "year age" for such areas depending on how the current changes go, Lee said.

'Age matters'

The idea behind "year age" is to ease South Korea's linguistic-linked hierarchies by ensuring that everyone in one

school year is considered the same age and so can speak to each other without using honorifics. "Age really matters" in South Korean culture, anthropologist Mo Hyun-joo told AFP, because it affects one's relative social status and dictates which titles and honorifics one must use for others. "It's hard to communicate with people without knowing their age," she said.

People typically use terms such as "unni" and "oppa" — meaning older sister and older brother respectively — rather than names in conversation, she said. South Korea's "hierarchical age-based culture (might) become neutralized a little" over time, Mo said, because people become more used to using international age in school settings, for example. For now most South Koreans, such as schoolboy Yoon Jae-ha from the southern port town of Busan, can simply enjoy feeling younger as the new legislation comes into effect. "My age has shrunk," he told AFP. "I like being younger because then my mum will take care of me longer." — AFP



In this picture Kim Jin-sil, an office worker, poses with a whiteboard showing her international age, 31, and Korean age, 33.



In this picture taken Lee Kyu-ok, poses with a whiteboard showing her international age, 86, and Korean age, 87.



In this picture Yoon Jae-ha (left), poses with a whiteboard showing his international age, 8, and Korean age, 9, next to his father, Yoon Dong-gun, who works in trade, and whose international age is 43 and Korean age 44.—AFP photos

Lifestyle

New 'Indiana Jones' tops North America box office despite tepid debut



The latest—and likely last—installment in the popular “Indiana Jones” franchise lassoed the competition at the North American box office, industry estimates showed Sunday, but analysts noted the weak debut for the fan favorite. “Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny,” starring Harrison Ford in the role the archeologist he first made famous more than 40 years ago, earned about \$60 million, according to Exhibitor Relations.

With that, Indy booted animated sequel “Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse” from the top spot, but analysts said it was a weak start for the fifth Indiana Jones movie. “Audience ratings are good, while critics reviews are lukewarm,” said David A. Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research. Gross noted the Disney film is believed to have cost a whopping \$295 million to make before marketing, but added that it was likely to make up ground overseas, where it opened with \$70 million in sales.

“Across the Spider-Verse,” the second installment in Sony’s inventive animated take on the web-slinging superhero, brought in \$11.5 million for second place, bringing its domestic total to nearly \$340 million. Pixar’s animated immigrant fable “Elemental,” which was bumped from second to third place, raked in \$11.3 million.

Also from Sony, “No Hard Feelings”—a throwback to the once-ubiquitous raunchy comedy genre, starring Oscar winner Jennifer Lawrence—brought in \$7.5 million for fourth place. “Transformers: Rise of the Beasts,” one of the many spin-offs and sequels dominating theaters this summer, brought in \$7 million for fifth place. “Ruby Gillman: Teenage Kraken” debuted this week end in sixth place, bringing in what Gross called a “weak” \$5.2 million.

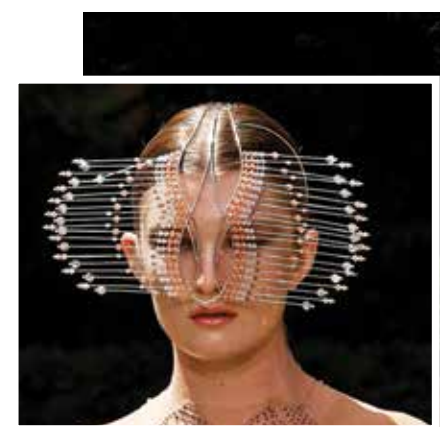
The animated offering from Universal’s Dreamworks follows a shy teenager who discovers she is a descendant of the titular mythic sea creatures. Rounding out the top 10 were: “The Little Mermaid” (\$5.15 million) “The Flash” (\$5 million) “Asteroid City” (\$3.8 million) “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3” (\$1.8 million)—AFP

Paris couture week brushes off riots with Surrealist start

An artist-inspired show from Schiaparelli opened Paris haute couture week Monday, easing fears that fashion shows would have to be cancelled due to five nights of rioting across France. French label Celine cancelled its show on Sunday (held outside the official calendar) due to unrest sparked by the police killing of a teenager last week.

But with violence ebbing around the French capital over the weekend, the fashion federation said it did not expect disruption to couture week, which celebrates the most expensive, tailor-made end of the industry. Before a crowd including rapper Cardi B, Vogue editor Anna Wintour and actress Gwendoline Christie, Schiaparelli got things rolling with what it described as “a Surrealist’s interpretation of a woman’s essential closet”. One of the designs was created by hand-painting a woman’s body in the style of artist Lucian Freud and then transferring it to a silk body stocking.

A cardigan and skirt made from broken mirror pieces was inspired by sculptor Jack Whitten, and there were nods to Sarah Lucas, Joan Miro and Salvador Dali—borrowing the vibrant colors of his distorted sunrise paintings. The brand’s designer Daniel Roseberry has overseen a revamp at the long-standing brand, and caused a media sensation at its last show with fake animal heads sported by the likes of Kylie Jenner. Monday will also see the Christian Dior show and US designer Thom Browne’s first as part of couture week. Another debutant is 26-year-old Charles de Vilmorin, who will present for his own brand after a short-lived tenure as artistic director of Rochas. “I’m super happy to have lived through all this and to do my first show,” the Frenchman told AFP.



Models present creations by Dutch fashion designer Iris Van Herpen during the Women’s Haute-Couture Fall/Winter 2023/2024 Fashion Week in Paris on Monday.—AFP photos

Chinese pop idol Cai Xukun denies wrongdoing in sex scandal

Chinese pop star and fashion icon Cai Xukun denied Monday he had pressured a woman to have an abortion but promised to change his behavior after being embroiled in a sex scandal that has taken China by storm. A blogger claimed last week that Cai had a one-night stand with a woman referred to as “Ms C”, alleging that he coerced her into getting an abortion when he found out she was pregnant.

The scandal has exploded in China, where celebrities are held to high moral standards, threatening Cai’s lucrative partnerships with major international brands, including Prada and Tag Heuer. Music videos featuring Cai were unavailable on state broadcaster CCTV’s video streaming app Monday and a search for the star’s name yielded no results.

And breaking days of silence on the issue, Cai acknowledged Monday having a relationship with Ms C that ended in 2021, adding that the two were no longer seeing each other. “The relationship between Ms C and I was voluntary... It did not involve illegal activities,” Cai posted to his more than 38 million Weibo followers. “I implore relevant independent media not to spread or believe rumors.”

But the singer added that he would change his behavior: “In the future, I will strictly constrain my words and actions and accept public and societal supervision”. Cai’s top global sponsors have not commented on the issue.

But signs of waning confidence emerged Saturday, when a Chinese celebrity-focused advertising association urged clients to be aware of “risks” concerning a “male singer named Cai”.

“This incident is tending toward further hype and expansion,” a body under the Beijing Advertising Association said in a statement published on WeChat. It did not give Cai’s full name. “Related brands, performance management firms, and multi-channel network operators are requested to control risks of male singer Cai.”

Chinese authorities have kept a close eye on the domestic entertainment sector in recent years, launching a wide-ranging crackdown on dodgy financial practices and “immoral” conduct in 2021 after numerous scandals implicated some of the nation’s biggest entertainers. In November, Chinese-Canadian superstar Kris Wu was sentenced to 13 years in jail after being found guilty of rape.—AFP

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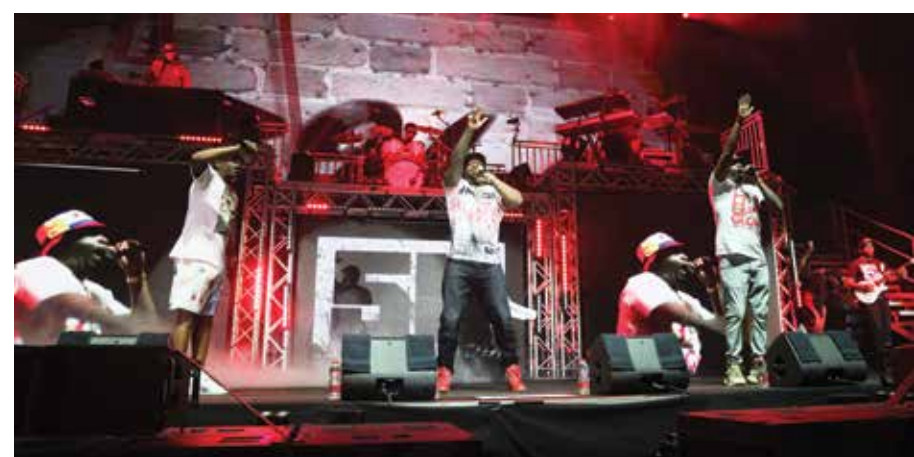
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US rapper Curtis James Jackson III “50 Cent” performs live on stage during a concert.—AFP

‘I was crazy’: 50 Cent on 20 years of ‘Get Rich or Die Tryin’

As 50 Cent heads out on a world tour marking the 20th anniversary of hip-hop classic “Get Rich or Die Tryin’”, he told AFP it’s probably his last on this scale. “I won’t be able to tour like this again. My film and TV production stuff doesn’t allow me,” said the rapper, who will soon be seen alongside Sylvester Stallone in “Expendables 4”. He took “a huge pay cut” to shift from music to TV a decade ago—most notably with hit show “Power”—but saw it as a strategic business decision.

“My audience is older. With my film and TV work I’m speaking to my core audience directly. I don’t want to lose them... They made me a success.” 50 Cent, real name Curtis Jackson, turns 48 this week as he prepares to embark on the “Final Lap” tour across North America, Europe and Australasia, with more dates due to be added in Asia and beyond.

It has already sold more than 600,000 tickets, which the ever-modest “Fiddy” says with a chuckle “would be impressive for other guys, but I’m 50 Cent”. The one thing that could lure him back after this would be if his old mentors—Eminem and Dr Dre—came with him. “If I could get Em and Dre out the house, that would get me back touring but I don’t think that’ll happen,” he said.

“Wouldn’t stop growing” Launched in February 2003, his debut was one of the fastest selling records of all time, boosted by a colorful backstory of true-life gangsterism, including time in prison and an attempted assassination in which he was shot nine times. Debut single “In Da Club” is still a huge hit thanks to its evergreen refrain, “Hey, Shorty, it’s your birthday”. And the rapper is still 114th on Spotify’s worldwide rankings despite not releasing a studio album since 2014.

There was debate over which single to launch at the time, with Dr Dre pushing for “If I Can’t”. “But I thought, no, we gotta go with ‘Go Shorty, it’s your birthday’. Coz every day is someone’s birthday and makes the song relevant again,” said Jackson.

“And the thing wouldn’t stop growing. I got a plaque now because it’s been played a billion times on Spotify. We weren’t even listening to shit on Spotify back then.” He remembers the moment, sitting on a tour bus heading for Washington DC, when he heard that the album had gone past 800,000 sales in the first week.

“At the time I thought if I could pray for just one thing, it was for that record to be a success. But one thing I learned about myself is I just want more wishes,” he said, laughing. “There was so much success and energy it started to feel like I could have whatever I want. The album was called ‘Get Rich or Die Tryin’ and I was, like, ‘No, let me die later. This feels great.’” All the adulation and partying went to his head, of course. “If they had clinically tested me at the time, they would have said I was crazy.”

“Moving too fast” Despite the whirlwind of sudden fame, Jackson parlayed the success into a mini-empire, creating clothing lines, video games, health foods and fragrances. The latter recently landed him in some bother with Remy Martin, who sued him for allegedly copying their bottle. “They felt I was moving too fast, so they put some pressure on me,” he said. “They picked the wrong guy coz I spend a million dollars a year on legal fees anyway—just for recreational purposes it feels like sometimes.” —AFP

Sports

Duplantis attempts world record, dominates Stockholm pole Vault

Hurdlers dodge climate protesters

STOCKHOLM: Pole vault star Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis, watched by his mother, attempted a world record, and climate protesters added "an 11th hurdle" in the rain-hit Diamond League event in Stockholm on Sunday. The pole vault was delayed for two hours by the wet weather, as the sound system in Stockholm's venerable Olympic Stadium, played "Let the Sunshine In" from the musical Hair. When it started, Duplantis, the reigning Olympic and world champion, was perfect with his first four jumps in an event.

His last clearance was at 6.05m, enough to win the competition comfortably by 23cm from Ernest Obiena. It was fourth time in five summer competitions "Mondo" has cleared 6m. The American-born Duplantis, who competes for Sweden through his mother Helena who was in the Stockholm crowd, then took off his black leg warmers and raised the bar to 6.23m, a centimeter higher than the world record he set indoors in France in February.

He pulled out before jumping on his first two attempts and then brought down the bar on his third and final try. "This is the most important meet, outside of the World Championships, for me in the year," said Duplantis. "I was really fired up and felt I could conquer the world," he said. "Maybe the conditions and tiredness caught up with me in the end there."

Seven weeks ahead of the 2023 World Championships in Budapest, Duplantis again dominates the

world rankings. His best mark is 6.12 meters set in Ostrava, in the Czech Republic on June 27. Sunday's jump was the fourth best in the world this season. Only American KC Lightfoot, with a clearance of 6.07 metres for third best, intrudes in the top five. Another Scandinavian world-record holder, Karsten Warholm, also won but the field in the men's 400m hurdle had to contend with an unexpected obstacle.

Runners in the middle lanes had to dodge three climate protesters who had come onto the track and unfurled a banner in front of the finish line. Warholm, on the outside, had an unimpeded run to the line, but two runners collided with the banner and others had to dodge the protesters. "There was an 11th hurdle today," said France's Wilfried Happio, who was fifth. "I didn't quite understand what was happening. Things go too fast in those moments," Happio said. "It's bad enough that you're not too lucid at the end of the race, so if on top of that there's a banner you have to dodge..."

Warholm won 47.57 sec, more than a second slower than the 2023 world best time he set in Oslo in June. "I got to post another good time, so I am very pleased. I am 100% exactly where I want to be," said the Norwegian. Croatian Sandra Perkovic won the women's discus for a record-extending 46th Diamond League victory. "After 13 years I am still here winning Diamond Leagues," she said. — AFP



STOCKHOLM: Sweden's Armand Duplantis competes during the men's pole vault competition of the Diamond League gala in Stockholm, Sweden on July 2, 2023. — AFP



LONDON: England's Jonny Bairstow walks back to the pavilion after losing his wicket for 10 runs on day five of the second Ashes cricket Test match between England and Australia. — AFP

Controversial dismissal sends Lord's into revolt

LONDON: Marylebone Cricket Club said three members had been suspended after Jonny Bairstow's controversial dismissal in the second Ashes Test at Lord's on Sunday sent the crowd into an unprecedented rage, with Australia players abused by spectators in the famous Pavilion Long Room. Bairstow was given out when Australia wicketkeeper Alex Carey threw the ball at the stumps after the England batsman walked out of his crease after ducking under a Cameron Green bouncer.

There was confusion in the middle, Bairstow seemingly believing the ball was dead at the end of the over, but Australia were happy to proceed with a deeply divisive appeal. The umpires sent the decision upstairs for review by TV umpire Marais Erasmus, who had no option but to confirm Bairstow's stumping dismissal. Bairstow was livid and the usually sedate Lord's crowd responded by chanting "Same old Aussies always cheating" while booing rang around the famous old arena for several minutes.

England's Stuart Broad, the batsman who came in after Bairstow's exit, immediately let his frustrations show as the stump microphone caught him telling Carey: "That's all you'll ever be remembered for that." Broad also told Australia captain Pat Cummins: "That's the worst thing I've ever seen in cricket". Veteran paceman Broad mockingly tapped his bat in his crease after each delivery to ensure he didn't depart the same way as Bairstow.

A bitter row about the 'spirit of cricket' was underway, with furious fans chanting "cheats" and England's players clearly angry Australia did not withdraw their appeal on grounds of fair play. Members in the Lord's Pavilion, the most exclusive part of the ground, confronted the Australia team as they walked through the historic Long Room to get to their dressing room at lunch. Australia batsmen David Warner and Usman Khawaja were seen stopping to speak to members who were booing before stewards stepped in to usher the players away.

A Cricket Australia spokesman called on MCC to investigate allegations their players were "verbally abused, with some being physically contacted". Cummins admitted it had been a hostile atmosphere in the normally refined environment of the Long Room. "The crowd made themselves known in the Long Room and in the stands. The MCC apologized for the behavior for some of the members," he said.

"They were quite aggressive and abusive towards some of our players, which the MCC weren't too happy with...The members here are normally very welcoming." Apologizing for the incident, MCC said: "After this morning's play, emotions were running high, and words were unfortunately exchanged with some of the Australian team, by a small number of members. "We have unreservedly apologized to the Australian team and will deal with any member who has not maintained the standard we expect through our disciplinary processes." MCC secretary and chief executive Guy Lavender later issued an email to the club's 18,000 strong mass membership where he said the three members "directly involved" had been identified. — AFP

Final MLB All-Stars named as Ohtani gets pitching nod

NEW YORK: Los Angeles Angels dual threat Shohei Ohtani of Japan was named to the American League pitching staff on Sunday as complete line-ups were revealed for this month's Major League Baseball All-Star Game. A combined 23 pitchers and reserves for each team were named for elite squads from the National and American leagues that meet on July 11 at Seattle. They were determined by "player ballots" and the commissioner's office after fan voting determined the position player starters, who were announced on Thursday.

Managers for each team will announce the starting pitchers on the eve of the game. Ohtani, the batting-pitching threat who leads MLB with 30 home runs, was voted the AL's starting designated hitter in ballots unveiled Thursday. The 28-year-old right-hander also is allowing opposing hitters an MLB-low .180 batting average as a pitcher, which could get him

a starting spot on the mound as well as swinging a bat.

Other AL pitchers included Houston's Framber Valdez, Minnesota's Sonny Gray, Seattle's Luis Castillo and Gerrit Cole of the New York Yankees. Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Clayton Kershaw, a 35-year-old left-hander, was selected for his 10th All-Star Game on the NL roster. The three-time NL Cy Young Award winner as best pitcher made his first All-Star start last year in Dodger Stadium. Other NL pitchers include Marcus Stroman and Justin Steele of the Chicago Cubs and San Diego's Josh Hader.

AL starting fielders include four from Texas - catcher Jonah Heim, second baseman Marcus Semien, third baseman Josh Jung and shortstop Corey Seager - and outfielders Aaron Judge of the New York Yankees, Randy Arozarena of Tampa Bay and Mike Trout of the Angels. NL All-Star starting fielders feature Atlanta catcher Sean Murphy and shortstop Orlando Arcia, Los Angeles Dodgers first baseman Freddie Freeman, Miami second baseman Luis Arraez, St. Louis third baseman Nolan Arenado, designated hitter J.D. Martinez of the Dodgers and outfielders Mookie Betts of the Dodgers, Ronald Acuna of Atlanta and Arizona's Corbin Carroll.

Atlanta first baseman Matt Olson, who leads the NL with 28 homers and MLB with 68 runs batted in,



Shohei Ohtani of Los Angeles Angels

was among the NL reserves along with teammates Austin Riley and Ozzie Albies, Will Smith of the Dodgers, Dansby Swanson of the Cubs, Pete Alonso of the New York Mets and Juan Soto of San Diego. AL reserves included Toronto's Vlad Guerrero Jr, Bo Bichette and Whit Merrifield, Cleveland's Jose Ramirez, Baltimore's Adley Rutschman and Austin Hays and Houston's Yordan Alvarez. — AFP

Australia win rancorous 2nd Ashes Test at Lord's

LONDON: Australia won a rancorous second Ashes Test at Lord's on Sunday by 43 runs despite a stunning century from England captain Ben Stokes that went into overdrive following the controversial dismissal of Jonny Bairstow. Stokes made a remarkable 155 before he was dismissed with England 70 runs shy of a steep target of 371. England were eventually dismissed for 327 as holders Australia, bidding for a first away Ashes series win in 22 years, went 2-0 up in the five-match campaign.

But it was the dismissal of Bairstow shortly before lunch on the last day that riled the England team and the crowd alike. Bairstow, the last of England's specialist batsmen, fell in bizarre fashion for 10 when he wandered out of his ground after ducking a Cameron Green bouncer and quick-thinking wicketkeeper Alex Carey under-armed the ball onto the stumps. Bairstow thought he had secured his ground by tapping his bat behind the crease. Australia captain Pat Cummins could have withdrawn the appeal, but third umpire Marais Erasmus ruled Bairstow had been stumped, with England now 193-6.

A usually sedate Lord's crowd reacted in fury with a chant of "Same old Aussies, always cheating" in a reference to Australia's 2018 ball-tampering scandal in South Africa. Incoming batsman Stuart Broad told Carey "you'll be forever remembered for that". But a spokesman for Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) the owners of Lord's and the guardians

Nissanka century books Sri Lanka's World Cup spot

HARARE: Pathum Nissanka's sublime unbeaten 101 propelled Sri Lanka to a place in this year's Cricket World Cup in India as the 1996 winners trounced hosts Zimbabwe by nine wickets on Sunday. Sri Lanka had bowled out Zimbabwe for a modest 165 inside 33 overs and Nissanka never gave the hosts a hope of victory with his superb innings lifting Sri Lanka to 169 for one in their Super Six stage match. Zimbabwe can still qualify if they beat Scotland on Tuesday.

Sri Lanka's bowlers had performed admirably in skittling the hosts out — man of the match Maheesh Theekshana taking 4-25. Sri Lankan captain Dasun Shanaka said it was crucial for them to be at the sport's quadrennial showpiece — another former winner West Indies are missing out for the first time after losing to Scotland on Saturday.

"It was a much-needed thing for Sri Lanka to play



LONDON: England's Harry Brook is bowled by Australia's Pat Cummins in day four of the second Ashes cricket Test match between England and Australia at Lord's cricket ground in London. — AFP

of cricket' Laws, told AFP that Bairstow had been given out correctly. An Australia team spokesman later alleged players had been "verbally abused" and "physically contacted" by irate MCC members in the Lord's Pavilion during the lunch break.

Stokes, then on 62, hit out and on 77 he slammed a fierce pull back at Cummins which the fast bowler dropped. Stokes then hooked Green for three sixes off successive deliveries — the second dropped over the boundary by Mitchell Starc — to complete

a stunning 142-ball hundred. Stokes accepted Bairstow had been out but he also told the BBC: "Would I want to win a game in that manner? The answer for me is no." Stokes hit nine fours and nine sixes in all but said his aggression had not been motivated by anger at Bairstow's exit but by his "best option" being to take the fielders out of play. Cummins insisted there was "nothing untoward or sneaky," about Bairstow's dismissal. "Jonny was leaving his crease every ball," he said. — AFP

on that big stage," said Shanaka. "See coming for the qualifiers. It's always tough but still, if you go through the process...and we knew with the team we've got, we were going to qualify for the World Cup." The Zimbabweans had been up against it from the start after being put into bat by Shanaka and were left tottering on 30-3 due to a stunning opening spell by Dilshan Madushanka.

The hosts had prided themselves on getting through the first 10 overs in the previous matches in the tournament virtually unscathed — they had lost just the one wicket. However, a fired-up Madushanka gave them a rude awakening reducing them to 8-2 beginning by dismissing Joylord Gumbie for a duck and then Wesley Madhevere for one. He snapped up the key wicket of captain Craig Ervine for just 14, the 37-year-old with over 100 ODI appearances for the hosts nicking the ball to wicketkeeper Kusal Mendis.

'Very good cricket'

Sean Williams and Sikandar Raza steadied the ship — only after the former had escaped when Matheesha Pathirana dropped a simple chance off Madushanka prompting a withering look from Sri Lankan coach Chris Silverwood. They put on a fluent

partnership of 68 but just as they were hitting their boot straps Raza on 31 holed out to Madushanka off the bowling of Shanaka to leave the hosts 98-4.

They recovered briefly thanks to 19 — including three sixes — coming off a Dhananjaya over. Williams brought up his half century with a beautifully executed four in Shanaka's next over. However, his elation was to turn to despair soon afterwards. Shanaka made an inspired bowling change bringing on Theekshana for his second spell in place of the expensive Dhananjaya and with just his fifth ball bowled Williams for 56.

Theekshana struck again dismissing Burl for 16 with a similar type delivery to reduce the hosts to 130-6 and it became 144-7 when he trapped Luke Jongwe lbw for 10. The Zimbabwe tail failed to wag with the unpredictable Matheesha Pathirana taking two of the remaining three wickets in one over. Ervine said despite the heavy defeat they would stick to their gameplan for Tuesday's match. "I don't think we need to prepare any differently from what we have been doing in this tournament (against Scotland)," said Ervine. "We have been playing some very good cricket. Sri Lanka were much better than us today." — AFP

Sports

Fowler snaps four-year win drought with playoff victory

First victory since 2019 and 6th PGA triumph overall

WASHINGTON: Rickie Fowler sank a birdie putt from just inside 12 feet on Sunday to win a playoff for the PGA Rocket Mortgage Classic title and snap a four-year win drought. Fowler defeated fellow American Collin Morikawa, a two-time major champion, and Canada's Adam Hadwin to capture his first victory since the 2019 Phoenix Open and his sixth PGA triumph overall. "It's just nice to have this one out of the way," Fowler said. "I'm obviously going to soak this one in and celebrate a bit. It has just been a long road. I'll get emotional at some point."

Fowler, 34, won the 2017 Players Championship but has struggled in recent years, falling to 185th in the world rankings last year before reviving his form this season with nine top-20 finishes in his past 10 events. "Had to keep putting the time in, keep grinding, keep pushing," Fowler said. "Then started to see some positive results and to build some confidence and momentum last fall. A lot of great stuff this year. I knew it was a matter of time the way I've been playing."

In the four years, four months and 29 days between his titles, Fowler became a husband and father and smiled as he held his daughter Maya on

the 18th green. "Winning is great," Fowler said. "But there's a lot more to life than that." Morikawa, Fowler and Hadwin all finished 72 holes on 24-under par 264 at rain-softened Detroit Golf Club, where players started early in threesomes to escape a stormy afternoon forecast.

Fowler, Morikawa and Hadwin shared the lead at 23-under as they came down the stretch. Morikawa and Hadwin each birdied the par-5 17th but Fowler needed three to reach the fringe there and settled for par. At 18, Fowler dropped his approach just over three feet from the hole and tapped in to reach the playoff. "Our back was against the wall," Fowler said. "Didn't take advantage of some opportunities I had on the back nine to win in regulation, but I'll take it any way we can get it."

The playoff began at 18 and Fowler booked his tee shot right into the crowd with his rivals in the fairway. But Fowler dropped his approach just inside 12 feet from the hole while Morikawa went over the green and like Hadwin ended up just over 21 feet from the hole. Hadwin's putt rolled past, Morikawa's chip was short and Fowler then made his putt, standing in place and smiling at his long-sought victory. "It was a nice

moment just to kind of feel like the weight on my shoulders was finally off," Fowler said.

'Old Collin' is back

Morikawa and Hadwin had also been trying to snap victory droughts, with Hadwin's only PGA victory coming at the 2017 Valspar Championship. "Would have liked to have made a couple more putts," Hadwin said. "But I did a lot of really good things. I'm proud of the way I kept going and had some fun. Hopefully this is a sign of good things to come." Morikawa, the 2020 PGA Championship and 2021 British Open winner, hasn't won a PGA event since capturing the Claret Jug at Royal St. George's. His most recent triumph was at the 2021 European Tour's season-ending championship at Dubai.

"You've got to execute the shots and we did a lot of that really good," Morikawa said. "It was awesome to see. Haven't seen that for 72 holes in a while. It's kind of the old Collin hopefully back... It will be really exciting for me heading to The Open." World number nine Max Homa, the highest-ranked player in the field, aced the par-3 15th from 140 yards with a pitching wedge. — AFP



DETROIT: Rickie Fowler of the United States poses with the trophy after winning the Rocket Mortgage Classic in a playoff at Detroit Golf Club on July 2, 2023. — AFP



CLUJ-NAPOCA: France's Maxence Caqueret (left) and Ukraine's Danylo Sikan vie for the ball during the UEFA European Under-21 Championship Quarter Final football match in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. — AFP

Ukraine upset France; England edge Portugal in Euro U21

CLUJ-NAPOCA: Georgiy Sudakov scored twice as Ukraine came from behind on Sunday to upset France 3-1 in Romania in the last quarterfinal at the European under-21 tournament. Earlier, Anthony Gordon scored the winner as England, who have yet to concede a goal in the tournament, beat Portugal 1-0 in Kutaisi in Georgia to reach the last four. In Cluj Napoca, in Romania, France stroled into the lead after 30 minutes as Bradley Barcola found space in the Ukrainian box and cut the ball back to Rayan Cherki who side-stepped a defender and popped his shot into the net. Ukraine were ahead by half time, lifted by two moments of inspiration from Chelsea starlet Mykhailo Mudryk. After 30 minutes, Mudryk sliced through the French defense and into the box where Pierre Kalulu lunged. Mudryk plunged. Sudakov converted the penalty. Ten minutes later, Mudryk's pinpoint pass from his own half found Sudakov who gave Ukraine the lead. In the second half, Ukraine, more experienced than the French, intelligently managed their lead.

Mudryk almost provided another spark with a brilliant long pass to Oleksandr Nazarenko who was unable to convert. Artem Bondarenko did score in 85th minute. By then, Mudryk was off and France were all but out. Mudryk has struggled since his 100 million euros (£88 million) move to Chelsea but said he was more comfortable with Ukraine, a team full of former Shakhtar Donetsk clubmates. "When you play with team-mates who are also your friends, you can play in a different way. When the coach puts 100-per-cent faith in you, you can do a lot more," he said.

In the evening's early match, Newcastle striker Gordon finished first time from a cut-back by Morgan Gibbs White of Nottingham Forest after 34 minutes. "It's what happens when you have top players around you," said Gordon at the press conference. "You're going to get chances and it's up to me to finish them. I probably should have had one or two more, which I'm a bit gutted about." England created the best chances in the first half but rode their luck after the break. — AFP

Verstappen wins GP to complete 'classy' Spielberg sweep

SPIELBERG BEI KNITTELFELD: Defending champion Max Verstappen continued his relentless charge towards a third world title on Sunday when he claimed a record fourth Austrian Grand Prix victory in emphatic style. The 25-year-old Dutchman finished 5.155 seconds clear of a revived Charles Leclerc of Ferrari, in second, with Red Bull team-mate Sergio Perez, showing revitalized form, taking a battling third after starting 15th on the grid. It was a race of attrition, punctuated by safety cars and influenced by a high number of drivers receiving penalties for exceeding track limits.

Several drivers served pit penalties during the race but after a stewards' investigation, eight received further late-night punishments including Carlos Sainz, demoted from fourth to sixth and Lewis Hamilton from seventh to eighth. During the

Frenchman Lafay ends Cofidis Tour de France curse at San Sebastian

SAN SEBASTIAN: Frenchman Victor Lafay sprung a surprise by beating an elite breakaway to the finish line on stage two of the Tour de France on Sunday ending a 15-year curse for his team Cofidis. The win is a first at the Tour de France for French outfit Cofidis since 2008, and elevates Lafay to fourth in the overall standings. English rider Adam Yates retained the overall leader's yellow jersey while Belgian ace Wout van Aert was second on the day ahead of Tadej Pogacar after the relentless rush for the line.

Coming into the final stretch after the rolling 209km run through the Basque Country, the longest stage of this year's Tour, all eyes were on the duel between defending champion Jonas Vingegaard and Pogacar. But Lafay gate-crashed the party with a stealth move that caught everyone out as he maintained just enough pace to cross the line ahead of his pursuers.

"I'm so happy to have lifted this curse from the team," said the winner. "It's crazy. I was hanging on at times today because that was fast. But I believed all the way and that's what got me over the line," said the 27-year-old. Pogacar picked up four seconds for coming third at the finish line along the seaford of San Sebastian's scenic horseshoe bay to add to bonuses he collected the day before and in the sprint to the top of day's final climb, the Jaizkibel.

The first real skirmish of the Tour between Pogacar and Vingegaard broke out atop the Jaizkibel. The Slovenian pipped the Dane to the bonus line at the top to collect eight bonus seconds to the Jumbo man's five. The battle on the steep 8km climb reduced the peloton to around 20 riders. As they zoomed downhill, rider after rider attempted to escape. With 500 meters to go Lafay succeeded and held on to deliver a first Tour de France stage win

race. Verstappen's unbroken run of laps led ended on 249, when he pitted. But it was only a pause in his serene progress to a fifth consecutive victory, seventh in nine races this year to extend his lead ahead of Perez in the title race to 81 points.

It followed the Dutchman's success in Saturday's sprint and with the fastest lap gave him a maximum points haul from the weekend. "That is the full sweep, classy Max, very, very classy," said Red Bull boss Christian Horner over the team radio. "The car was on fire!" replied Verstappen after his 42nd career win. Despite a third title being his to lose Verstappen said he preferred to take it one race at a time. "I don't like to think about that yet," he said. "I am just enjoying driving this car and racing for this team. The sprint weekend can be very stressful so I'm just glad it all went to plan."

His win total lifted him to fifth in the all-time list of winners and clear of Ayrton Senna, with whom he had shared 41 victories since winning in Canada. Including a triumph in the 2022 Styrian Grand Prix, run during the COVID pandemic, this was Verstappen's fifth win at the Red Bull Ring circuit overall. Leclerc and Perez were also pleased with their performances. "We have maximized what we have," he said. "It was just yester-

day that I was off it a bit. The upgrades have worked as expected, but there is still a lot of work to do."

day that I was off it a bit. The upgrades have worked as expected, but there is still a lot of work to do."

Perez said: "It's been a rough patch for me so I hope we are back now and we can keep some consistency." Leclerc's second place earned Ferrari their 800th podium finish. After the results were revised by stewards, McLaren's Lando Norris was fourth, two-time champion Fernando Alonso fifth with Ferrari's Sainz sixth ahead of the Mercedes pair of George Russell and Hamilton. Lance Stroll was ninth in the second Aston Martin after Pierre Gasly was demoted to 10th for Alpine.

The race was preceded by a minute's silence in memory of Dutch racer Dilano van't Hoff, 18, who was killed racing in heavy rain at Spa-Francorchamps on Saturday. In warm and dry conditions, Verstappen made a clean start and on lap 25 of the 71, he pitted, handing the lead to Leclerc to end his run of 249 consecutive laps led since lap 48 at the Miami GP. The Dutchman swiftly regained second, however, and then swept inside Leclerc at Turn Three, on lap 35, to regain the lead. Hamilton served a penalty while pitting as did Sainz, Ocon, Gasly, Albon and Tsunoda. Hamilton's frustrated fuming prompted a radio rebuke from team boss Toto Wolff. — AFP

Spain's Palou takes 3rd IndyCar win in a row

WASHINGTON: Spain's Alex Palou won his third consecutive IndyCar race on Sunday, capturing the Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio to boost his season points lead. It was the fourth victory in the past five races for Palou, who defeated New Zealand's Scott Dixon by five seconds with Australian Will Power third. The 26-year-old Spaniard, who won the 2021 IndyCar season crown, dominated over the last half of the 80-lap race over the 13-turn, 2.258-mile permanent road course in Lexington, Ohio. "We had a really fast car," Palou said. "Everything went well on strategy and pit stops and our pace was really good so super happy."

Palou's eighth career IndyCar victory stretched his lead in the season title race from 74 points to a 110-point margin, 377-267 over second-place Dixon. "I think maybe we're starting to (dominate), but no we're not," he said. "It's all about putting everything together. We've been able to do this quite often this year. Hopefully we can keep it going." Palou won last month on the Indianapolis road course and took the Indy 500 pole before finishing fourth on race day, then added triumphs at Detroit and Road America in June. "This is the best moment in my career so far," Palou said. "We'll focus on what we can do I know we can have a good couple of races coming up. We'll try and win when we can." He became the first IndyCar driver to win three in a row since Chip Ganassi Racing teammate Dixon began the 2020 campaign with three consecutive triumphs. Dixon, a six-time winner at Mid-Ohio and six-time IndyCar season champion, managed his best finish of the year. — AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Hospitals

| | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Sabah Hospital | 24812000 |
| Amiri Hospital | 22450005 |
| Maternity Hospital | 24843100 |
| Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital | 25312700 |
| Chest Hospital | 24849400 |
| Farwaniya Hospital | 24892010 |
| Adan Hospital | 23940620 |
| Ibn Sina Hospital | 24840300 |
| Al-Razi Hospital | 24846000 |

Physiotherapy Hospital 24874330/9

Clinics

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

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

Change of Name

I myself **Naziya Syed** holding of Indian Passport number U0465194 resident in 2361 Sastrinagar Akkayapalli Kadapa YSR District that I have changed my name **Naziya Syed** to given name **Naziya** surname **Shaik**. (#3821) 04-07-2023

hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: **Mahaboob Basha** (given name) and **Syed** (surname). (#3820) 04-07-2023

I **Mahboob Basha Syed** holder of Indian Passport No. Z3826892 having permanent address 9 515 6 A Agadi St, Kadapa Dist, Andhra Pradesh, India, residing in Kuwait at present,

I, **Kherunnisa**, holder of Indian Passport No. T0703469 having permanent address Hussaini Colony, Partapur, Banswara District, Rajasthan, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as **Kherunnisa** (given name) **Mulla Yahya** (surname). (#3819) 27-06-2023

Djokovic dries Wimbledon court, overpowers Cachin

Swiatek cruises into Wimbledon second round



WIMBLEDON: Serbia's Novak Djokovic jokes as he attempts to dry the grass of Center Court with a towel as rain starts to fall during his men's singles tennis match against Argentina's Pedro Cachin on the first day of the 2023 Wimbledon Championships on July 3, 2023. (Right) Poland's Iga Swiatek serves to China's Zhu Lin during their women's singles tennis match on the first day of the 2023 Wimbledon Championships. — AFP

LONDON: Novak Djokovic helped dry the grass on Wimbledon's Centre Court with his towel before picking up where he had left off to beat Argentina's Pedro Cachin 6-3, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) in his opening match on Monday. The Serbian second seed was broken in the third game when he double-faulted but hit back immediately to level at 2-2. Djokovic, chasing a record-equalling eighth Wimbledon men's singles title, broke again in the eighth game before serving out for the set.

The covers were rushed on as soon as the defending champion had wrapped up the set, with rain falling in southwest London. The roof was closed but

there was a lengthy delay featuring multiple inspections by officials and the players. Djokovic, who was clearly unhappy with the slipperiness of the surface, at one stage emerged with a towel, which he used to rub the surface of the court to laughter from the crowd. Members of the ground staff then used hand-held machines to try to dry the surface in farcical scenes on the world-famous court. The match eventually resumed after a delay of almost 90 minutes, with the Centre Court roof reopened.

Djokovic, seeking to match Margaret Court's all-time record of 24 Grand Slam singles titles, was unfazed by the delay, breaking in the first game of the

second set to establish an iron grip on the match, repeating the feat to seal the set. Cachin, ranked 68th, dug deep in the third set, with neither player able to force a break in the early evening sunshine. Djokovic was immediately on top in the tie-break, surging into a 6-2 lead and he wrapped up the match when Cachin netted. The 36-year-old Serbian is chasing the first calendar Grand Slam in men's tennis since 1969 after winning the Australian Open and French Open this year.

In another development, World number one Iga Swiatek racked up the first five games on her way to sweeping past China's Zhu Lin to reach the Wimble-

don second round on Monday. Reigning US Open and French Open champion Swiatek came through 6-1, 6-3 against her 34th-ranked opponent. Top seed Swiatek, who has yet to progress beyond the fourth round at the All England Club, will face either Martina Trevisan of Italy or Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo for a place in the last 32. "I feel confident and did a good job of adjusting to grass," said the 22-year-old after an 81-minute win that was completed under the roof of Court One as heavy rain disrupted play on the outside courts. "After winning Roland Garros last year, I felt overwhelmed but this year I took the time to appreciate it and then went back to work." — AFP

Kyrgios withdraws from Wimbledon with wrist injury

LONDON: Nick Kyrgios withdrew from Wimbledon on Sunday with a wrist injury, stripping the tournament of one of its headline acts 12 months after the firebrand Australian finished runner-up to Novak Djokovic. "I'm really sad to say that I have to withdraw from Wimbledon this year," the 28-year-old wrote on Instagram, explaining that he had hurt his wrist as he prepared in vain to play in Mallorca last week. Kyrgios had been an injury doubt in the build-up to Wimbledon.

However, that was because he was struggling to recover from knee surgery which has restricted him

to just one match in 2023. "I tried my hardest to be ready after my surgery and to be able to step on the Wimbledon courts again. During my comeback, I experienced some pain in my wrist during Mallorca," he added. "As a precaution, I had it scanned and it came back showing a torn ligament in my wrist. I tried everything to be able to play and I am disappointed to say that I just didn't have enough time to manage it before Wimbledon. "I'll be back, and as always, I appreciate the support from all my fans."

Kyrgios had been due to face wild card David Goffin in the first round at the All England Club on Monday. His place in the draw will be taken by a lucky loser from qualifying. Earlier Sunday, Kyrgios, whose lone match in 2023 came in Stuttgart last month, said that his battle to regain full fitness had been "brutal".

However, he added: "I didn't miss the sport. I was almost dreading coming back a little bit, but it's my job." He also admitted there remained "question

marks" over his ability to play best-of-five sets after such a lengthy absence. "I feel like to the outside world, people don't understand. Just because it's not contact, it's not that physical. I dare someone to go out there and play four hours with Novak and see how you feel afterwards." At Wimbledon in 2022, the Australian dominated most of the headlines.

His high-octane, flamboyant shot-making was accompanied by signature clashes with rivals and officialdom. He was fined \$10,000 for spitting and \$4,000 for shouting obscenities - one of which sent the British tabloids into meltdown as it was within earshot of eight-year-old Prince George. Kyrgios also fought out an explosive third round clash with Stefanos Tsitsipas with the Greek even describing him as "evil" and a "bully". In the final against Djokovic, he demanded a woman be ejected from the crowd for consuming "700 drinks, bro".

"In a way it was good to be home. Obviously heart-breaking as well," said Kyrgios as he reflected on his

time out of the sport. "Last year I felt like everything kind of came together for me. Finals of Wimbledon. Barely lost a match. Had the third best season on tour. "Obviously my body was just crying out for some sort of rest." For Kyrgios, being away from the tennis courts didn't mean an absence from the public view. In May, his car was stolen from his mother at gunpoint outside the family home in Canberra.

Before that incident, Kyrgios pleaded guilty in February to assaulting a former girlfriend. He avoided a conviction for what the magistrate called a "single act of stupidity". Kyrgios has also been the headliner in the Netflix series "Break Point" where he spoke candidly about his mental health. He admitted he had considered suicide and ended up in a psychiatric ward in 2019. "It took me seven, eight years to be able to just open up about that," he explained on Sunday. "I feel great now. It's hard because I'm putting so much expectation on myself. Compared to that time, I'm feeling a lot better." — AFP

Qatar upset Mexico to reach Gold Cup quarter-finals

MIAMI: Qatar upset Mexico 1-0 on Sunday to reach the quarter-finals of the CONCACAF Gold Cup while Jesus Ferreira became the first player to score back-to-back hat-tricks for the United States in the 6-0 win over Trinidad and Tobago. Jamaica also qualified for the last eight from Group A with ease, behind the USA, after beating St Kitts and Nevis 5-0 in Santa Clara, California. In Group B, Qatar shocked already-qualified Mexico to qualify in second place and denying Honduras, who were eliminated despite beating Haiti 2-1.

Qatar, who are playing for the second time as a guest team in the tournament for North and Central America and the Caribbean, survived a second half onslaught from Mexico to pull off a famous victory. The 2022 World Cup hosts, coached by Carlos Queiroz from Portugal, took the lead in the 27th minute when Musaab Khidir whipped in a great cross from the right and Hazem Shehata found the target with a superb angled header. That proved to be the only real effort on goal from the Gulf side as Mexico dominated but couldn't find a way through.

Santiago Gimenez, who had survived a red card review for a swinging arm on a Qatari defender, fired wide from a promising position and then Edson Alvarez headed against the post. Deep in stoppage time, Israel Reyes had another chance to level — and help Honduras into the knockout stage — but his header was also off target. Qatar, the reigning Asian champions, reached the semi-finals of the Gold Cup in their previous guest appearance two years

ago. Their victory meant Honduras' comeback win against Haiti was in vain, an agonizing outcome for the Central American side, whose players waited on the field as Qatar clung on.

It was a different story for the USA, who after an early scare utterly dominated against a poor Trinidad team. The Caribbean side went close to opening the scoring in the 11th minute in Charlotte when winger Levi Garcia crossed from the right, but Joevin Jones fired his volley over the bar. Three minutes later, Ferreira, who had scored three in Wednesday's 6-0 win over St. Kitts, opened his history-making account with a smart first touch and quick finish after a pull-back from DeJuan Jones.

Ferreira then doubled the lead when Alex Zendejas put in a ball from the left and while Trinidad keeper Marvin Phillip kept out Ferreira's first effort, the FC Dallas forward pounced on the loose ball and fired home. Colombia-born Ferreira grabbed his third from the penalty spot, confidently converting after Djordje Mihailovic was brought down in the box. The Americans lost momentum after the break and Trinidad went close when Shannon Gomez struck the post with a fierce drive in the 62nd minute.

But 19-year-old substitute Cade Cowell made it 4-0, keeping his cool to round Phillip and slot home and moments later he struck the post after cutting in from the left. Gianluca Busio made it five by side-footing a Julian Gressel pass into the net, while Brandon Vazquez completed the scoring after more good work from Cowell. Jamaica were too strong for tournament debutants St. Kitts, going behind after half an hour when Kaheem Parri's low ball across the box was turned in by the grasping arm of keeper Julani Archibald.

After the Reggae Boyz had two efforts ruled out for offside, Jon Russell doubled the lead after a clever back-heel from Aston Villa winger Leon Bailey. Di'Shon Bernard made it 3-0 after a jinking run from



SANTA CLARA: Goalkeeper Meshaal Barsham #22 of Qatar blocks the shot from Orbelin Pineda #17 of Mexico in the first half during the Group B match of 2023 Concacaf Gold Cup on July 02, 2023. — AFP

the influential Demarai Gray and goals from Daniel Johnson and Cory Burke completed the rout. Both the United States and Jamaica finish in Group A on seven points, having drawn in their meeting, but the Americans top the group due to better goal difference.

Haiti took a 20th minute lead through Frantzdy Pierro but Honduras fought back with a fine, angled header from 36-year-old forward Jerry

Bengtsson three minutes before half-time. Honduras completed their comeback in the 59th minute when Jorge Alvarez chipped the ball over the top and into the path of the on-running Jose Pinto, who slotted home. Haiti went desperately close to a stoppage time leveler when Fafa Picault burst down the left and unleashed a long-range drive which crashed out off the post. — AFP