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Why wait
to go electric

\$10,000 trade-in support



3 Crown Prince receives Saudi Cabinet member, State Minister



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8 Boursa Kuwait wins 2 awards for leadership in sustainable finance



16 Enrique named PSG coach, Mbappe future up in the air



Saudi says oil cuts show not at odds with Russia

Riyadh and Kuwait reiterate full rights to gas field eyed by Iran



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil Saad Al-Barrak arrives at the 8th OPEC International Seminar on July 5, 2023. — AFP

VIENNA/RIYADH: Saudi Arabia on Wednesday dismissed talk of discord with oil ally Russia, praising their coordinated decisions to remove barrels from the market in efforts to prop up prices. Oil producers are grappling with falling prices and high market volatility amid fears of global economic slowdown and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which has upended economies worldwide.

On Monday, Riyadh said that it would extend a production reduction of one million barrels per day (bpd), which began in July, to August to boost prices. At the same time, its ally in the OPEC+ group of oil producers, Russia, decided to slash exports by 500,000 bpd in August.

Speaking at an OPEC seminar in Vienna on Wednesday, Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said the coordinated announcement was "quite telling". "Part of what we have done with the help of our colleagues from Russia was also to mitigate the cynical side of the spectators on what is going on between Saudi Arabia and Russia," he added.

Moscow and Riyadh have not always talked with one voice regarding oil quotas, with Russia less enthusiastic than Saudi Arabia about cutting production as it needs the revenue amid its war in Ukraine and Western sanctions. The latest cuts, however, have failed to drive up international oil prices. Analysts say the kingdom needs oil to be priced at \$80 per barrel to balance its budget, which is well above recent averages. Brent North

Sea crude, the international benchmark, was trading at around \$75 per barrel on Wednesday.

Estimates show that Russia, on the other hand, is far from reducing its production by the volume promised, and is concentrating on Asian markets such as India and China. Faced with these accusations, OPEC+ has called on "independent sources" to verify Russia's figures, said the Saudi minister. Moscow has "committed to this exercise and they are going to be doing it on a monthly basis", he insisted.

Asked about the markets' muted reaction to the recent production cuts, Prince Abdulaziz called for patience as he deplored the prevailing "negativism". "We will do whatever is necessary, whatever it takes" to stabilize prices, he added. OPEC did not invite journalists from three major financial news outlets — Bloomberg, Reuters and The Wall Street Journal — to cover the talks.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has said it enjoys "full rights" along with Kuwait to a disputed gas field in the resource-rich Gulf, pushing back against claims by Iran, state media reported late Tuesday. The field, known as Arash in Iran and Durra in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, falls under "joint ownership between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Kuwait, and they alone have full rights", the official Saudi Press Agency reported, citing a foreign ministry source.

The Saudi statement appeared one day after Kuwait

reinvited Iran to participate in talks on their sea borders. The dispute over the field — whose recoverable reserves are estimated at some 220 billion cu m — dates back to the 1960s, when Iran and Kuwait awarded overlapping offshore concessions. Last year, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia signed an agreement to develop the field, despite objections from Iran 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.

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. In March, Saudi Arabia and Iran announced a surprise Chinese-brokered rapprochement deal, agreeing to restore ties after a seven-year rift, raising hopes for reduced tensions between the Middle East heavyweights. — AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Call to hike wages by 35%

KUWAIT: Five lawmakers on Wednesday filed a draft law calling to increase the salaries of Kuwaiti government employees by 35 percent and child allowance from KD 50 to KD 75 per month per child. According to the bill, the increase will be added to the social allowance of employees. Meanwhile, the constitutional court on Wednesday decided to postpone challenges to the parliamentary elections until July 12 to hear arguments from lawyers.

Iran tries to seize two tankers

WASHINGTON: US forces blocked two attempts by the Iranian navy Wednesday to seize commercial tankers in international waters off Oman, including one case in which the Iranians fired on the tanker, the US military said. The Iranians had sought to seize the Marshall Islands-flagged TRF Moss and three hours later the Bahamian-flagged Richmond Voyager, in both cases fleeing after the US destroyer USS McFaul appeared on the scene, the US Central Command said in a statement. — AFP

10 get 10 years for lynching

RANCHI, India: An Indian court sentenced 10 men to 10 years in jail on Wednesday for the lynching of a Muslim man, who died after being tortured and forced to chant Hindu slogans. Tabrez Ansari was tied to a pole and tortured for 12 hours in 2019, as he cried and pleaded with a mob that accused him of burglary. Following a public outcry, police arrested 12 Hindu men, two of whom were later acquitted due to lack of evidence. — AFP

Zionists end Jenin raid that left 13 dead

JENIN: The Zionist army on Wednesday declared the end of a large-scale military operation in the occupied West Bank that killed 12 Palestinians and one Zionist soldier over the previous two days. The raid, involving hundreds of forces, drone strikes and armored bulldozers, targeted the northern West Bank city of Jenin, a center for multiple armed Palestinian groups.

Thousands of Palestinian mourners joined a Jenin funeral procession for those killed, where militants fired gunshots into the air and the crowd chanted "With our souls and blood, we will sacrifice for you, martyr!" Amid the days of violence, a Palestinian in Tel Aviv on Tuesday wounded seven Zionists in a car ramming and stabbing attack before an armed civilian shot him dead.

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JENIN: Mourners carry the bodies of Palestinians killed in clashes the previous day in a Zionist military operation during their funerals in the occupied West Bank on July 5, 2023. — AFP

Temperature breaks record for second day

PARIS: Tuesday was the hottest day ever recorded as the global average temperature leaped to a record high for the second day in a row, according to preliminary readings by US meteorologists published Wednesday. The average daily air temperature on the Earth's surface reached 17.18 degrees Celsius (62.92 Fahrenheit), according to data compiled by an organization attached to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

That far outstripped even the previous day's record measurement, a fresh sign of the impact of climate change driven by the burning of fossil fuels. The global average temperature reached 17



SERIFOS, Greece: Boys dive into the water at Agios Sostis beach on Serifos island on July 4, 2023. — AFP

degrees Celsius for the first time on Monday, according to data from NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Prediction, whose records go back to 1979. That topped the previous daily record of 16.92 Celsius dating to July 24, 2022.

For comparison, the world's

average air temperature, which fluctuates between 12 Celsius and just under 17 Celsius on any given day over the year, averaged 16.2 degrees at the beginning of July from 1979 to 2000. This reported record has yet to be corroborated by other measurements, but could

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Western allies drag Iran to ICJ over downed jet

THE HAGUE: Canada, Britain, Sweden and Ukraine have taken Iran to the UN's top court to seek damages for families of passengers on a jetliner downed by Tehran in 2020, they said Wednesday. The case lodged by the four countries, which had a number of citizens on board, asks the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to order Iran to apologize for shooting down Ukraine International Airlines flight 752 after take-off from Tehran.

All 176 people on the plane were killed. Three days after the Jan 8, 2020 crash, Iran admitted that its military had targeted the Kyiv-bound Boeing 737-800 plane by mistake. The Hague-based ICJ said in a statement that the four countries "claim that Iran has violated a series of obligations" under a convention on civil aviation by shooting down the plane.

Their joint filing to the court alleges that Iran breached a 1971 multilateral treaty on threats to

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Local

Kuwait, Italy ink several cooperation deals, examine axing tax on oil investments

Italy declares support for Kuwait's Schengen waiver file



ROME: Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen with Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani after signing several cooperation deals on Tuesday. — KUNA photos.



Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah discusses matters of mutual interest with Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani and other officials.

ROME: Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held talks on Tuesday with Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani on various issues of joint concern namely prospects of relieving Kuwaiti nationals of the Schengen visa.

The two sides also signed several agreements, including one for holding strategic dialogue between Kuwait and Rome, another for adopting the executive program for cultural cooperation for the years 2023-2024-2025, and one between Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation.

The Kuwaiti foreign minister, heading

a delegation and currently paying an official visit to Italy, conveyed greetings from the State of Kuwait political leadership to the Italian people and leadership, wishing them lasting progress and prosperity. Official talks between the Kuwaiti and Italian sides addressed the close bilateral relations and means of boosting the ties in various spheres. The file of relieving Kuwaiti citizens of the Schengen visa topped topics of the official deliberations in addition to joint efforts to rally European support for this cause. For his part, the Italian foreign minister affirmed Rome's support for resolving this file, noting Italy's continuous efforts in this regard in the European Union and the European Parliament.

Sheikh Salem along with the accom-

panying officials broached regional files namely Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine and repercussions of issues in these countries on the regional and international arenas, in addition to climate change and swapping information in this domain.

Tackling taxes on oil investments

The same topics were also on the table of talks between Sheikh Salem Abdullah and the head of the Italian-Kuwaiti Friendship Parliamentary Committee, Senator Matteo Jamiti. Sheikh Salem raised the visa issue while noting necessity to lift taxes slapped on Kuwaiti oil investments in Italy. The Italian host assured the Kuwaiti officials the visa issue is one of the top top-

ics regularly discussed in the commission, also noting his efforts to tackle the file of the taxes. The Italian side praised the State of Kuwait for adopting successful policies at the regional and international levels. Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber also met with the Chairperson of the parliamentary foreign affairs commission Giulio Tremonti and its members, discussing means of promoting cooperation at the economic, cultural, educational, security, political, diplomatic and parliamentary levels, in addition to enhancing the cooperation in combating terrorism and extremism. Members of the Italian commission underlined great significance of broadening economic cooperation and exploring feasible projects in the energy sector. They expressed grat-

itude to the State of Kuwait's efforts at the humanitarian and diplomatic levels at the regional and international levels.

Separately, the Kuwaiti foreign minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber met with Speaker of the Italian Parliament Lorenzo Fontana. Talks between the two sides dealt with the close bilateral relations and means of cementing these ties particularly at the parliamentary and grass-root levels.

The chief Italian parliamentarian praised the distinctive and historic ties with Kuwait, noting the aspiration to boost the relations particularly at the commercial and tourism levels. The talks also covered issues such as Ukraine while the two sides affirmed necessity to establish international security and peace. — KUNA



ROME: Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah hands letter from Kuwait's Prime Minister to his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni. — KUNA

Foreign minister meets with Italian prime minister

ROME: Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met Tuesday with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni as part of his official visit to Italy.

During the meeting, he conveyed the regards of Kuwait's political leadership to the leaders and people of the friendly Republic of Italy and handed Prime Minister Meloni a letter from His Highness the Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah relating to the close relationship between both countries.

Sheikh Salem Abdullah spoke highly of the state-to-state and the people-to-people friendship as both nations are celebrating the 60th anniversary of their diplomatic relations this year.

Prime Minister Meloni praised the friendly and deep-rooted relations between both nations, voicing hope to open new horizons for mutually beneficial cooperation in all fields. — KUNA

Teenagers speak on negative aspects of AI

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Experts have warned of social media platforms that use artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, which are very popular among users in the Middle East, especially Kuwait. The experts revealed that exposure to these platforms may lead to an increase in diagnoses of symptoms of schizophrenia and hallucinations among adolescents and children.

It was believed that adolescents will be the most affected in the future as a result of the increased integration of AI in means of communication, entertainment and education. For example, TikTok uses an addictive algorithm to hook teenage users in an "endless stream" of harmful content related to suicide, anxiety and depression.

Kuwait Times spoke with teenagers to learn more. Teenager Hattan Fatafta affirmed TikTok's new AI filter has left her peers addicted. The rapid

rise of AI has made her and her friends experience hallucinations of believing in ghosts due to some filters that show you someone or something is in the same place as you. "One of the AI filters that TikTok made as a trend among teenagers and adults is to show someone else exists in the same room, which made us believe that we are being watched by some unseen creatures," she said.

ChatGPT, the popular application of AI in smartphones today, is cause for more concerns, as it affects not only the psychology, but also creativity within people, especially adolescents, and increases dependency. Teenager Salma Zawaidah, who was a top student in her class, said: "ChatGPT was unfair to smart students who did their homework. Many students used it to get unfair grades, while teachers unfavorably compared regular homework to well-written artificial homework."

Noor Helmy noted AI suppresses



teenagers' sensory abilities and increases their isolation with screens. "We may lose more and more the way of communicating with others in reality," she affirmed that many teenagers are now in depression due to their isolation from the real world and living in an AI fantasy that allows them to be whoever they want whenever, mentioning AI filters in TikTok have many

fantasy options that allow nerds and fan of any era to become the character they want to be.

"AI has prompted increased attention on our generation that excessively uses AI techniques for the purpose of entertainment and moving images and sounds, not only of the living but even of the dead, which can be easily experienced on TikTok," Helmy pointed out.

Expert urges fines, legislation to curb widespread scams

KUWAIT: Online fraud and scam methods are being professionally devised and developed by individuals, networks and suspicious groups, a thing that necessitates fast-track response through a national strategy, cautioned a Kuwaiti expert. Such constantly changing methods mainly embrace electronic fraud, fake links and accounts and use of ads in piracy as well as the use of celebrities' accounts and images, Head of Kuwait Society for Information Security Dr Safaa Zaman said in an interview to KUNA.

Impressive technological progress and advancement, and reliance upon online shopping have made everyone subject to internet fraud schemes, she said, suggesting that a national strategy should be put in place to fight various types of scams and to promote cybersecurity nationwide.

She mainly blamed online scams involving malicious software, email and instant messaging services on lack of public awareness, abuse of social media, easy access to data and dearth of legislation, accountability and oversight. The Kuwaiti cybersecurity expert cited the recent use by fake companies of celebrities' images in stock-selling ads as being one of the most complicated and common methods of internet fraud.

Dr. Zaman sounded the alarm that with the university graduation season starting, mediators are now inventing a fresh way of deceiving university graduates by offering them jobs in some sectors in return for nearly KD 500. In this context, she warned that the reluctance of some individuals and institutions to inform state bodies concerned against any electronic fraud has unfortunately added fuel to fire. Asked what state bodies concerned should do to fight fake accounts that usually spread misinformation and rumors in society, she suggested that penalties and fines should be imposed on any company involved in any wrongdoing in this regard. She cited that the US and European countries have already taken such steps to put all false accounts and platforms at bay.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries should enact pieces of legislation aiming at combatting cybercrimes by means of incriminating anyone caught in malpractice on social media, particularly when it comes to their internal political affairs, she suggested.

Furthermore, relevant national laws, including the anti-cybercrime act, need to be revised in a way that could bar users from making loopholes and innovative methods to run fake accounts and spread misinformation and fan out hatred with apparent impunity, the Kuwaiti expert urged. She concluded by calling for establishing a digital forensic center, boosting inter-agency cooperation in the cybersecurity space, hammering out relevant treaties and agreements with world institutions involved, and promoting investment in cybersecurity. — KUNA



Dr Safaa Zaman

KISR to support making bags biodegradable

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) has signed a cooperation agreement with a factory specialized in manufacturing plastic products, with the purpose of improving the factory's capabilities in producing biodegradable bags.

The move comes following several suggestions from officials on how to best deal with the country's growing waste problem, with an emphasis on recycling.

According to KUNA, KISR's initiative will help reduce the negative effects of non-biodegradable plastic waste on human health, living organisms and the environment. The goal is to eventually fulfill Kuwait's needs of bags using biodegradable materials, effectively replacing plastic bags in the Kuwaiti market.

Dr Salah Al-Enezi, Director of the Petrochemical Products Improvement and Development Program at the Petroleum Research Center of the Institute, said on Tuesday: "The agreement aims to improve and develop the factory's production lines for biodegradable plastic products in order to promote the concept of social responsibility and put concern for the environment at the top of its priorities."

"The work also includes exploring the degradability of plastic films under natural conditions using the International Standard for American Organizations for Testing Materials according to ASTM 6956 as well as the British Standards Institute under the International Standard No. 8472:2011," Enezi added.

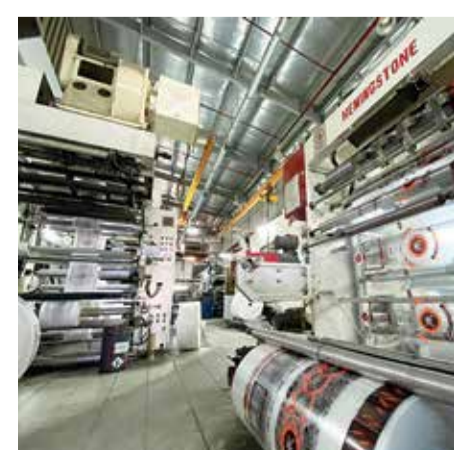
The terms of the agreement include carrying out joint research projects to develop the factory's production lines, as well as exchanging scientific and marketing experiences between the two parties to upgrade a distinctive national product and raise the level of quality.

"It also includes holding workshops, seminars and joint conferences to consolidate the concept of environmental decomposition to reduce plastic waste in safe ways in accordance with the ap-



Dr Salah Al-Enezi, Director of the Petrochemical Products Improvement and Development Program at the Petroleum Research Center at KISR.

proved environmental conditions," he concluded. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The factory with which KISR signed an agreement is seen in this photo. — KUNA photos

Crown Prince receives Saudi state minister, discusses boosting relations

Saudi, Kuwaiti officials commend deep-rooted cooperation



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (right) speaks with Prince Turki bin Mohammad Al-Saud.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Saudi State Minister and Cabinet Member Prince Turki bin Mohammad Al-Saud and other officials on Wednesday. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (right) meets with the Saudi minister.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Wednesday, at Bayan Palace, Saudi State Minister and Cabinet Member Prince Turki bin Mohammad Al-Saud and his accompanying delegation. Prince Turki conveyed the greetings of Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammad bin Salman to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, wishing continuous health to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Crown Prince

Sheikh Mishal Al-Sabah and Kuwait. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammad bin Salman, wishing them continued health and further progress to Saudi Arabia. During the meeting, the two sides discussed the brotherly bilateral ties and ways to boost them in all fields, as well as discussing issues of common interests and the latest

developments in the region. The meeting was attended by Head of the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of Amiri Diwan and His Highness the Amir Office Director Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad, His Highness the Crown Prince Office Director retired Lieutenant General Jamal Al-Thiyab, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs at the Office of His Highness the Crown Prince Mazen Al-Essa, and Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin

Saad Al Saud, and Director General of the Office of the Minister of State and Cabinet Member Hamad bin Sulaiman Al-Saleem.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also met with the Saudi minister. In a separate meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Sabah discussed with Saudi State Minister and Cabinet Member Prince Turki bin Mohammad Al-Saud, aspects of bilateral cooperation between both sides and ways to strengthen and develop them. Sheikh Ahmad received Prince Turki and his accompanying delegation in his office

at Bayan Palace Wednesday during his visit to the country, the Ministry of Defense said in a statement. The Minister of Defense welcomed the honorable guest and his accompanying delegation, commending the deep-rooted and close ties between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which are based on the unity of religion, history and solid ties under the wise leadership of both countries, it added. Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud and Undersecretary of His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Khaled Tala Al-Khaled Al-Sabah attended the meeting. — KUNA



Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (right) meets with Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.



Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (left) meets with Foreign Minister of the Republic of Iraq Fuad Mohammed Hussein.



BAKU: Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (left) is seen with Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey Hakan Fidan at their meeting on Wednesday. — KUNA photos.

Foreign minister meets Iraqi, Iranian and Turkish counterparts

BAKU: Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met with Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey Hakan Fidan on the sidelines of the ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement, which is being held today, Wednesday, in the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku.

Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah renewed congratulations to the Turkish minister on assuming his new post as foreign minister of the friendly Republic of Turkey, wishing him success and for

Turkey and its friendly people further progress and prosperity. During the meeting, they discussed the close bilateral relations linking the two countries and the frameworks for developing them in various fields, especially in the economic and investment sectors.

The two sides expressed their common aspiration to hold the work of the Joint Committee between the two friendly countries within the end of this year in the State of Kuwait. The recent developments on the regional and international arenas, the current developments in the region and the topics on the agenda of the NAM ministerial meeting were also discussed.

Sheikh Salem also met with the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on the sidelines of the meeting in Baku. The meeting picked up where previous talks between the two parties left off during the Iranian minister's recent visit

to the country last month. The foreign ministers of the two countries stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation to maintain the security and stability of the region, stressing the need to continue dialogue and support all efforts that would promote regional and international security and stability.

Another meeting was held between Sheikh Salem and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Iraq Fuad Mohammed Hussein. During the meeting, they discussed the close bilateral relations between the two countries and peoples and how to boost them. They also discussed several topics of common interest, current developments in the region, developments on the regional and international arenas and topics on the agenda of the ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement. — KUNA

Expert weighs in on what it takes to be a good leader

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: In a competitive era where every leader wants to reach the top, they have to discover the keys to succeed and shine among others. Today, leadership is barely defined by titles or positions held. It is the ability to inspire, influence and guide others towards a clear and aspiring vision. Kuwait Times interviewed management consultant and trainer Ahmad Ndoom to unravel the secrets of successful leadership and provide practical strategies to cultivate the qualities needed to thrive in this role.



Ahmad Ndoom

Kuwait Times: What are the necessary skills and qualities that a leader should possess?

Ahmad Ndoom: The skills required of a leader differ from those required from an employee. An employee needs to know their area of expertise and their role within the organization. They are then required to possess the skills to perform their job. For example, an accountant needs to know accounting, and a purchasing department employee needs to know how to prepare purchase orders and receive them upon arrival.

On the other hand, a leader is expected to possess leadership and team management skills. While it is true that a leader should be familiar with the tasks of their team and how to manage them, they should also know how to identify the tasks they want to delegate, assign each task to a specific person and follow up on the execution to ensure that the work is being done correctly and on time. Therefore, the most important skills a leader should possess are task delegation and follow-up skills.

KT: How can a person develop strong leadership and communication skills?

Ndoom: Developing any skill goes through two stages. The first stage is obtaining the correct information. It is important to note that obtaining information is different from obtaining the correct information. Some information may be incorrect or inapplicable, so it does not benefit the person when learning it. Correct information should help you act better. Therefore, the first stage is obtaining correct information from books, courses or from experienced colleagues who have preceded you in the field.

The second stage is applying this information and repeating its application. No matter how correct and useful the information is, when you apply it for the first time, you will not be proficient at it. Therefore, you need to repeat its application and refine your skill until you become proficient at it. Thus, successful training should not be theoretical only and explain the information, but it should contain practical exercises that are repeated until the trainee achieves the information and hones the skill as well. Skills are developed in training courses, as well as in the workplace or what is called 'on job training'.

KT: What strategies can be used to effectively manage a team and create a positive work culture?

Ndoom: The most important strategies are: Written orders rather than verbal orders, because verbal orders are the fastest way to chaos, as one might forget what they have said to the employee. Therefore, communication should be in writing. Another important strategy is regular meetings — the team should meet regularly, weekly, and if work is progressing quickly, there is nothing wrong with having short daily meetings.

The purpose of the meeting is not just to talk at the meeting table. The main goal is to 'direct efforts'. Therefore, on a daily basis, a leader should know what his or her team did the day before and how things are progressing and what they will do today. When a leader is aware, there will be no surprises and if a problem occurs, it can be quickly resolved. So, the two most important strategies are documentation and follow-up.



Representatives of member states sit at the meeting.

Kuwait calls for ramping up efforts to fight Islamophobia

BAKU: Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah headed the delegation of the state of Kuwait participating in the ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement held on Wednesday in the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku.

The meeting, hosted by the Republic of Azerbaijan by virtue of its current chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement, is being held under the title (the Non-Aligned Movement is united and resolute in the face of emerging challenges). It's aimed at enhancing consultation and coordination among member states on various emerging issues and challenges at the international and regional levels.

"Our peoples are exhausted by instability, disasters and conflicts resulting in tragedies and disappointments. They are now looking forward to a bet-

ter future where they can breathe the air of freedom, peace and dignity ... Today, more than ever before, it is imperative for us to exert every effort, mobilize energies and intensify work to achieve the aspirations of the peoples of our countries and the whole world to create a solid environment that will enable us together to face all the challenges of development, security and peace," said Sheikh Salem in his speech.

He called on member states not to abandon their quest to achieve "a just and comprehensive peace" for Palestinians. "This will not happen as long as (the Zionist entity) remains the occupying power and continues to build settlements, confiscate land, demolish houses and displace Palestinians from their lands," he said. Sheikh Salem also touched on the situation on Sudan, stressing Kuwait's relentless efforts in ensuring its stability.

He also emphasized the importance of "concerted international efforts" to combat Islamophobia and curb hate speech, "especially with the increasing series of patterns of hatred and incitement against Muslims, the latest of which was the extremist's burning of the Holy Quran."

"We reiterate the strong condemnation and con-



BAKU: Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen at the ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement held on Wednesday. — KUNA photos

demnation of the state of Kuwait for these jarring acts. We demand that the perpetrators be held accountable and that they not be repeated in the future. We also call on the international community to adopt international laws criminalizing the defamations of religions and beliefs," said Sheikh Salem.

News in Brief

Court delays examination of
appeals against elections

KUWAIT: The Constitutional Court on Wednesday declared that it delayed cross-examination into appeals against the National Assembly elections (Umma 2023) until July 12. The tribunal said in its rule that more time was needed to examine the case, prepare for replies and the hearing. The court had set July 5 as the date for examining the nine appeals. — KUNA

Fire fighters battle two
blazes in Hawally, Funaitees

KUWAIT: Firemen rescued individuals who were trapped in a house basement in Funaitees area due to a fire Wednesday. Bairaqa and Qurain fire centers were dispatched to the location of the incident. The trapped persons were freed and taken by paramedics for treatment. Also on Wednesday, Hawally and Salmiya fire centers responded to a fire in a Hawally café, located in a mall. The fire, which had erupted in a café on the sixth floor of the mall, was extinguished with no injuries reported.

1,470 legal documents issued
for illegal residents in 2022

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Justice issued 1,470 legal documents for marriage, divorce and review contracts for illegal residents, in cooperation with the Central Agency for Addressing the Status of Illegal Residents, during 2022, the ministry announced Wednesday. "The ministry issued 909 marriage and marital authentication documents and 507 divorce documents. It also issued 54 marital review documents for illegal residents," Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Family Affairs and Arbitration at the ministry Dr Fahd Al-Dha'en said on Wednesday. The ministry issued 191 documents related to inheritance during the same period. He praised the continuous cooperation and coordination between the Ministry of Justice and the Central Agency for Addressing the Status of Illegal Residents in providing all services to facilitate the procedures for extracting documents. — KUNA

New committee to review performance of
hygiene contractors, municipal departments

Officials now obliged to carry out at least three inspection tours a week



KUWAIT: Hygiene workers clean the parking lot of a school in this file photo. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs Fahad Al-Shu'la issued a ministerial decision to form a committee that would follow up and evaluate public hygiene contracts across the six governorates.

The committee will evaluate the level of public hygiene in all governorates in general through conducting field tours and keeping track of complaints received by the municipality on WhatsApp, the e-baladia app and the 139 hotline.

It will also identify the most glaring issues facing each governorate, explore the factors contributing to the observed disparity in the level of cleaning services among the six governorates and propose appropriate solutions to address these issues.

Shu'la said the committee will also be tasked with studying the reports and observations of the Audit Bureau over the last five years in relation to hygiene contracts and how they're being enforced across the governorates. The end goal is to identify the reasons behind the "low level of service" reported by the bureau, said Shu'la.

Kuwaiti researcher
recognized for work
on clean energy

LONDON: Kuwaiti researcher Dr Abdullah Al-Khaldi was awarded the Arthur Lefebvre Prize for his work on renewable energy and hydrogen fuel by British specialist postgraduate university Cranfield. Khaldi's thesis, proposing a new innovative design for large hydrogen carrier ship, contributes to global

carbon neutrality objectives as it employs the use of clean hydrogen fuel rather than regular fuel thus eliminating harmful carbon emissions. Speaking to KUNA on Wednesday, Khaldi said he was quite proud of this achievement, saying that parts of his thesis were published by renowned journals. His research handled technical, environmental and economic review of the new design as it examined and analyzed its performance in various simulated circumstances. Dr Al-Khaldi further clarified that his field of study contributes to zero carbon emissions, alleviating the consequences of climate change. The Arthur Lefebvre prize is given out by Cranfield University to the most distinguished PhD thesis in the field. — KUNA



Minister Fahad Al-Shu'la

He also issued a circular obliging directors and heads of hygiene departments in all municipalities to conduct at least three field tours a week to ensure the commitment of the contracted companies to the terms of the contracts and observe the adherence of hygiene inspectors to existing ministerial resolutions regulating how the performance of these companies will be monitored.

The field tours, he added, will help the committee determine any shortcomings in the provision of cleaning services or the monitoring of the implementation of hygiene contracts. Proposed solutions will be implemented in coordination with the Public Hy-

giene Committee. A mechanism of action to reduce the incidence of hygiene violations, said Shu'la, will also be worked out by the new committee.

How the committee will function

The committee will be led by the head of the control and inspection sector. It will include the deputy director general for municipal services sector affairs, directors of control branches at the six governorates and the director of the Public Services Department.

The ministerial decision will give the committee authority to conduct field tours which assess the level of hygiene in all governorates.

As part of its mandate, the committee will observe the work of concerned departments within the municipalities and review their records to ensure they are carrying out all their tasks properly.

It is also entitled to summon the necessary municipal employees and representatives of cleaning companies who would provide all the information and documents needed for the committee to do its work.



LONDON: Kuwaiti researcher Dr Abdullah Al-Khaldi is seen with his design. — KUNA

UN calls for renewed
action for sustainable
development goals

NEW YORK: The United Nations, today, is kicking off a communications campaign to rally for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the roadmap for people and planet adopted by world leaders in 2015. Ahead of a critical UN summit in September, the campaign aims to amplify an urgent call for ambitious new action, showcase the Goals as the blueprint for sustainable progress globally and stimulate the global public around this shared agenda for our common future.

At the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, for the first time in decades the world has seen development progress stalled and even reversed under the combined weight of climate disasters, conflict, economic downturn. The world's poorest countries and most vulnerable people are once again bearing the results of this situation. It is critical to leave no one behind. On its current course, many Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) may miss its target by 2030, resulting in the need to accelerate collective efforts towards achieving these goals.

The 2023 SDG summit will gather world leaders at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 18-19 September to reaffirm their collective commitments to the goals and the promise to leave no one behind. This summit is a defining moment to urgently put the world back on track to achieving the SDGs.

Starting today, in a major digital activation across platforms and countries worldwide, the UN campaign aims to re-energize the conversation about the goals. Moises Venancio, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Kuwait said: "The United Nations in Kuwait is playing a key role by supporting the government to align their plans, enhancing their role, and building national capacities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)".

The Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr Khaled Mahdi stated that the State of Kuwait is based on a solid history of development and maintaining sustainability at the core of its policies and strategies. Eight years ago, at the beginning of the SDGs, the gov-

ernment took a comprehensive decision to integrate all 17 SDG goals and 169 targets within the country's long-term vision, which was approved one year before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Indeed, Vision 2035 - New Kuwait consists of wide-ranging pillars, which are fully endorsed and structurally integrated with the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, as well as their indicators. Since then, the government has been leading unremitting efforts in the framework of awareness-raising, implementation and coordination at the national level of values related to the transformational approach and additional benefits of the 2030 agenda, focusing on its triple areas of social, economic and environmental sustainability, as well as the ultimate ambition of leaving no one behind.

Among the mechanisms that have been adopted internationally to measure the efforts of countries in this regard is to review the progress made by countries by reviewing voluntary reports at the national level from each country during a meeting (the United Nations High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development), which is held annually in this regard.

In this context, the State of Kuwait submitted its first voluntary national report (VNR1) on the sustainable development goals to the United Nations High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2019, with the participation of several governmental and private agencies and civil society organizations, and the report was highly welcomed at that time.

The State of Kuwait now intends to submit its second voluntary national report (VNR2) to the High-Level Political Forum in July 2023, with the aim of documenting the progress made in implementation in various relevant sectors in the country, checking for shortcomings and persistent challenges, and identifying strategies and approaches that require further attention at all levels of governance and renew commitment to review it.

Moises added: "All SDGs are everybody's campaign, and we would like to take this opportunity to call on the private sector, academia, CSOs, NGOs, and citizens to contribute in achieving the Global SDGs Agenda."

In this year that marks the 60th anniversary of Kuwait joining the United Nations, the United Nations Country Team in Kuwait would like to express their appreciation and recognition for the Government's role and contributions towards achieving agenda 2030 and the SDGs. Both in Kuwait and globally.

One core campaign component is the call to individual citizens to take action on the SDGs through the UN's ActNow initiative across all 17 Goals. From using public transportation, to fundraising for schools or speaking up for equality, the platform lists steps that everyone can take to accelerate progress on the SDGs and create better lives on a healthier planet for all.



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Singapore's pre-execution photo shoots

Tunisians target African migrants, dozens forcibly expelled: Witnesses

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IAEA chief reassures Fukushima residents over water release

Fishing communities fear customers will shun their catches

IWAKI: The head of the UN's nuclear watchdog tried to reassure local residents and representatives on Wednesday that the planned release of treated wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear plant is safe. The planned, decades-long discharge of accumulated water from the devastated nuclear facility has been approved by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as meeting global standards.

Its chief Rafael Grossi acknowledged at a meeting in Iwaki, Fukushima prefecture, that concerns remain. "All these complex graphs and statistics are one thing but the reality, the reality of people, the reality of the economy, the reality of the social mood and perceptions may be different," he told a meeting of residents and officials.

Some 1.33 million cubic metres of groundwater, rainwater and water used for cooling have accumulated at the Fukushima site, which is being decommissioned after several reactors went into meltdown following the 2011 tsunami that badly damaged the plant. Plant operator TEPCO treats the water through its ALPS processing system to remove almost all radioactive elements except tritium, and plans to dilute it before discharging it into the ocean over several decades.

The release is expected to begin this summer but is opposed by some regional neighbours, with Beijing vocally condemning the plan, as well as some in Fukushima, particularly fishing communities who fear customers will shun their catches.

Grossi said the IAEA was not involved

in the process to "give cover... to decorate something that is bad". "When it comes to this activity here, what is happening is not some exception, some strange plan that has been devised only to be applied here and sold to you," he said. "This is, as certified by the IAEA, the general practice that is agreed by and observed by many, many places, all over the world."

'No choice'

Still, there is palpable anger among some residents who fear the reputational damage of the release. Tetsu Nozaki, chairman of the Fukushima Prefectural Federation of Fisheries Co-operative Associations, argued Japan's government was misrepresenting local sentiment, which he said remained strongly opposed to the plan.

"We fishery operators are left with no choice but to react emotionally and harden our attitude," he told Grossi. "I beg you to realise... that this project of the release of ALPS-processed water is moving ahead in the face of opposition." Grossi said he had no "magic wand" that could assuage concerns but pointed out the IAEA will set up a permanent office to review the release over decades. "We are going to stay here with you for decades to come, until the last drop of the water which is accumulated around the reactor has been safely discharged," he said.

The IAEA said Tuesday in a final report that the release would have "negligible" impact on the environment, a finding that South Korea said it respects. China has been less conciliatory, with its foreign ministry spokesman



TABA: Rafael Grossi (3rd L), Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), arrives to inspect the damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant as Tomoaki Kobayakawa (2nd R), President of Tokyo Electric Power Co., escorts him in Futaba on July 5, 2023. — AFP

warning Wednesday that "the report cannot prove the legitimacy of Japan's ocean-dumping plan".

"The IAEA report has not silenced strong calls to oppose ocean dumping coming from within and outside Japan," spokesman Wang Wenbin said. Grossi also visited the Fukushima plant on Wednesday. "For the past five hours or

so, I have been visiting different places, different locations... I was satisfied with what I saw," Grossi told reporters, as he wound up his visit to the plant.

He said he was aware of China's position, as he had visited the country recently and discussed the issue, adding "if there are any concerns I take (them) very seriously". "China is a very important

partner also for IAEA and we are in close contact," he said. Grossi will make stops in regional neighbours, including South Korea, after his Japan trip. "I am going to explain what IAEA (does) for Japan" during the visits, he said. "IAEA is doing (its work) to ensure that there is no problem and that the environment is getting any negative impact," he said. — AFP



BRUSSELS: (L to R) Lawyer Gonzalo Boye, Exiled former member of the Catalan government and MEPs Toni Comin, Carles Puigdemont and Clara Ponsati give a press conference after EU court confirms lifting of Catalan MEPs' immunity. — AFP

EU court confirms lifting of Catalan MEPs' immunity

LUXEMBOURG: The Court of Justice of the EU on Wednesday dismissed a challenge brought by three Catalan MEPs over the European Parliament stripping them of their immunity at Spain's request. The court said it "rejects all the pleas" made by the three—Carles Puigdemont, Toni Comin and Clara Ponsati—effectively confirming the parliament's 2021 decision.

Madrid had asked for their immunity as EU lawmakers to be lifted so it could pursue legal action against the trio over a banned Catalan referendum and failed independence bid that sparked Spain's worst political crisis in decades.

Following Wednesday's ruling, Puigdemont—the Catalan leader at the time of the referendum who fled into exile to avoid prosecution—immediately vowed to appeal in a posting on social media. Comin and Ponsati also fled abroad with Puigdemont with all three

ending up in self-exile in Belgium. Puigdemont and Comin were elected to the European Parliament in May 2019, and Ponsati in February 2020.

In March 2021, the European Parliament decided to waive their immunity, prompting all three to ask the EU's General Court—one of the tribunals making up the bloc's Court of Justice (CJEU) -- to annul the decision. But the Luxembourg-based court on Wednesday rejected their challenge, notably their argument that the European Parliament had violated its own principle of impartiality.

"The General Court rejects all the pleas put forward by the three members, in particular their arguments that the parliament erred in concluding that the legal proceedings... were not brought with the intention of damaging the members' activities," it said.

It also determined that "the parliament is not required to examine the legality of the Spanish judicial acts" as that issue comes "exclusively" under the competence of Spanish authorities. And it also dismissed claims about the impartiality of the MEP heading the parliament's legal affairs committee which handles immunity cases—who belongs to the right-wing eurosceptic ECR group, saying his political alignment was "irrelevant". — AFP

Biden denounces wave of shootings

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden called again Tuesday for stricter gun control measures while denouncing a wave of shootings that overshadowed Independence Day. Five people were killed and four wounded in a shooting in Philadelphia Monday night, police said. Another shooting overnight in Fort Worth, Texas, claimed the lives of three and injured eight, CNN reported. And as of Tuesday afternoon, the country had already seen multiple shootings on Independence Day. Five were injured in Lansing, Michigan, and four hurt in Charlotte, North Carolina, according to the Gun Violence Archive (GVA).

Another shooting in Akron, Ohio, which police responded to in the early morning hours of Tuesday, left four injured, according to local media. "Over the last few days, our nation has once again endured a wave of tragic and senseless shootings in communities across America," Biden said in a statement, mentioning the

shootings in Philadelphia, Fort Worth, and Lansing, as well as recent instances of gun violence in Baltimore, Wichita, Kansas and Chicago.

"As our nation celebrates Independence Day, we pray for the day when our communities will be free from gun violence," the president said. At a Fourth of July parade last year in Highland Park, Illinois, just outside Chicago, a gunman killed seven and wounded dozens. This year, the suburb planned a remembrance ceremony in lieu of a parade and traditional festivities, officials said.

"In mere moments, this day of patriotic pride became a scene of pain and tragedy," Biden said in reference to the shooting's anniversary. In Philadelphia, police said they had apprehended the shooter, though his motive remained unknown. "We have absolutely no idea why this happened," Philadelphia Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw said. The suspect, a 40-year-old man, was wearing body armor and a ski mask, and sprayed bullets from a military-style assault rifle at random in the city's Kingessing neighborhood, said Ernest Ransom, a staff inspector with the Philadelphia police. — AFP

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International

Tunisians target African migrants, dozens forcibly expelled: Witnesses

Residents demand eviction of all illegal migrants

SFAX: Racial tensions in the Tunisian coastal city of Sfax flared into violence targeting migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, dozens of whom were forcibly evicted from the city, witnesses said Wednesday. Amid the disturbances late Tuesday, police detained some and deported them as far away as the Libyan border more than 300 kilometres (over 200 miles), according to a local rights group.

The latest unrest started after the funeral of a 41-year-old Tunisian man who was stabbed to death Monday in an altercation with migrants, which led to the arrests of three suspects from Cameroon. "We are going to avenge his death!" young people chanted at the victim's funeral, according to video footage published online. Sfax, the North African country's second-largest city, is a departure point for many migrants hoping to reach EU member Italy by sea, usually the island of Lampedusa about 130 kilometres (80 miles) away.

Hundreds of residents massed in the streets late Tuesday demanding the eviction of all illegal migrants, said an AFP correspondent. Some blockaded streets and set tyres ablaze. Videos shared on social media showed police chasing dozens of migrants from their homes to the cheers of city residents, before loading them into police cars.

On the Facebook page of non-government group Sayeb Trottoir, the medic Lazhar Neji, working in the emergency room of a hospital, deplored "an inhumane... bloody night that makes you tremble". He said the hospital had received between 30 and 40 injured migrants, including women and children, and said "some were thrown from terraces, others attacked with swords".

Other footage showed migrants lying on the ground, their hands on their heads, surrounded by residents armed with sticks who waited for police to arrive to hand them over. Police took some migrants to the site of the Sfax International Fair, from where they were to be transferred elsewhere, said Romdane Ben Amor, head of the non-government group Forum for Economic and Social Rights.

He told AFP that some migrants were taken to an area near the Libyan border, without being able to give precise numbers. Tunisia has seen a rise in racially motivated attacks following President Kais Saied's comments in February accusing "hordes" of illegal migrants of bringing violence and alleging a "criminal plot" to change the country's demographic make-up. — AFP



SFAX: Migrants sit on the ground in Sfax on July 5, 2023. Racial tensions in the Tunisian coastal city of Sfax flared into violence targeting migrants from sub-Saharan Africa. — AFP

Iran maintain executions over protests: UN

GENEVA: Iran is still meting out harsh punishments on people suspected of involvement in mass protests, including "chilling" executions, a United Nations fact-finding mission said Wednesday.

Iran was rocked by demonstrations sparked by the September 16 death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian Kurd who had been arrested for allegedly violating the strict dress rule for women based on Islamic sharia law.

At a special session in November, the UN Human Rights Council voted to create a high-level

investigation into the deadly crackdown. Reporting to the council, Sara Hossain, chair of the independent international fact-finding mission, said that 10 months on, the Amini family's "right to truth and justice remains unfulfilled".

"The lack of transparency around the investigations into her death is further evidenced by the arrest and continued detention of the two women journalists, Nilufar Hamed and Elahe Mohammadi, who first reported on the event," she added.

Iran has said that 22,000 people have been pardoned in connection with the protests—which "suggests that many more were detained or charged", Hossain said. No official data exists on the nature of the allegations against them, or on those convicted, detained or charged in connection with the protests, she said.

Hossain said pardoned protesters were reportedly made to express remorse—"to effectively admit

guilt" in signing written undertakings not to commit "similar crimes" in future. "Harsh punishments continue to be meted out to those involved in the protests, including for exercising rights protected under international human rights law," she said.

"Most chilling, seven men have already been executed following hasty proceedings marred by serious allegations of fair trial violations, including confessions extracted under torture." The fact-finding mission called on Tehran to stop the executions of individuals sentenced to death in connection with the protests, and urged Iran to release all those detained for peaceful assembly and reporting on the protests. Hossain also urged Tehran to cooperate with the investigation.

In response, Kazem Gharib Abadi, secretary general of Iran's high council for human rights, said Western countries fomented the protests and "terrorists entered the scene". "More than 75 law en-

forcement forces and people were martyred by the rioters, and over 7,000 law enforcement forces were also injured," he said.

"The policy of Iran vis-a-vis the riots was to use the minimal legal powers," he insisted, while branding the establishment of the UN investigation "politically motivated and unacceptable". He claimed that one social media channel "taught how to make bombs", and another "created more than 50,000 fake Farsi accounts to act against Iran", while foreign "anti-Iranian" TV channels "dedicated their capacities to notorious terrorists for interviews".

He also pointed to the recent riots against police violence in France, which he said was "witnessing the use of excessive force against peaceful protesters, widespread arbitrary arrests, and restrictions on the internet and social media". "It would be prudent for the Human Rights Council to convene a special session to examine the situation in France," he said. — AFP

Assaulted Russian reporter back in Moscow

MOSCOW: Award-winning Russian investigative journalist Elena Milashina, who was badly beaten in the restive republic of Chechnya, is in a "difficult" condition in a Moscow hospital, her editor told AFP Wednesday. International press freedom

and rights groups voiced concern after Milashina said she had been beaten and held at gun point with a lawyer during a work trip to the volatile region in southern Russia.

"Milashina is in Moscow in hospital. Her condition is, frankly, difficult: she was really severely beaten, beaten with a stick," Dmitry Muratov, the editor of her paper, Novaya Gazeta, told AFP reporters in the Russian capital.

Novaya Gazeta after the incident this week published a video of Milashina in hospital with her head shaven and her hands bandaged. Human Rights Watch said the attackers shaved her head and

poured a green-coloured dye over her. The Kremlin and the strongman leader of Chechnya said those responsible should be identified.

Muratov said Wednesday that Milashina's fingers had been broken and that the attackers had demanded access to her phone: "Her condition is what you'd expect," he added. Milashina has covered rights abuses in Chechnya, the Caucasus republic ruled by former warlord Ramzan Kadyrov, for years.

Novaya Gazeta since 2000 has seen six journalists and contributors killed, including investigative reporter Anna Politkovskaya, who was shot dead in Moscow on President Vladimir Putin's birthday. — AFP



Elena Milashina

Zionists end Jenin raid that...

Continued from Page 1

Overnight, the Zionist entity carried out air strikes on targets inside the blockaded Gaza Strip in response to rocket fire from the Palestinian coastal enclave, with no deaths reported. As the army pulled out of Jenin, much of the city's crowded refugee camp was left charred and in rubble from the incursion which displaced at least 3,000 residents.

"All this bloodshed is considered a sacrifice for the homeland and for our cause. All this destruction can be fixed, God willing," a resident from Jenin camp told AFP as crowds of people holding Palestinian and militant flags marched through the city for the funerals. The camp, a small urban area home to about 18,000 people, has long been a stronghold of militant groups including Islamic Jihad and Hamas.

Among the dead Palestinians was 16-year-old Abdulrahman Hassan Ahmed Hardan, who was shot in the head by Zionist forces while unarmed on Tuesday, according to the non-government group Defense for Children International. Islamic Jihad praised its fighters Wednesday for what it labelled a "heroic" victory and vowed that, for the Zionist entity, "Jenin and its camp will remain a terror that haunts you".

Jenin residents inspected the widespread destruction in the camp, where gaping holes were torn into buildings, cars were crushed and the ground was littered with bullet casings and broken glass. The Palestinians labelled the escalation an act of "open war against the people of Jenin". The Zionist entity has occupied the West Bank since the 1967 Six-Day War and built many settlements, considered illegal under international law, in the area Palestinians regard as the core of the independent state they are seeking.

Excluding annexed east Jerusalem, the territory is home to about 490,000 Zionist living in settlements — a number that hard-right nationalist groups within Netanyahu's coalition government are working to increase. The Palestinians



A man checks a wrecked car in Jenin refugee camp on July 5, 2023. — AFP

want the Zionist entity to withdraw from all land seized in 1967 and to dismantle all settlements.

The Jenin clashes sparked renewed international concern, and the United Nations decried the violence in both Tel Aviv and Jenin. "The killing, maiming and the destruction of property must stop," UN rights chief Volker Turk said on Tuesday. Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, called the Tel Aviv attack "an initial response to crimes against our people in the Jenin camp".

Medical charity Doctors Without Borders condemned Zionist forces for firing tear gas inside Jenin's Khalil Suleiman hospital. Palestinian health minister Mai al-Kaila accused the army of shooting at Palestinians in the Jenin public hospital courtyard, saying this had marked a moment when "(the Zionist entity's) aggression reached its climax". — AFP

Western allies drag Iran to ICJ...

Continued from Page 1

civil aviation, and that attempts to seek binding arbitration with Iran had failed. They asked the court to "order full reparation for all injury caused" and to make Iran pay "full compensation to the applicants for the material and moral damages suffered by the victims and their families". Iran should also return the belongings of the victims, "publicly apologize" and acknowledge its "internationally wrongful acts".

Ottawa, London, Stockholm and Kyiv vowed last month they would take the case to the ICJ, which was set up after World War II to rule on disputes between UN member states. Ministers from the four countries said in a joint statement on Wednesday that they had "taken an important step in our collective effort to ensure Iran is held accountable" for downing flight PS752. "Today's legal action reflects our unwavering commitment to achieving transparency, justice and accountability for the families of the victims," said the statement on the Canadian foreign ministry website.

Temperature breaks record...

Continued from Page 1

be broken again as the northern hemisphere's summer begins. The EU climate monitoring unit Copernicus confirmed in a statement to AFP on Wednesday that Monday had been the hottest day in its dataset going back to 1940. It could not yet confirm the data for Tuesday. The average global

In June, Iran took Canada to the ICJ accusing Ottawa of allowing victims of alleged terror attacks to claim damages from Tehran. Tehran's case claims that Ottawa, which listed the Islamic Republic as a sponsor of terrorism in 2012, had violated Iran's state immunity. Iran's application cited a 2022 Canadian court judgment that awarded more than \$80 million in compensation to the families of six people who died when the Ukrainian airliner was shot down.

Eighty-five Canadian citizens and permanent residents were among the victims. Ukraine lost 11 citizens in the disaster. Iran jailed 10 members of the armed forces in April after finding them guilty of involvement in the downing of the Boeing, the Iranian judiciary's Mizan Online website reported Sunday. In 2020, Iran offered to pay "\$150,000 or the equivalent in euros" to each of the victims' families.

But Ukrainian and Canadian officials strongly criticized the announcement, saying compensation should not be settled through unilateral declarations. Tensions between Iran and the United States had been soaring at the time the airliner was shot down. Iranian air defenses were on high alert for a US counterattack after Tehran fired missiles at a military base in Iraq that was used by American forces. — AFP

temperature typically continues to rise until the end of July or early August. Even last month, average global temperatures were the warmest Copernicus had ever recorded for the start of June.

Temperatures are likely to rise even further above historical averages over the next year with the onset of an El Nino weather phenomenon in the Pacific Ocean, which the World Meteorological Organization confirmed on Monday is now underway. In addition, human activity — mainly the burning of fossil fuels — is continuing to emit roughly 40 billion tons of planet-warming CO2 into the atmosphere every year. — AFP

International

Fifteen dead, four missing as heavy rains lash southwest China

Disrupting lives of more than 130,000 people in 19 districts and counties

BEIJING: Fifteen people died and four were missing after torrential rain lashed the metropolis of Chongqing and swathes of southwestern China, local officials and state media said Wednesday. China has for weeks been hit by extreme weather—from heavy rains to intense heatwaves—the frequency of which is increasing as global temperatures soar.

Residents in the capital Beijing and dozens of other areas have been warned to stay indoors as temperatures soar past 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit). And in one of the deadliest natural disasters to occur in China so far this year, torrential rains in Chongqing this week “killed 15 people and left four others missing”, local authorities told AFP.

“The heavy rains, mainly seen in the areas along the Yangtze River, have triggered floods and geological disasters, disrupting the lives of more than 130,000 people in 19 districts and counties,” state-run news agency Xinhua said.

Images from state broadcaster CCTV posted on social media on Tuesday showed torrents of muddy water in Chongqing’s heavily affected Wanzhou District overflowing embankments and pieces of debris being swept away. And the Communist Party-backed People’s Daily posted photos of ongoing rescue efforts Wednesday, showing emergency responders helping residents evacuate flooded residential buildings.

On the outskirts of Chongqing, workers on Tuesday discovered that a closed-off railway bridge had collapsed after it was “damaged by the impact of mountain torrents”, CCTV said. The government dispatched a working group to Chongqing early on Wednesday morning to oversee disaster relief efforts.

More is still to come, with officials warning that China is set to face “multiple natural disasters in July, including floods, severe convection weather, typhoons and high temperatures”. In response, President Xi Jinping has ordered that “authorities at all levels must give top priority to ensuring people’s safety and property”, Xinhua said Wednesday.

China’s finance ministry has issued 320 million yuan (\$44.2 million) in disaster relief to affected regions, which it said would be used by local governments to boost emergency search and rescue efforts.

Widespread damage

In neighbouring Sichuan province, authorities said more than 460,000 had been affected by the heavy rain this month, Xinhua reported. About 85,000 people have been evacuated from their homes as a result of the rain, officials said, with “flash floods in mountainous areas” and “possible mudslides in some parts” of China expected this week.

Scientists say that rising global temperatures—caused largely by burning fossil fuels—increase the likelihood of extreme weather events such as the flash floods and heatwaves experienced in many Asian countries in recent weeks.

China recorded an average of four days in which temperatures exceeded 35 degrees every month in the first half of this year, the highest since national records began in 1961, according to a National Meteorological Center statement on Sunday.

In June, Beijing sweltered through a total of 14 days of temperatures exceeding 35 degrees, matching the record set in July 2000, according to the state-run Beijing Evening News. —AFP



CHONGQING: File photo shows paramilitary policemen searching an area after it was flooded by heavy rains in China’s southwestern Chongqing. Fifteen people have been killed and four are missing after torrential rain in southwest China. — AFP

Philippine accuses Chinese boats of dangerous manoeuvres

MANILA: The Philippine Coast Guard on Wednesday accused Chinese patrol vessels of blocking two of its boats in the disputed South China Sea, describing their actions as “very dangerous”. China claims almost the entire sea despite rival claims from other Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia.

Its coast guard and navy vessels routinely block or shadow Philippine ships patrolling the contested waters, Manila says. The Philippine Coast Guard said the latest incident happened on June 30 during a regular operation to re-supply marines stationed in a run-down navy ship grounded at the Second Thomas Shoal to assert Manila’s territorial claim in the waters.

As they neared the shoal, the two Philippine coast guard boats assigned as escorts for the navy mission were approached by two Chinese coast guard vessels. One of the Chinese boats came within about 100 yards (90 metres) of the BRP Malabrigo’s bow, forcing its commanding officer to slow down to avoid a collision, Commodore Jay Tarriela told reporters.

“They dangerously conducted different manoeuvres, even crossing the bow of the Philippine Coast Guard vessels and that kind of distance is very dangerous because that’s already prone to collision,” said Tarriela, the coast guard spokesman for the West Philippine Sea.

Manila refers to waters immediately to its west as the West Philippine Sea. The Chinese embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A similar incident happened in April when a Chinese coast guard ship cut off the Philippine patrol vessel Malapascua as it carried journalists near the Second Thomas Shoal.

An AFP team was on another coast guard vessel and witnessed the near collision. In that incident, the Malapascua’s commanding officer Rodol Hernandez said the Chinese ship came within 45 metres of his boat and only his quick actions avoided the steel-hulled vessels crashing into each other. —AFP



SECOND THOMAS SHOAL: Handout photo shows, a Chinese Coast Guard ship allegedly blocks Philippine Coast Guard patrol ship Malabrigo, as it escorts a Philippine Navy re-supply mission near Second Thomas Shoal in the disputed South China sea. —AFP



SINGAPORE: Photo shows Nazira Lajim Hertslet’s phone displaying an official prison “photo shoot” image of her late brother Nazeri Lajim, who was executed for drugs trafficking, as she visits his grave at a Muslim cemetery in Singapore. — AFP

Singapore’s pre-execution photo shoots

SINGAPORE: Death row inmate Nazeri Lajim beams at the camera, fingers raised in a “V” sign, wearing a shirt emblazoned with large motifs and showing no signs of his impending hanging. Taken days before his execution at Singapore’s Changi prison, the picture is among the last mementoes Lajim’s family has of the 64-year-old, who was executed on charges of drug trafficking. In the city-state, prison officials offer a photo shoot shortly before an inmate’s hanging, providing simple props like chairs and other items. “When I see his photograph he’s (a) very healthy man, he’s very good looking man... his face shines,” Nazira Lajim Hertslet, his sister, told AFP. “I was very upset... that he was taken away just like that.”

Singapore imposes the death penalty for a litany of crimes, including murder and some forms of kidnapping. It also has some of the world’s toughest anti-drug laws: trafficking more than 500 grams of cannabis can result in the death penalty. Thirteen people have been hanged since the government resumed executions following a two-year hiatus in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a programme first introduced in the 1990s, they were offered the option to pose for photographs before their death.

‘Quite cruel’

Usually taken against a pale-green flowery backdrop, the photos offer a glimpse into the last days of the condemned. The Singapore Prison Service says participation in the programme is voluntary, and that the photo shoots “allow family members to have recent photographs of their loved one”. Relatives, however, say they have mixed feelings about the practice. “Actually it’s quite cruel to do such thing, to take photograph on his last days,” said Hertslet, pointing to the horror inmates might feel knowing it was their last time being photographed alive. “But at least we have his last photo for memories when he’s really gone,” she added. Nazeri was hanged last year for trafficking more than 33 grams (1.2 ounces) of heroin. In his sister’s favourite photograph of him, he is wearing a white Muslim prayer robe, his hands clasped in front, looking at the camera.

A ‘vener of thoughtfulness’

Little information is publicly available about Singapore’s death row inmates. The Transformative Justice Collective, which provides support to families of death row prisoners and advocates for the abolition of the death penalty, estimates about 53 people are on death row, the majority convicted of drug offences.

Authorities generally notify inmates and their families about a week before an execution. During that time, the inmate is allowed to have daily visitors, but they are separated by a glass pane and no physical contact is allowed, according to the TJC. Spiritual counsellors are also provided. Kokila Annamalai, a TJC activist, said the photo shoots are an attempt “to lend a veneer of thoughtfulness” to the executions. —AFP

Thai parliament to vote on new PM on July 13

BANGKOK: Thailand’s parliament will vote on whether to appoint progressive party leader Pita Limjaroenrat prime minister on July 13, the new House speaker announced Wednesday. Pita’s pro-democracy Move Forward Party netted the most seats at the May 14 election but there are no guarantees it will be able to form government or that he will lead the country.

MFP has cobbled together an eight-party alliance, which also includes election runners-up Pheu Thai, with a total of 312 seats but remains well short of the 376 votes needed across both houses of parliament to endorse Pita for the top job. Veteran lawmaker Wan Muhamad Nour Matha, who was appointed as a compromise candidate to the all-powerful House speaker role on Tuesday, has scheduled a joint sitting of parliament on July 13 to choose a prime minister.

Asked what would happen if Pita doesn’t have enough support, Wan Nour said: “The parliament will vote until we have a PM”. “If the vote does not meet 376, we will do further votes,” he told reporters. He would not be drawn on how many chances Pita would be given before alternative candidates are sought.

MFP has faced resistance from within the military-appointed, 250-member Senate since its election victory because of the party’s controversial push to reform Thailand’s royal defamation laws, as well as plans to shake up business monopolies.

The United Thai Nation Party said on Wednesday it was considering whether to put up a rival candidate against Pita. Caretaker prime minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha, who came to power in a 2014 coup and formed a vast coalition government after the 2019 poll, sought re-election under that new party’s banner. Political analysts say it would be technically possible for him to stay in power under a minority government with support from the Senate. However, the election results were seen as a national rejection of Prayut and rule by military-linked parties. Pita’s bid to be prime minister also faces other challenges outside parliament. —AFP

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Business

THURSDAY, JULY 6, 2023

Boursa Kuwait wins 2 esteemed awards for its outstanding leadership in sustainable finance

Global Finance honors Boursa Kuwait at the annual 'Sustainable Finance Awards' ceremony

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait, the privatized and self-listed national stock exchange of the State of Kuwait, has received two esteemed awards at the third annual 'Sustainable Finance Awards' ceremony hosted by Global Finance and held at Glaziers Hall in London. Boursa Kuwait has been acknowledged for its exceptional achievements in "Outstanding Financial Leadership in Sustaining Communities Award" and "Outstanding Leadership in Sustainability Transparency" in the category of Middle East regional awards. These distinguished awards serve as a testament to Boursa Kuwait's unwavering commitment to promoting sustainability initiatives and cultivating awareness regarding climate change within the community. The company recognizes the significance of assuming a pivotal role in achieving Kuwait's ambitious roadmap by advancing corporate sustainability practices within the capital market and aims to foster an investment climate in the State of Kuwait that attracts and nurtures sustainable investments from a diverse range of participants.

Global Finance's Sustainable Finance Awards are designed to honor remarkable accomplishments in sustainable finance worldwide, spanning global, regional, and national levels. Furthermore, they commend financial institutions for their endeavors in mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change. Award recipients are chosen based on their contributions to overall sustainable financing, community support, resource management, transparency and reporting, as well as their commitment to sustainable funding.

The awards and recognition programs presented by Global Finance boast an impressive legacy of 35 years, characterized by editorial accuracy and integrity. Over time, they have become a trusted and revered standard of excellence within the global financial community.

Outstanding financial leadership in sustaining communities award

The recognition bestowed upon Boursa Kuwait by Global Finance not only highlights the exchange's exceptional financial leadership but also underscores its unwavering dedication to community development.

By leveraging its influence, expertise, and resources, Boursa Kuwait continues to make a lasting and positive impact on Kuwait's society and economy, embodying the true spirit of corporate responsibility and sustainable growth. Boursa Kuwait has integrated Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into its sustainability strategic goals, sponsoring community initiatives and prioritizing the engagement, motivation, satisfaction, and productivity of its human capital and laying the foundation for its continued success. The company's unwavering dedication to its employees underscores its understanding that investing in their well-being is paramount. Committed to addressing their pressing concerns, attracting and nurturing talent, fostering diversity and inclusion, and providing a safe and supportive workplace environment, Boursa Kuwait ensures that its employees feel valued and empowered to give their best.

Boursa Kuwait's sense of responsibility extends beyond its internal stakeholders, as the exchange is deeply committed to supporting and serving communities and people across Kuwait. Driven by a strong desire to be a force for good, Boursa Kuwait actively gives back and strives to create a positive impact through a diverse range of ongoing community and social initiatives. Education and financial literacy form the core of many of Boursa Kuwait's initiatives, recognizing their pivotal role in fostering economic and social prosperity. Since its establishment, the exchange has been dedicat-



The awards program recognizes global and regional leadership in sustainable finance for initiatives designed to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and help build a more sustainable future

ed to elevating its status and positioning on both local and international stages by championing these causes. By equipping all stakeholders with the knowledge and skills needed to contribute to and benefit from the nation's exchange, Boursa Kuwait is committed to enhancing financial literacy, promoting best practices, and driving positive behavioral change, a commitment which is evident through a comprehensive range of in-person and virtual training programs, workshops, seminars and initiatives designed to empower listed companies, investment firms, brokerage companies, and individuals. To make a lasting positive impact in the communities in which we operate, Boursa Kuwait partnered with several local and international organizations.

The exchange contributed to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees' Annual Winterization Programs and its initiatives to protect refugees and internally displaced people in the Middle East and North Africa since 2021. The bourse also renewed the strategic partnership with Kuwait Red Crescent Society as a Humanitarian Partner for the second consecutive year, sponsoring the Society's "Basic Education" initiative that helps underprivileged children gain an education.

Boursa Kuwait is also committed to minimizing the company's impact on the environment and have implemented several green programs and initiatives. The company is training their employees to operate the exchange's iconic building more sustainably and have started the process towards obtaining a LEED certification right after renovating the building to upgrade the facilities and reduce its carbon footprint. Boursa Kuwait has also renewed the partnership for the third consecutive year with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation's Kuwait Dive Team, collaborating with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to sponsor the National Campaign to remove hundreds of tons of

hazardous waste from Kuwait Bay and its beaches and supporting the Dive Team's efforts for the preservation of Kuwait's marine environment.

Boursa Kuwait has also partnered with the LOYAC Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA), sponsoring the Academy's "Green Darb" program, an initiative that provides practical training in agriculture to equip young trainees with advanced skills in the field, helping them secure employment opportunities in agricultural projects.

Outstanding leadership in sustainability transparency

Boursa Kuwait strives to adopt the highest standards of accuracy and transparency in the dissemination of information about the company and listed companies, as it has a significant impact on enhancing investor confidence, attracting capital and improving liquidity within the market. In 2017, the exchange joined the United Nations-led Sustainable Stock Exchanges (SSE) initiative, demonstrating its unwavering dedication to driving Corporate Sustainability within financial markets. The exchange has adopted a strategy that seeks to develop a more transparent and solvent capital market through the implementation of a group of enhancements and regulatory projects as well as the technology to raise the capital market's profile locally, regionally, and around the world. Companies listed in Boursa Kuwait's flagship "Premier" Market have an obligation to allocate an Investor Relations function that is responsible for educating shareholders about the company's activities as well as answering shareholder inquiries and questions, communicating with shareholders to exercise their rights to attend and vote in general assemblies and building links between the company and its investors. Additionally, "Premier" Market companies are required to host quarterly analyst meetings within five days of the disclosure of their annual and

quarterly financials and publish the transcripts of the conference, as well as all their disclosures and announcements, in both Arabic and English. The company also developed the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Reporting Guide to support listed companies in disclosing ESG matters, catering to the growing demand for transparency from stakeholders, including investors, customers, suppliers, and regulators.

The guide includes recommended sustainability metrics and indicators aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB), and Kuwait's 2035 Vision. Through this initiative, Boursa Kuwait aims to enhance transparency, advocate sustainable practices, and facilitate ongoing improvement in ESG efforts. ESG reporting and implementation play a vital role in today's financial landscape, and the exchange is committed to demonstrating its role as one of the model issuers listed on the exchange to achieve a more sustainable future and a brighter tomorrow.

Boursa Kuwait's 2021 and 2022 Sustainability Reports marked the beginning of the company's long-term commitment to progressively report the latest results and impacts of their Corporate Sustainability (CS) strategies to stakeholders. This also inaugurates the ESG reporting apparatus of Boursa Kuwait, detailing their contributions to the "New Kuwait 2035" vision, which aims to transform Kuwait into a financial, cultural, and institutional leader in the region. In keeping with its commitment to the support and promotion of responsible, sustainable and impactful business practices, and as part of its ongoing initiatives to promote Corporate Sustainability in the Kuwaiti capital market and encourage the adoption of best standards in ESG disclosure and reporting among listed companies, Boursa Kuwait partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to organize a workshop around the standards, practices and tools for ensuring the impactful implementation and reporting of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles as well as the importance of integrating them with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and into business operations.

The course, entitled "The ESG SDG Impact Sensitization" was attended by Kuwaiti-listed companies. Boursa Kuwait's Corporate Sustainability strategy stipulates ensuring initiatives apply and fall in line with the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR), industry best practice standards and investor expectations, creating strong and sustainable partnerships that ultimately achieve success and allow Boursa Kuwait to leverage the capabilities and strengths of other companies or organizations that have experience in different fields, and integrating sustainability efforts with the company culture, in order to achieve longevity and an ongoing impact that is carried on and instilled in the day-to-day operations of the stock exchange. As part of the strategy, Boursa Kuwait has launched many initiatives in partnership with local and international organizations, focusing on support for nongovernmental organizations and charity programs, financial literacy and capital market awareness, the empowerment of women, as well as environmental protection.

As a trusted and respected entity within the global financial community, Boursa Kuwait continues to pave the way for sustainable growth and exemplify the power of responsible business practices. Through its unwavering dedication, Boursa Kuwait plays a crucial role in shaping a brighter and more sustainable future for Kuwait and beyond.

Germany approves belt-tightening draft budget

BERLIN: Germany's coalition government approved a draft of next year's budget Wednesday after fractious negotiations, aiming to impose deep cuts after years of big spending while giving defense a boost. Following months of feuding after Finance Minister Christian Lindner, from the business-friendly FDP party, demanded severe cutbacks, Chancellor Olaf Scholz's cabinet signed off on the proposed 2024 budget.

Lindner sees it as a turning point after several years of massive outlays to tackle first the coronavirus pandemic and then an energy crisis triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "With the 2024 federal budget, we are taking an important step towards fiscal normality," he wrote in an article in conservative daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.

"Not everything that is politically pop-

ular can be financed." This statement is a swipe at his coalition partners, Scholz's centre-left SPD party and the Greens, with whom negotiations have been tense.

The Greens were upset at Lindner's refusal to sacrifice tax breaks for motorists while he has also been reluctant to give ground on a proposed new scheme to combat child poverty. The cabinet approved the draft budget Wednesday, according to government sources, and Lindner will present it at a press conference later in the day. It will be debated in parliament from September.

Europe's top economy — which slipped into recession at the turn of the year, as surging inflation and interest rate hikes took their toll — forecasts spending of 445.7 billion euros (\$485 billion) next year, down from 476.3 billion planned for 2023. Despite the drop, spending will still be 25 percent higher than in 2019, according to the draft. Cuts to borrowing are even more drastic. For 2024, 16.6 billion euros in new borrowing is forecast, down from 45.6 billion in 2023.

Germany should thus comply with its constitutional "debt break" which limits

new annual borrowing to 0.35 percent of gross domestic product a year. After being suspended from 2020 as Germany spent huge sums to tackle the pandemic, the rule came back into force this year.

But to ensure that the 2023 spending plan complied with the debt break, the government has had to resort to creating several special funds that are outside the official budget. They have been used in particular to help households and businesses cope with rising energy prices after Russia slashed crucial gas supplies to Europe amid the Ukraine war. The government will tap one of these funds to ensure it hits the NATO target in 2024 of spending two percent of GDP on the military, according to the draft budget.

About 19.2 billion euros will be channeled to the armed forces from a 100-billion-euro pot set up to overhaul the creaking Bundeswehr after the start of the Ukraine war. This will be in addition to the regular defense budget of 51.8 billion euros, up from about 50 billion the previous year.

However, the amount is still far short of the 10 billion extra that the defense



BERLIN: German Finance Minister Christian Lindner (right) and State Secretary Werner Gatzert arrive for a press conference on July 5, 2023 in Berlin to present the government's draft for the 2024 federal budget and financial plan through 2027. — AFP

minister was seeking.

Just days ahead of a summit of NATO leaders in Lithuania, some are questioning how Germany will be able to hit its military spending targets in future. The

German government must "explain how it intends to achieve more than two percent of GDP in the long term, once the special fund has been spent," asked daily Tagesspiegel. — AFP

Business

AI's rise is the 'most profound' tech shift of our lifetime: Google report

'AI can help turn around UK's recent growth stagnation'

LONDON: The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) is the "most profound" technology shift of our lifetime with the potential to "turbocharge" the UK's economy, according to a new report by Google.

Artificial intelligence, according to the report, can help turn around the UK's recent growth stagnation and boost its economy by £400 billion by 2030 by enabling an annual growth of 2.6 per cent. The tech giant's UK and Ireland boss Debbie Weinstein called the transformation ushered in by AI in the tech industry "the most profound platform shift that any of us have lived through".

While some jobs are likely to be lost to AI, there will also be a "whole new set of jobs that will be created", according to the tech chief. "We are very conscious of the impact that this technology will have on people," Weinstein said.

"We want to make sure everyone has the skills they need. We're aware that this is a fundamental technology shift that will impact all of our lives," she

added. Google's new report comes amid widespread fear of the impact disruptive AI technology could have on several spheres of life, including privacy, the education sector, industry and jobs.

Recently, professor Geoffrey Hinton, widely called the "godfather of AI" for his research contributions to the field and its impact, resigned from his job at Google, expressing fear that the AI tools he helped build could spell humanity's doom. He cautioned that "bad actors" could use new AI technologies to harm others. "It is hard to see how you can prevent the bad actors from using it for bad things... I console myself with the normal excuse: If I hadn't done it, somebody else would have," he said.

A growing number of experts across the world have called for AI development to be slowed down or halted as the potential for the technology to be misused has come to light following the launch of tools like ChatGPT and Midjourney. Google agrees in the new report that regulation is vital as AI



Debbie Weinstein

technology develops, and adds that is "actively collaborating" with regulators around the world. The company is reportedly in favor of launching a "national skills agenda" involving governments, firms, and educational institutions to ensure that workers are not left behind as AI technology develops.

"This nuanced approach is important if the UK is to pursue a competitive ad-



vantage in attracting inward investment associated with agile regulation," Google noted in the report. "We're aware of the fundamental change and the importance of getting it right while managing the downside risks," Weinstein added. — Agencies

Saudi govt takes new initiatives on SMEs

RIYADH: The Saudi government has been able to save hundreds of projects through its initiatives and programs on small and medium enterprises and ensure they do not exit the local market. According to sources in the General Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises (Monshaat), the authority

was keen to remove obstacles facing the sector.

Monshaat revealed that more than 9,000 establishments have benefited from its services during the first quarter of 2023, while more than 300 SMEs were able to reduce costs and raise operational efficiency through the "Mazaya" platform, which provides various services at reduced prices and is supported by the authority.

The services offered by Monshaat include business support, advisory sessions and presentation to the investor, in addition to training and

guidance on how to prepare feasibility studies and strategic planning for building a project. Anmar Al-Sulimani, chairman of the board of AROB Business and Investment Company, pointed to the multiple challenges facing SMEs, the most important of which is poor knowledge of various aspects of business.

In remarks to Asharq Al-Awsat, he explained that the rate of closure of emerging projects around the world was 20 percent in the first year and 50 percent during the first five years, stressing that feasibility studies con-

tribute to the success of projects by no less than 80 percent.

For his part, Saudi Senior Economist Ihsan Buhulaiga told Asharq Al-Awsat that internal reasons could lead to the closure of SMEs, including high costs and the failure to carefully study the target market.

Workers in the restaurants and cafes sector stated that the closure of hundreds of shops due to accumulated losses comes as a result of the entrepreneurs not being aware of the market situation before launching the project. — Agencies



German car sales jump in H1 as supply woes fade

FRANKFURT: Easing supply chain problems helped boost new car sales in Germany over the first half of 2023, official data showed Wednesday, but analysts said the recovery would likely stall in the face of high inflation and a weakening economy. More than 1,396,000 new cars hit the road in Europe's biggest economy over the first six months of the year, a 12.8-percent increase on a year earlier, according to the KBA federal transport authority.

Last month alone, sales surged by nearly a quarter compared with a particularly weak June 2022 when carmakers were struggling with a shortage of semiconductors. The lack of chips has since eased considerably. The June increase was driven by a 31-percent jump in SUV sales, while demand for fully electric cars soared by more than 64 percent, the data showed.

Improved supply chains and full order books are likely to see "the upward trend continue at least until the end of the year", said EY analyst Constantin Gall, who expects Germany's new car market to grow by around 15 percent in 2023.

But beyond that, the outlook is murkier. "High inflation, high prices for new cars, few attractive financing options and an uncertain economic situation" are all expected to weigh on demand, Gall said.

The end of electric car subsidies for company fleets from September 2023 will have a further dampening effect, Gall added. Overall, the German new car market remains well below pre-pandemic levels. Over the first half of 2023, new registrations were still 24 percent lower compared with the same period in 2019, before the pandemic disrupted the industry. — AFP

Lebanese economy shows signs of improvement

BEIRUT: Business sentiment in Lebanon's private sector hit a 10-year high in June despite the country's enduring economic crisis, soaring inflation and a political impasse that has held back billions of dollars from the International Monetary Fund and international donors.

The country's Blom purchasing managers' index, a measure of the strength of its private sector, rose to 50.2 in June, from 49.4 in May. This is the first improvement in the health of the private sector economy since August 2022, with growth hitting its highest level since June 2013, as new orders, employment and business activity posted renewed expansion.

A reading over 50 indicates an expansion in business conditions, while one below represents a contraction. The reading for June was largely a reflection of business activity, employment and new orders increasing, while input cost inflation slowed to a 21-month low.

"The improvement was a long time in coming, but perhaps it was largely expected. The economy registered positive growth in 2022 and its momentum is carried over to 2023, especially with the onset of the tourist summer season," said Ali Bolbol, the chief economist and head of research at Blom Bank.

"It is plain to see that the economy is adjusting upwards from its deep lows of the crisis years; but the worry is that these positive, tentative steps are viewed as 'back to normal', and consequently obviate the need for vital structural reforms that would underpin genuine, solid, and steady growth."

New orders rose at the second-fastest rate in the PMI survey's history during June and to the greatest extent since May 2013. The improvement in demand reflected greater sales to domestic and foreign customers, according to the survey. June's reading was the third consecutive monthly increase in new business received from non-domestic markets, which subsequently signaled the longest uninterrupted sequence of export demand growth since the survey began in 2013.

As a result of greater intakes of new business, Lebanon's private sector businesses recorded an in-



The Corniche in Beirut.

crease in backlogs of work, with output levels raised to match workloads. Employment levels in June increased as businesses raised capacity to accommodate greater sales. For the first time since October 2019, there was a shortening of supplier delivery times in June. Cost pressures subsided during June as input price inflation slowed. Despite the positive developments, business confidence fell to a four-month low, with companies reporting concerns over the outlook caused by domestic political and economic uncertainty, according to the survey.

Inflation in Lebanon hit an annual rate of 260 percent in May as a political impasse over the election of a president persisted, thwarting the enactment of reforms necessary for the country to emerge from its worst economic crisis. Hyperinflation continued for the 35th consecutive month as the country's currency continued to lose value on the parallel and official markets since it was devalued by 90 per cent at the start of February.

The country is in the grip of an economic crisis described by the World Bank as one of the worst in modern history and has yet to enforce critical struc-

tural and financial reforms required to unlock \$3 billion of assistance from the IMF, as well as billions in aid from other international donors.

The country has a caretaker cabinet led by Prime Minister Najib Mikati, with limited powers. It also needs to elect a president after the six-year term of Michel Aoun ended at the end of October, but this requires the consensus of the country's political elite.

Last month, the IMF said although Lebanon's economy showed some signs of stabilization in 2022 due to a rebound in tourism, strong inflows of remittances and an improvement in trade in the second half of the year, it "remains severely depressed". "Still, high uncertainty, banking sector restrictions, and expensive and very limited electricity supply continue to hinder economic activity," the fund said.

The country's economic outlook "is highly uncertain and depends on the authorities' policy actions", it said. Lebanon's economy contracted by about 58 per cent between 2019 and 2021, with gross domestic product falling to \$21.8 billion in 2021, from about \$52 billion in 2019, according to the World Bank — the largest contraction on a list of 193 countries. — Agencies

UN worried as clock ticks on Ukraine grain deal

GENEVA: The United Nations said Wednesday that it was "worried" about the survival of a grain exports deal for Ukraine, which could collapse within a fortnight, threatening food security for the world's most vulnerable.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative aimed at easing a global food crisis is set to expire on July 17 unless Russia, which is pressing an invasion of Ukraine launched in February 2022, agrees to its renewal. But Moscow remains unhappy about the operation of the deal's parallel agreement on Russian food and fertilizer exports, and said Tuesday that it saw no reason to extend the BSGI.

"No doubt we are worried because the two agreements signed in Istanbul are very important for food security and for the developing countries in the

global south," Rebeca Grynspan, head of the UN's trade and development agency UNCTAD, told reporters in Geneva. UNCTAD has been a major player in brokering the deals.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine saw Ukraine's Black Sea ports blocked by warships until the agreement, signed in July 2022, allowed for the passage of critical grain exports. The initial 120-day agreement struck with the UN and Turkey last July has been extended three times: in November, March and in May.

The parallel agreement, between Moscow and the UN, is aimed at facilitating the export of Russian food and fertilizers, which are exempt from Western sanctions imposed on Moscow over the Ukraine war. But Russia claims this parallel agreement is not being upheld.

UN considers Moscow trip

"We need both, to continue bringing prices down and have stable markets of food and fertilizers in the world," Grynspan said. "The United Nations remains committed to making every effort

for the continuation of the agreements. They remain our main concern and we hope that we can ensure their extension for the benefit of the most vulnerable countries and the most vulnerable people in the world. "We will continue during the days and hours still left with our efforts to make that happen."

Ukraine was one of the world's top grain producers, and the deal has helped soothe the global food crunch triggered by the conflict. Some 32.8 million tons have been exported so far under the agreement, according to the UN. Just over half of the exports have been corn while more than a quarter have been wheat. Grynspan said consultations with a Russian delegation had taken place in Geneva. "We will consider, yes, going to Moscow in the days that are left, but that has not been confirmed yet," she added.

Russia said Tuesday that the Moscow-UN deal had "continued to degrade", blaming the problem on secondary effects of Western penalties on shipping and insurance companies as well as banks. — AFP

Turkey's inflation rate slows to 38.2%

ISTANBUL: Turkey's annual inflation rate slowed to 38.2 percent in June, official data showed Wednesday, although economists warned that this may be a low point for the year. The rate slowed from 39.6 percent in May, according to the TUIK state statistics agency.

A separate study released by independent economists from the ENAG group who question the official data put the June figure at 108.6 percent, up from 105.2 percent in May.

The official rate has been steadily dropping since reaching a more than two-decade high of 85 percent in October of last year. But economists think inflation will soon start growing faster because of the vast spending pledges President Recep Tayyip Erdogan meted out ahead of May's general election.

Turkey has also allowed its tightly controlled currency to start losing value against the dollar at a faster-than-expected rate. "Inflation is likely to rise in July

and we think it will end this year at 40-45 percent year-on-year," said Liam Peach, a senior emerging markets economist at Capital Economics.

"With the lira's depreciation having been more front-loaded than we had expected and the currency likely to depreciate further in the coming months, inflation looks set to end this year at a higher level than we had thought. The lira has lost more than 23 percent of its value against the dollar since Erdogan extended his rule into a third decade in a hard-fought runoff election on May 28.

The drop underscores a radical shift in policies since the election that includes an end to a two-year era of ultra-low interest rates. The central bank hiked its policy rate to 15 percent from 8.5 percent last month in its first meeting since the election. Economists welcomed Erdogan's turn to more traditional economics, urging his team to move even faster.

But the Turkish leader still believes that high interest rates contribute to—rather than cure—growing consumer prices. He began pushing the central bank to slash borrowing rates at all costs in 2021, setting off the worst inflationary spiral of his rule. — AFP

Business

UN urges 'massive' clean energy investment in developing world

Developing countries need \$1.7tn renewable energy investments annually

GENEVA: The United Nations called Wednesday for massive investment in clean energy in developing countries, saying there was otherwise little hope of achieving any climate goals by 2030. Developing countries need renewable energy investments of about \$1.7 trillion annually but attracted foreign direct investment in clean energy worth only \$544 billion in 2022, the UN's trade and development agency UNCTAD said.

"We cannot fulfill the world's energy needs and safeguard our planet and our future without massive private sector investment in renewables in developing countries," said UN chief Antonio Guterres.

"We are at least a decade late in our efforts to combat global warming. Investment in renewable energy in developing countries is therefore essential and often the most economical way to bridge the energy gap. "But while the transition to renewable energy is a global priority, investments in energy infrastructure and efficiency still fall far short of what is needed."

International investment in renewable

energy has nearly tripled since the Paris climate accord was struck in 2015, UNCTAD noted in its annual World Investment Report.

However, it said much of the growth was in developed nations. Since 2015, "31 developing countries, including 11 least developed countries, have not yet registered a single utility-sized international investment project in renewables or other energy transition sectors," the report said.

Fossil fuel subsidies \$1tn

"The scale of the challenge is enormous," said UNCTAD chief Rebeca Grynspan. "A significant increase in investment in sustainable energy systems in developing countries is crucial for the world to reach climate goals by 2030."

The agency called for debt relief to give developing countries fiscal space to invest in clean energy transition. The report also said that fossil fuel subsidies around the world amounted to a record \$1 trillion in 2022 - eight times the value of subsidies provided to renewable energy.

"Fossil fuel subsidies represent a disincentive to investment in the energy transi-

tion because they make it more challenging for renewable energy to compete, especially when it does not receive the same level of support," it said. "Although phasing them out is complex, particularly for developing countries, doing so would help encourage investment in renewable energy."

FDI down in 2022

UNCTAD's report said that after a steep drop in 2020 and a strong rebound in 2021, overall global foreign direct investment (FDI) declined by 12 percent in 2022, to \$1.3 trillion. "The slowdown was driven by the global polycrisis: the war in Ukraine, high food and energy prices, and debt pressures," it said. International project finance and cross-border mergers and acquisitions were especially affected by tighter financing conditions, rising interest rates and uncertainty in capital markets, the report said.

UNCTAD expects downward pressure on global FDI to continue in 2023.

FDI in developing countries increased by four percent to \$916 billion, and represents more than 70 percent of glob-



al flows — a record share. However, this growth is concentrated in a small number of large emerging economies. "FDI flows to many smaller developing countries are stagnant, while flows to the least-developed countries fell by 16 percent from an

already low base," said Grynspan.

The top 10 host economies for FDI inflows in 2022 were the United States, China, Singapore, Hong Kong, Brazil, Australia, Canada, India, Sweden and France. — AFP



An investor is reflected on an electronic board showing stock information at a brokerage house in Beijing in this file photo.

Stock markets drop as Chinese data disappoint

LONDON: Stock markets retreated Wednesday on disappointing eurozone and Chinese economic data and rising tensions between Beijing and Washington.

Wall Street stocks fell at the start of trading while European markets were down in afternoon deals and Asia finished lower. Eurozone economic activity fell to 49.9 points in June, just under the 50-point mark indicating zero growth, according to revised figures from the keenly-watched HCOB Eurozone Composite purchasing managers' index.

In China, the Caixin private survey of the services sector showed that activity slowed sharply in June and at a much faster pace than feared in the world's second biggest economy.

That came after an official reading also pointed to weakness in the sector and added to a run of soft data on trade and consumer activity. Apart from the odd pledge of action and some small interest rate cuts, Chinese authorities have done little to address the problem as the economy has sputtered despite the end of COVID restrictions late last year.

"There are fresh concerns about the global economy powering down as data from China's service sector underlines how tepid the post-pandemic recovery has become, just as trade tensions between Beijing and Washington ramp up," said Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at Hargreaves Lansdown. Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare pointed to the poor Chinese data plus indications that both Beijing and Washington are adopting new protectionist measures just as US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen visits China this week to ease tensions.

"It sounds like she will have her work cut out for her, but in any case, there is an identifiable excuse for market participants to take some money off the table in stocks that have made big runs and it appears that is an aim ahead of today's open," O'Hare wrote shortly before trading began.

President Xi Jinping's government this week added to a tech standoff with the United States by imposing export controls on key metals used in making microchips. Officials said Monday's measure placed on shipments of gallium and germanium was to protect national security.

Investors will also focus on the release later Wednesday of minutes from the US Federal Reserve's June policy meeting. They should provide an insight into officials' thinking when they decided to pause interest rates for the first time after 10 straight hikes to combat elevated inflation.

The minutes will be followed Friday by closely-watched US jobs data, a key guide to the state of the world's top economy. — AFP

Booming carbon capture climate tech 'confusing'

PARIS: Humanity's failure to draw down planet-heating carbon dioxide emissions - 41 billion tons in 2022 - has thrust once-marginal options for capping or reducing CO2 in the atmosphere to centre stage in climate policy and investment.

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) and direct air capture (DAC) are both complex industrial processes that isolate CO2 but these newly booming technologies are fundamentally different and often conflated. Here's a primer on what they are and how they differ.

What is carbon capture?

CCS syphons off CO2 from the exhaust, or flue gas, of fossil fuel-fired power plants as well as heavy industry. The exhaust from a coal-fired power plant is about 12 percent CO2, while in steel and cement production it is typically double that.

Unlike CCS, which by itself only prevents additional carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere, DAC extracts CO2 molecules already there.

Crucially, this makes DAC a "negative emissions" technology. It can therefore generate credits for companies seeking to offset their greenhouse gas output — but only if the captured CO2 is permanently stored under-

ground, such as in depleted oil and gas reservoirs or in saline aquifers.

The concentration of carbon dioxide in ambient air is only 420 parts per million (about 0.04 percent), so corralling CO2 using DAC is far more energy intensive.

Once isolated using either CCS or DAC, CO2 can be used to make products such as building materials or "green" aviation fuel, though some of that CO2 will seep back into the air.

"If the CO2 is utilized, then it is not removal," said Oliver Geden, a senior fellow at the German Institute for International Security Affairs.

State of play

The fossil fuel industry has been using CCS since the 1970s but not to prevent CO2 from leaching into the atmosphere. Rather, oil and gas companies inject CO2 into oil fields to extract more crude more quickly. Historically, bolting CCS facilities onto coal- and gas-fired power plants and then storing the CO2 to reduce emissions has proven technically feasible but uneconomical.

The world's largest CCS plant, the Petra Nova facility in Texas, was mothballed three years after opening in 2017. But the looming climate crisis and government subsidies have revived interest in CCS for the power sector and beyond. At the end of 2022, there were 35 commercial-scale facilities worldwide applying carbon capture technology to industry, fuel transformation or power generation, isolating a total of 45 million tons (Mt) of CO2, according to the

International Energy Agency (IEA).

DAC, by contrast, is very new. A total of 18 DAC plants globally only captured about as much CO2 last year (10,000 tonnes) as the world emits in 10 seconds.

Scaling up

Both CCS and DAC must be massively scaled up if they are to play a significant role in decarbonizing the global economy. To keep the mid-century net-zero target in play, CCS will need to divert 1.3 billion tons a year from power and industry - 30 times more than last year — by 2030, according to the IEA.

DAC must remove 60 Mt CO2 per year by that date, several thousand-fold more than today.

But the nascent industry is burgeoning with new actors, and the first million-ton-per-year plant is scheduled to come on line in the United States next year, with others following. "It's a huge challenge but it's not unprecedented," University of Wisconsin — Madison professor Gregory Nemet told AFP, citing other technologies, including solar panels, that have scaled up dramatically in a matter of decades.

Preparing a site to stock CO2 can take up to 10 years, so storage could become a serious bottleneck for both CCS and DAC development.

Cost per ton

Carbon capture costs \$15 to \$20 per ton for industrial processes with highly concentrated streams of CO2, and \$40 to \$120 per ton for more diluted gas streams, such as in power generation.

Singapore CB sees record net loss on inflation fight

SINGAPORE: Singapore's central bank said Wednesday it suffered a record annual net loss of \$23 billion in the most recent financial year as it tightened monetary policy to battle soaring inflation, and it warned the city-state's economy still faced headwinds.

Central banks worldwide have embarked on a campaign to cushion the effects of rising prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year that hammered oil and gas supplies. But while others have hiked interest rates in their battle, Singapore, which imports most of its needs, has strengthened

the local dollar to make imported goods cheaper.

However, that has translated into huge losses in its official foreign reserves. Monetary Authority of Singapore managing director Ravi Menon announced. The MAS booked a "net loss of Sg\$30.8 billion (for the financial year ended March), reflecting the effects of monetary policy tightening to bring down inflation", he said at the release of its annual report. "This is the largest loss MAS has ever recorded," he added. He said 70 percent of the loss, or Sg\$21.4 billion, was down to the "negative currency translation effects of a stronger Singapore dollar". The other 30 percent of the loss came from the MAS's "net interest expenses... from money market operations to mop up excess liquidity in the banking system".

Menon said inflation has "clearly peaked and has discernibly moderated". Core inflation on a month-on-month seasonally adjusted annualized basis fell sharply from a peak of 9.1 percent in June 2022 to 3.6 percent in May 2023, he said. He said growth pros-



The building of the Singapore Monetary Authority.

pects for Singapore "have dimmed and the economy will operate slightly below its underlying capacity" as manufacturing and financial services — two key economic pillars — have stalled in recent quarters.

"Growth will remain weak in the near term," he said. The trade ministry in May forecast economic growth this year of 0.5-2.5 percent. — AFP

UK watchdog defends oversight of hedge fund

LONDON: Britain's financial regulator on Wednesday defended its work as it revealed a two-year probe of a hedge fund founded by Crispin Odey, at the centre of sexual assault allegations. The Financial Conduct Authority "has ongoing investigations into both Mr Crispin Odey and Odey Asset Management (OAM)", FCA chief executive Nikhil Rathi wrote to British lawmakers.

The watchdog revealed it had opened investigations into the group in mid-2021, and stressed its evolving nature. "Our supervision of OAM... has been intensive," the regulator's letter added.

The current scope is examining whether Odey is a "fit and proper person" to work in financial services, Rathi said in a letter to parliament's Treasury Select Committee, which requested an update.

The FCA opened the probe two years ago to look at allegations that Odey "dismissed OAM's executive committee for an improper purpose". Rathi added in the letter dated Monday and published Wednesday. The Financial Times (FT) newspaper last month published a series of allegations of sexual harassment or misconduct by Odey, which he denies.

The FCA on Wednesday said its probe was "not intended as a replacement for, or alternative to, a police investigation or criminal prosecution". Following the FT allegations, the OAM last month began to transfer activities to other firms. Its founder has been accused of sexual assault against eight women, according to the business daily. Odey, a vocal Brexit supporter and Conservative party donor, has meanwhile been ousted from the group. The FCA has restricted OAM's activities to facilitate an orderly breakup of the hedge fund following its rapid collapse. Odey, 64, is also well known for making huge sums from betting heavily against the British pound and UK government bonds in recent years. — AFP

Egypt's trade deficit grows

CAIRO: The foreign trade data bulletin for April, issued by Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, showed an increase in the trade balance deficit value by about 23.8 percent after it reached \$2.33 billion, compared to \$1.89 billion for the same month of the previous year.

The bulletin indicated a decrease in the country's value of exports by 44.9 percent, reaching \$3.03 billion in April, compared to \$5.50 billion for the same month in 2022, due to the decrease in the value of exports of some commodities — most notably natural and liquefied gas by 75.6 percent, fresh fruits by 58.8 percent, and crude oil by 48.2 percent, and ready-made clothes by 34.1 percent, according to the statistics.

The value of exports of some commodities in Egypt increased during April, compared to the same month last year, the most important of which are iron bars, sticks, angles and wires by 568.8 percent, pasta and various food preparations by 35.6 percent, fresh onions by 65.8 percent, and dairy products by 1.4 percent. The value of imports decreased by 27.4 percent, reaching \$5.36 billion, compared to \$7.38 billion for the same month of the previous year, due to a decrease in the value of imports of some commodities, the most important of which were wheat, by 1.4 percent, and organic and inorganic chemicals by 2.1 percent.

The value of imports of some commodities increased during April, compared to the same month in 2022, the most important of which are petroleum products by 13.8 percent, natural gas by 16.6 percent, and iron ores and concentrates by 5.2 percent. — Agencies

Lifestyle



This file photograph shows the Konyak tribe's women dancing at their community gathering in Longwa village in the Mon district of India's Nagaland state. — AFP photos



The Konyak tribesmen with guns and sickle dance at their community gathering in Longwa village.



This photograph shows Konyak tribesmen gesturing during a community gathering in Hongphoi village.

Once, the way to get ahead among India's Konyak warriors was by chopping off an enemy's skull. Today, the last survivors of a past age mourn the changing times — and a new generation they see as soft.

At 90, Nokkho Konyak can barely see beyond a few feet, his facial tattoos marking him as a warrior are fading and his frail body needs support.

But his eyes light up and his hands become animated when he talks about "those simpler times".

"We witnessed our brave elders cutting off enemies' heads and participated in many battles," he told AFP. Nokkho is a Konyak, a small but fierce and respected warrior community in north-eastern India's Nagaland state.



This photograph shows Konyak tribesmen standing in front of the king's residence in Longwa village.

The Konyaks were the last to give up the age-old practice of severing enemies' heads in this remote, hilly and densely forested region close to the Myanmar border. "I am lucky to still be alive, to be around my extended family, and I feel that today's generation is too privileged," he said at Chi village, about 360 kilometres (225 miles) from the regional capital Dimapur.



This photograph shows Ganjum Konyak, an advisor to the Konyak tribe's king in Hongphoi village.

'Heads were trophies'

Nokkho is an old man from a dying breed that practised or witnessed head-hunting before it stopped half a century ago. "Human heads were trophies that earned you respect," he said, sitting in front of a wall decorated with the skulls of animals sacrificed by his family.

Warriors were inked with different tattoos signifying anything from participation in a battle to killing someone and actually taking a head. As a



India's headhunter warriors

sever past, fret over future

young boy, he practised lopping off heads on large puppets, though he never severed a human one in battle himself. The last two headhunters in the village, his two elderly friends, died about 20 years ago.

Most tribal fights happened over land and limited resources, with warriors carrying spears, axes and machetes ambushing their enemies. Wherever possible, enemies' headless bodies were tied to a bamboo pole and taken back to the victor's village.

The head itself was taken and paraded about for the village to see, hailed as a sign of bravery to be celebrated.



The Konyak tribesmen with guns and sickle dance at their community gathering in Longwa village.



The Konyaks perform their tribal dance in Longwa village.

"My youth was a time of great transition," Nokkho said, referring to the arrival of missionaries, who denounced headhunting and gradually converted most people from their traditional animist beliefs to Christianity.

Nokkho remembers World War II, the end of British colonial rule, the formation of the Indian state in 1947, the first roads and power lines, and now, finally, the arrival of mobile phones.

'Hard for women'

Like Nokkho, 90-year-old Bo Wang, king of nearby Hongphoi vil-

laged, took up hunting wild boars and other animals after "headhunting became taboo".

Wang's family, like other royals in nearby Konyak villages, has been the final local authority for generations. "Everyone lived in fear of an ambush, and we were taught to be wary of everyone," Wang said, describing the stress of growing up with the threat of headhunters. The area is peaceful now, he said, but he laments what he sees as a lost era.

"Everything changed with modernity, our culture is dying," he said. "People

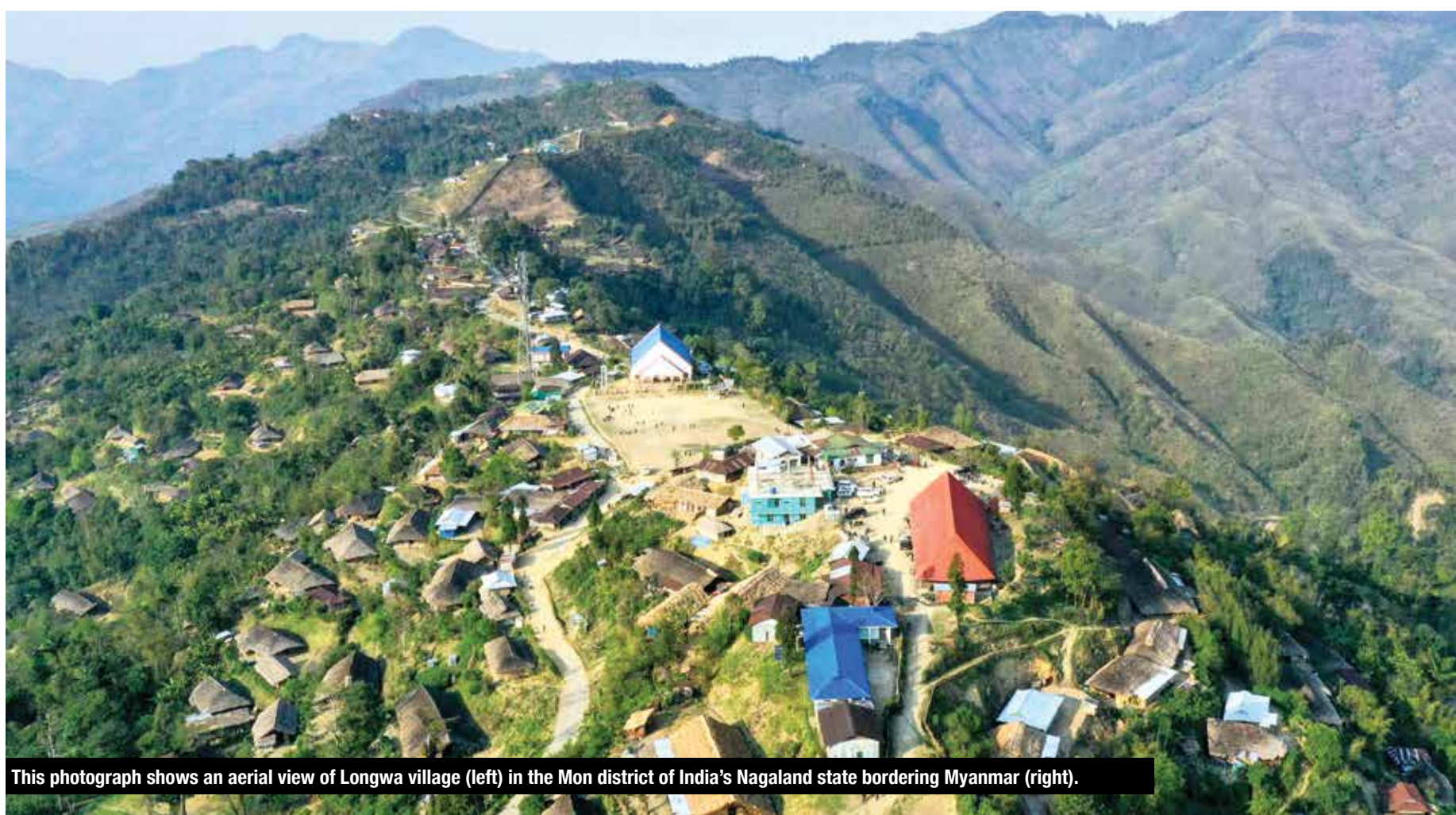


This photograph shows Konyak tribesmen during a community gathering at a traditional tribal house in Hongphoi village in the Mon district of India's Nagaland state.

lary hard for women, who thanklessly worked at home, in the fields — all the time".

Kaipa Konyak, 34, from a local tribal organization working to support the Konyak culture, said that the history would not be lost. "Young people are proud of their warrior traditions and culture," he said.

"We remember our roots and will strive to protect them while also securing our future with the best modern education and infrastructure." — AFP



This photograph shows an aerial view of Longwa village (left) in the Mon district of India's Nagaland state bordering Myanmar (right).



The Konyak tribe's women cook in the kitchen of their king's residence in Longwa village.

Lifestyle



TV satire series is safety valve in troubled Burkina

Burkinabe Actor Halidou Sawadogo (right) acts during the filming on the set of "Bienvenue a Kikideni" series by director Aminata Diallo-Glez, in Loumbila. — AFP photos

Your country is one of the poorest in the world, battered by a bloody jihadist insurgency and last year underwent two military coups. So, if you are a citizen of Burkina Faso, what can you do? Well, instead of plunging into despair, you can turn to the safety valve of laughter — making light of some of the country's many problems. Just in time, one of the Sahel nation's best-loved comedy series is set to return to the TV screens with the aim of providing precisely that kind of therapy.

"Bienvenue a Kikideni" ("Welcome to Kikideni") follows the rivalries between a village leader, an imam and a priest, using their squabbles to provide a gently satirical take on insecurity, religious fundamentalism, pandemics, tolerance, feminism and other sensitive issues. "It lays bare the facts of society," said actor and director Aminata Diallo-Glez. But "these themes are always addressed in a comic tone, with a lot of humor in there." "Kikideni" began life in 2005 under the title of "Three Men, One Village," and came back for a second series five years later. It returns for a third series of 20 26-minute episodes — and true to type, making the show has been affected by the security crisis. Diallo-Glez admitted she was "very moved to be completing the project."

"Before, we used to shoot in Ziniare 35 kilometers (22 miles) north of the capital Ouagadougou, and sleep there. But we can't do that anymore," she said.

"We then looked for a village, Wanvousse, fairly close to Ouagadougou, which met the requirements for a set in a somewhat rural environment."

The three characters at the heart of the plot bicker over their differences but always find a way of co-existing, said Il-

dever Meda, who plays the role of Kikideni's priest. "It's daily life with big human rivalries," said Meda. "But at the same time we show that being different is not a hindrance but an advantage." "We show that contradiction is possible and that you can live in peace and social cohe-

Security crisis

Some of the humor touches delicately on the country's deep security problems. Since jihadists swept in from neighboring

Mali in 2015, more than 10,000 people have died, according to an NGO count, while at least two million have been displaced. More than a third of the country lies outside the government's control. In one episode, the village debates whether it should mount a collective de-

draogo, a 70-year-old actor who in real life is a member of a civilian militia, the Volunteers for Defence of the Fatherland (VDP), which supports security operations against the jihadists. Filming for the third series is set to finish at the end of July. The show will be broadcast on Canal+ and Burkina Faso public television in early 2024, according to the production company. Ouedraogo said the show was popular in other African countries but its theme — of people rubbing along despite their differences — would resonate further afield. "All



The filming on the set of "Bienvenue a Kikideni" series by director Aminata Diallo-Glez in Loumbila.

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the problems raised here are ultimately universal problems," Ouedraogo said. "Whether it's in Europe, the Americas or Africa, it's the big question of today: how do we live together?" — AFP



Burkinabe actors, Rasmané Ouedraogo (left), Ildevert Meda (second left) and Aminata Diallo-Glez (right), act during the filming on the set of "Bienvenue a Kikideni" series by director Aminata Diallo-Glez, in Loumbila.



Burkinabe Actor Halidou Sawadogo (right) acts during the filming on the set of "Bienvenue a Kikideni" series by director Aminata Diallo-Glez in Loumbila.



Burkinabe actors Eleonore Kocly (left) and Halidou Sawadogo (second left) rehearse their scene under the direction of Burkinabe actor Ildevert Meda, during the filming on the set of "Bienvenue a Kikideni" series by director Aminata Diallo-Glez in Loumbila.

Blondie drummer says music in UK schools helps autistic children

Blondie drummer Clem Burke on Wednesday said adding drumming to the UK school curriculum could be a "game changer" for autistic children after a study found as little as 90 minutes a week offered benefits. A study conducted as part of the Clem Burke Drumming Project found children with the condition who learned to play the drums showed better control of their emotions and fewer signs of hyperactivity, inattention and repetitive behavior.

"This landmark study is the first of its kind to show how the brain responds positively to drumming and how it can help children with autism and other social and emotional difficulties," said Burke. "Given the pressure schools are currently facing trying to deal with a huge rise in the number of children experiencing social and emotional problems and learning difficulties, adding short drumming sessions to the curric-

ulum could be a game-changer at minimal cost and effort."

US veteran musician Burke played at Glastonbury last month with Blondie, the legendary post-punk band that has been fronted by singer Debbie Harry since 1974. British schools have more than 166,000 children with autism, an eight percent increase on 2020, government figures show.

Although 70 percent are in mainstream schools, research has found three-quarters of parents do not feel their child's needs are fully met. As part of the study, published in the Proceed-



Blondie drummer Clem Burke

ings of the National Academy of Sciences journal last year, those aged 16-20 with no drumming experience were given two 45-minute lessons each week for two months.

They had MRI scans before and after the sessions, while their guardians were asked by the researchers about recent behavioral difficulties. Results showed that those who improved their drumming skills saw an improvement in their condition.

MRI scans revealed changes to their brain function linked to overall behavior. Ruth Lowry, an exercise psychology at the University of Essex and co-author of the study, said the research provided the first evidence of neurological adaptations from learning to play the drums, specifically for adolescents with autism spectrum disorder.

Further research is being conducted in schools around the UK to back up the initial findings and the work is being showcased at the UK's Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition which runs until Sunday. The Clem Burke Drumming Project was founded in 2008 by Burke and two academics at UK universities. It initially set out to examine the physiological demands of playing live but grew into an exploration of the physical and mental health benefits of drumming. — AFP

Canadian journalist, author Bombardier dies at 82

Denise Bombardier, an acclaimed Canadian journalist, novelist and feminist, died Tuesday at the age of 82, her family said. Bombardier, known for her staunch feminist views, was one of the first women to rise through the ranks of Canadian media, hosting top political and cultural shows on Radio Canada in the 1970s and 80s and interviewing many celebrities. Bombardier died in a palliative care clinic in Montreal "following a rapid cancer, surrounded by people who loved her," her family said in a statement.

"Tenacious, passionate, intelligent, courageous — Denise Bombardier was all that and more," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Twitter. "Her impact on Quebec was immense and her legacy will live on, there's no doubt about that."

Bombardier also had strong ties to France, where she had completed her studies. In 1990, speaking on a popular television talk show, Bombardier confronted Gabriel Matzneff, a writer who celebrated pedophilia in his work. A video of this exchange went viral when French publisher Vanessa Sprin-



Canadian journalist Denise Bombardier receives from French President Francois Mitterrand the French Legion of Honor at the Elysee Palace in Paris on February 17, 1993. — AFP

gora wrote a memoir in 2020 about her traumatic relationship, at age 14, with Matzneff, who is 36 years her senior. That book prompted prosecutors in Paris to open an investigation against Matzneff on accusations of raping minors. — AFP



French model and music producer Caroline de Maigret (left) and models present creations by Chanel during the Women's Haute-Couture Fall/Winter 2023/2024 Fashion Week in Paris. — AFP photos



FASHION AND FILM MERGE AS PARIS SHOWS ITS OPULENT SIDE

From an absurdly opulent film shoot at the Opera Garnier to a Chanel catwalk along the Seine, fashion week offered a very different view of Paris on Tuesday from the riots of recent days. The country is still licking its wounds and facing up to the deep societal divisions exposed by days of violence sparked a week ago by the police killing of a teenager. The riots have died down since the weekend, and it was the other France—of unbridled luxury, craftsmanship and conspicuous excess—that took centre-stage on the second day of haute couture week.

Chanel's models paraded alongside the River Seine with the Eiffel Tower in the background, some with little dogs or baskets of flowers, in a show of "sophistication and simplicity," said designer Virginie Viard. She mixed tweeds, silk muslins, organzas and en-crusted lace with floral and graphic motifs. A few bright colors, including Barbie pink, stood out against a largely grey palette.

Over at the Opera Garnier, the 19th-century monument to late-imperial excess, couturier Stephane Rolland put on a fabulously opulent show that was



also being filmed by veteran filmmaker Claude Lelouch for his next movie, "Finalement". There was a strapless velvet dress with a glittering diamond hood, an elaborate headpiece that looked like a mass of gold flames, and a long red satin dress with a bejeweled collar.

The show was an homage to Greek singer Maria Callas, whose voice was heard through the show, aimed at reliving one of her most legendary performances at the Opera Garnier in December 1958. Rolland is known for bright colors, such as the bright-yellow dress in which he put singer Pretty Yende for the coronation of King Charles III recently.

But he said "in the heart of the Palais Garnier, I didn't want to disturb the scenery with pinks, yellows and greens" and stuck mostly to black, white and a few flashes of deep red. Actors mingled with the guests for the upcoming movie from Lelouch, best-known for his Oscar-winning 1966 film "A Man and a Woman". The director's request to film during the show was "like a gift from heaven," Rolland told AFP, adding that it was vital to merge fashion and other art forms.

"It's very important in our profession. I find that from time to time it lacks a bit of refinement. Money is not everything," he said. Also showing on Tuesday was French designer Alexis Mabille, who created a female take on the tuxedo.

And there was another luxurious display from Giorgio Armani, all sumptuous ballgowns adorned with many variations on poppies and roses. Red was a dominant color for the Italian—even for the wedding dress at the end.—AFP



Models present creations by Chanel during the Women's Haute-Couture Fall/Winter 2023/2024 Fashion Week in Paris.



Sports

England's Bright warns 'players are not robots'

Injuries mount ahead of World Cup

News in Brief

Firmino joins Saudi club

PARIS: Brazilian forward Roberto Firmino became the latest high-profile player to complete a move to Saudi Arabia, signing for Al-Ahli on Tuesday after his contract with Premier League giants Liverpool expired. The 31-year-old left Liverpool after eight seasons at Anfield, during which time he scored 111 goals in 362 appearances and won the Premier League, Champions League and Club World Cup. His arrival at Al-Ahli was revealed by the club in a video posted to social media and comes less than a week after the team concluded a deal to sign Senegal goalkeeper Edouard Mendy from Chelsea. Backed by the nation's sovereign wealth fund, the Saudi Pro League is luring big names from the major European leagues with the promise of huge salaries. Former Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard took over as coach at Al-Ettifaq earlier in the week, while Karim Benzema and N'Golo Kante have also made the move to the Gulf state since Cristiano Ronaldo's switch to Al-Nassr in January started the trend. — AFP

NBA introduces 'flopping'

MIAMI: The NBA said Tuesday it will test an in-game penalty for flopping during the upcoming summer league. A flop, or dive to simulate a foul, will be punished by a free throw and possession of the ball. The new penalty will be in effect for the summer league games but the NBA's board of governors will vote on any rule changes for the next season later this month. Officials won't have to stop the game to award the penalty, which instead will be imposed at the next natural break in play. Back in 2012, the NBA tried to reduce flops by introducing a system of a warning followed by fines but the rule has rarely been used. The offence won't count towards a player's personal fouls. — AFP

Dingley makes history

LONDON: League Two side Forest Green Rovers have become England's first professional men's football team to be managed by a woman after appointing Hannah Dingley as new caretaker boss. Rovers sacked former Everton striker Duncan Ferguson as manager on Tuesday, and later announced that its academy head Dingley would take interim charge. The club was relegated from League One - the third tier of English football - last season. The League Two season does not kick off until next month, but Dingley will be in charge for a friendly match against non-league Melksham Town on Wednesday. "I'm really excited for this next step of my career. Pre-season has just begun, and the full season kicks off very soon," said Dingley, 39. Club chairman Dale Vince said Dingley was "the natural choice", adding "she's done a fantastic job leading our academy and is well aligned with the values of the club. — AFP

Hockey's woman president

MONTREAL: Canada's ice hockey federation on Tuesday announced the appointment of sports executive Katherine Henderson as its first woman president, tapped to lead the organization after a sex scandal rocked the national sport last year. After seven years at the head of the national curling federation, where Henderson brought about important social reforms, she will take up her post at Hockey Canada on September 4. "The future of hockey is limitless," Henderson said in a statement, adding that she would work "to ensure that all Canadians have a personal hockey experience that is right for them." Hailed internationally for her commitment to equity and inclusion in sport, Henderson successfully reformed Curling Canada by bringing pay equity between women's and men's teams, welcoming more Canadians into the sport and boosting the organization's finances. — AFP

Leeds hire new manager

LONDON: Leeds hired Daniel Farke as their new manager on Tuesday as the relegated Premier League side look for an immediate return to the top flight. Farke knows exactly what it takes to succeed in the Championship after twice leading Norwich to the second tier title. The 46-year-old German agreed a four-year contract with Leeds, taking over from Sam Allardyce, who left at the end of last season following his short spell at Elland Road. "I feel humble at this time, I know the responsibility to fulfil all the expectations and I want to repay the trust shown," Farke said. "The most important thing is to create a togetherness and unity within this club again and, from today onwards, I will work on it with my staff and players. "I trust our supporters will be there when we need them. I can't wait for the first game of the season." Leeds are back in the Championship for the first time since 2020 and start the season against Cardiff on August 6. — AFP

BURTON UPON TRENT: England captain Millie Bright has warned that the boom in women's football is putting dangerous demands on players, with a host of star names set to miss out on the World Cup. Bright will lead the European champions in Australia and New Zealand after regular skipper Leah Williamson suffered an anterior cruciate ligament knee injury, which has become a regular occurrence in the women's game. England are also without Euro 2022 Golden Boot winner Beth Mead, who tore her ACL in November.

Mead's partner and Arsenal teammate Vivianne Miedema is missing for the Netherlands, while France are shorn of forwards Marie-Antoinette Katoto and Delphine Cascarino with the same injury. Bright herself has faced a fight to be fit for the World Cup after undergoing knee surgery in March. But the 29-year-old said that injury has been "a blessing" as it allowed her time to physically and mentally recover after a gruelling few years.

Bright was central to England's success at Euro 2022 and helped Chelsea to a league and FA Cup double this season. "I think there is work to be done in terms of scheduling," she said. "We are not robots, we need time to recover." "We want to perform for you guys (media), our fans, our clubs and our countries — we want to be at the highest level", Bright told reporters before England flew out to Australia.

"It's tough. I've been doing it for several years now and back-to-back tournaments, it's hard. "When you are playing every single minute for your club too and that is the demands of the game now, you can see how competitive it is getting, the games are getting harder and harder to win." A group stage was introduced to the women's Champions League for the first time in 2021, while there are two domestic cup competitions on top of the Women's Super League in England.

At international level, the Women's World Cup has doubled in size from 16 teams in 2011 — this year's tournament, starting on July 20, is the first-ever 32-team event. "It's everyone coming together to make sure the schedule works," said Bright. "It doesn't matter what club you play for, what country you represent. We care for the game, we care

Olympics bracing for the Seine dip

PARIS: While the 2024 Olympics will stage events in the Seine river from the ornate Alexandre III bridge, a proud declaration of the waterway's environmental renewal, many swimmers in the capital are already defying decades-long bans to take the plunge. Fears over pollution and safety led to a ban on swimming in the Seine and the Paris canals in 1923, though application of the rules has been relaxed in recent years. One group of pioneers calls itself "Les Ourcq Polaires" — a pun invoking polar bears and the name of the canal that is a favorite swimming site, running northeast out of the capital.

In five years, none of their swimmers have been fined, said one member, Laurent Sitbon, and they have been dragged out of the water by police only once. Thirty years ago, Jacques Chirac, Paris mayor at the time, boasted that the Seine was becoming a "clean river" and that he would soon go for a swim — though he never did. But the 2024 Olympic Games organizers plan to hold the triathlon and the open-water swimming events in the Seine, with French authorities investing 1.4 billion euros (\$1.5 billion) to clean up the river.

Already pools have been roped off in the Ourcq canal for the annual Paris Plages summer events in recent years, and permanent venues for the general public are scheduled to open in the region

WCup in sight as Rugby Championship kicks off

SYDNEY: A shortened Rugby Championship - to accommodate the World Cup - starts on Saturday with southern hemisphere teams honing their game plans ahead of the showpiece tournament in France. AFP looks at how each team is tracking:

Jones put to the test

Wallabies coach Eddie Jones faces his first test since replacing the axed Dave Rennie against world champions South Africa in Pretoria. The master tactician, renowned for his innovative thinking, has been charged with revitalizing a struggling team to give them a shot at once again lifting the World Cup. He has vowed to instill a gritty, and winning, mentality by making them more aggressive in attack while defending like "mongrel dogs", what he calls "the Australian way". Adaptability has been another buzzword, with veterans Michael Hooper and James Slipper sharing the captaincy in an Australian first. But history is not on Jones's side in Pretoria, with Australia yet to win at Loftus Versfeld Stadium over seven games stretching back to 1963.

All Blacks dominance on line

The All Blacks are coming off one of the worst years in their history, winning just eight of 13 Tests and setting firsts by losing a home series against

Ireland and going down on home soil against Argentina in 2022. Despite this, they still managed to clinch the Rugby Championship, for the eighth time in its 10 editions. Nevertheless, the spotlight will be again shining sharply on coach Ian Foster in Mendoza this weekend. The World Cup in France will be his swansong, and he has demanded the team be "dominant from Test one" this year, in contrast to their sluggish start in 2022. While questions linger over his leadership, Sam Cane has retained the captaincy. Among a number of veteran players kicking off what is probably their last international seasons are Aaron Smith, Richie Mo'unga, Sam Whitelock and Brodie Retallick.

Pumas have work cut out

Perennial strugglers Argentina have shown tremendous development since former Wallabies coach Michael Cheika took over, but Los Pumas seem destined to again prop up the ladder. The fixture list is not in their favor, with just one home match against the All Blacks this weekend, before travelling to Australia and South Africa.

They head into their clash against New Zealand with injury worries and Cheika again looking to veterans Julian Montoya, Pablo Matera, Jeronimo de la Fuente and Emiliano Boffelli to lead from the front. In a setback, they will be without powerhouse forward



BURTON-ON-TRENT: England's defender Millie Bright attends a team training session at St George's Park in Burton-on-Trent, central England. — AFP

for the next generation coming through. "We don't want to see this amount of injuries. The conversation will never die until we see some change."

Research call

The spate of ACL injuries has increased calls for more research into how training programs, footwear, pitches and facilities can be tailored to the needs of female players. The problem is not unique to football — ACL injuries have long been a talking point in women's basketball in the United States.

Scottish surgeon Gordon Mackay, a former player himself, told AFP that women footballers were up to six times more likely to suffer ACL injuries due to factors such as pelvic shape and hormonal changes related to the menstrual cycle. But Bright believes

there are also more simple changes that can help. A recent study from the European Club Association revealed that 82 percent of women players at top European clubs said their performance was affected by uncomfortable boots.

"From a female perspective it's different, the body is very different to the male (body) so there needs to be research," said Bright. "For me it's more than just one factor. It's facilities, pitches, the amount of game we're playing. The amount of rest we get is absolutely critical. "It's just everything together, all elements need to align. We want to put on the best show of football but we can only do that if you are fully recovered. "If you are fatigued you will pick up injuries because it's just impossible to keep going." — AFP

by 2025. On the first Sunday in July, the Polaires organized a dip in the Seine. Swimmers lined the railing on a barge moored at the Ile-Saint-Denis, north of Paris, where the Paralympic athlete's village is being built. "I can't wait to swim in the Seine! It's something else than a swimming pool," said one swimmer, Celine Debunne.

'We've paved the way'

At 8 pm, with little traffic on the river, around 20 people took to the water for a one-hour outing, covering two kilometers in warm water. At 25 degrees Celsius, the temperature "is borderline" too high for a club that has "polar" in its name, said one swimmer, Josue Remoue. They are just downstream from the setting of French artist Georges Seurat's painting "Bathers at Asnieres" from 1884, a time when frolicking in the Seine was common. "People say, 'You're crazy, you'll get spots,'" said Tanguy Lhomme, who was welcoming swimmers to his barge on the recent Sunday. "As a result, they treat the Seine like a sewer."

Lhomme admits that when he started living on the river in 2017, "it was out of the question for me to get into it." The club's members go out with inflatable buoys and in groups, which, along with their designated lifeguards, explains why they are "tolerated", Sitbon said. "The Seine gets a lot of bad press, like all dark-colored rivers. The color will never make you dream," said Louis Pelerin, another swimmer.

The Paris police did not respond to requests for comment on their attitude to swimming in the river. "It's not the pollution but a control of morals that's at the root of it," said Benoit Hachet, a Paris sociology professor who had also dived in. After summer rains



SEINE-SAINT-DENIS: A group of swimmers enjoy the River Seine in Ile-Saint-Denis, north of Paris. — AFP

wash dirt from paths and roads into the water, the Parisian authorities post signs banning swimming on the canal banks.

"Pollution is always a great pretext and often a great lie," said Sibylle van der Walt, a German sociologist based in Metz in eastern France, where she campaigns for wild swimming access. "Whereas in the Nordic countries, people swim at their own risk, in France the mayor is responsible." Van der Walt said. "More than the Olympics, it's global warming," Hachet said. "In ten years, it'll be 40 degrees. People will go in the water whether its forbidden or not!" Sitbon also said that attitudes were changing. "There were only a few of us in 2017. We feel we've paved the way a little." — AFP



LONDON: Eddie Jones watches his players warm up during the Six Nations international rugby union match at Twickenham Stadium, west London. — AFP

Marcos Kremer for the entire tournament after he copped a five-week ban over a shocking clearout during the Top 14 clash between Racing 92 and Stade Francais - his third red card of the season. While his star is no longer as bright as it once was, 34-year-old fly-half Nicolas Sanchez made Cheika's squad and will be aiming to do enough to play at a fourth World Cup.

Boks miss star names

World champions South Africa boast a formidable squad, but have split it for games against the Wallabies then the All Blacks to avoid jet lag as Auckland is 10 hours ahead of Johannesburg. Coach Jacques Nien-

aber opted to send 12 Springboks to New Zealand early, depleting the side to face Australia, which will be skipped by experienced No.8 Duane Vermeulen. Inspirational captain Siya Kolisi was among that advance party, but a knee injury is set to be keep him out of the tournament, with star fly-half Handre Pollard also sidelined. Marco van Staden will wear Kolisi's number six shirt and operate as openside flanker against the Wallabies, with their other leading option, Kwagga Smith, already in New Zealand. The absence of Pollard, a pivotal figure in their 2019 World Cup final triumph over England in Japan, is a serious blow. Rising star Manie Libbok will replace him. — AFP

Sports

Canada, Costa Rica, Guatemala move into CONCACAF quarters

Guadeloupe crash out in goal-filled night

MIAMI: Canada and Guatemala moved into the quarter-finals of the CONCACAF Gold Cup with goal-filled wins in group D on Tuesday, causing agony for Guadeloupe who crashed out. There were a total of 25 goals in the last four games of the group stage and while Canada took care of business with a 4-2 win over Cuba in Houston, the drama was in New Jersey where Guatemala came from 2-1 down to beat Guadeloupe 3-2 with two goals in the last 20 minutes. Panama, already qualified after two wins, topped group C with seven points after a 2-2 draw with El Salvador, while Costa Rica joined them in the last eight after beating Martinique 6-4, after leading 5-1.

The results mean that Canada will face the United States in the quarters while Guatemala will play Jamaica - with both games to take place on Sunday in Cincinnati. On Saturday in Dallas, Mexico take on Costa Rica while Panama are up against guest team Qatar. Guadeloupe, who have played some of the most entertaining football of the tournament, were top of the group with 20 minutes to go and would have still qualified with a draw if Matthias Phaeton had not had his 88th minute penalty saved.

Red Bull Arena was packed with loud and passionate Guatemala fans, but their hearts sank when Andrew Gravillon headed Guadeloupe into a 27th minute lead. Guatemala fought back though, drawing level 12 minutes later with a superb glancing header from striker Rubio Rubin. Then came a bizarre incident where Jordan Leborgne scored for Guadeloupe, but the effort was ruled out for handball.

The VAR review of the incident, however, spotted handling by a defender in the same move and a penalty was awarded. After a fan delayed the spot kick by running on the field, Ange-Fredy Plumain kept his composure to convert and make it 2-1 for the Caribbean side. Plumain celebrated his goal in front of the Guatemala fans, resulting in a shower of debris being thrown onto the field. But the anger of the Central Americans soon turned to hope when Rubio leveled in the 70th minute, tapping in a low cross from Nathaniel Mendez-Laing after a defense-splitting pass from Pedro Altan.

The winner came in the 75th minute when a poor clearance was pounced on by Carlos Mejia on the edge of the box and he twisted and turned to create space before unleashing a superb drive. That goal saw Guadeloupe sink from first to third in the group, but then a handball by Marlon Sequen handed a lifeline. However, Phaeton's penalty was saved by Nicholas Hagen, securing a place in the last eight for Guatemala.

Canada advance

Having drawn their opening two games, Canada needed a win against already-eliminated Cuba and they did so with little trouble. A 21st minute penalty from Junior Hoilett put John Herdman's team on their way and Jonathan Osorio doubled the lead five minutes later, tapping in a low cross to the back post from Lucas Cavallini. Cuba pulled a goal back with a Luis Paradela penalty just before the break, but straight after the interval Jayden Nelson restored Canada's two goal advantage tapping in after a fumble from Cuba keeper Sandy Sanchez.

Liam Millar made it 4-1 in the 61st, and although Maikel Reyes scored another penalty for Cuba in the 89th minute it was just a consolation. Costa Rica went into Tuesday's game with Martinique bottom of the group, but they soon set about making sure of progress from the group. After a goalmouth scramble, Kendall Weston, lying on the ground, managed to head the ball into the net to give the Ticos a ninth minute lead. Martinique leveled nine minutes later with a wonderful, curling shot from Patrick Burner, but he was then to concede an own goal in another goalmouth scramble.



HOUSTON: Panama's forward Cecilio Waterman (right) shoots but fails to score as El Salvador's goalkeeper Mario Gonzalez looks on during the Concacaf 2023 Gold Cup Group C football match between Panama and El Salvador on July 4, 2023. — AFP

But Juan Pablo Vargas was left free to head in a Joel Campbell corner and then a Campbell penalty and Anthony Contreras strike made it 5-1. Although Martinique rallied, with Burner adding a second, the final scoreline of 6-4 flattered them and Costa Rica were never truly in danger. El Salvador needed a

win and for results to go their way and they started off well with Brayan Gil scoring in the fourth minute. But goals from Panama's Fidel Escobar and Ismael Diaz - along with Costa Rica's triumph - killed off any hope. Mayer Gil's stoppage time leveler was some reward for El Salvador who finished bottom with two points. — AFP

Coaching great Ancelotti takes on Brazil challenge

SAO PAULO: Real Madrid's Italian coach Carlo Ancelotti is set to become the first foreigner in almost 60 years to coach Brazil's national team the president of the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) said on Tuesday. Ancelotti, 64, has a season remaining on his contract with Real, which he has said he would like to honor, and will take over Brazil in time for the Copa America, in the United States from June 2024.

The Brazilian federation had announced earlier Fluminense's Fernando Diniz would take charge of the team for the coming year. "This guy (Diniz) is a coach who has a nice style of play," Ednaldo Rodriguez president of the CBF told CNN Brazil. "His style is similar to the coach whop will assume the role at the Copa America, Ancelotti." The prize football-mad Brazil will want one of the most successful coaches in European football to deliver a sixth World Cup trophy in 2026. It would be the first since 2002. The 2022 edition was especially galling for the Brazilians as they exited in the quarter-finals, beaten by Croatia, and their bitter continental rivals Argentina lifted the trophy. Tite brought down the curtain on his six years in charge following their elimination.



Italian coach Carlo Ancelotti

Ancelotti's agreement to take over Brazil comes after months of negotiations with Rodrigues, who had the Italian at the top of the list. Ancelotti had said the Real job would be his last after almost 30 years as a coach, but one of the most glamorous and challenging jobs in football brought a change of mind. Brazilian hierarchy said they were attracted not only by Ancelotti's record of winning trophies but also by his laid-back character and ability to develop close relations with the players. "We went after him not only due to his record, but also because he is a decent person," Rodrigues told beIN Sports recently. "Those who have worked with him say that he is open, cultured, and he appreciates Brazilian football." — AFP

Napoli begin Scudetto defense at Frosinone

MILAN: Napoli will kick off their Serie A title defense at promoted Frosinone after next season's fixture list was revealed on Wednesday. Now led by Rudi Garcia, Napoli won their first Scudetto in over three decades last term and will be the team to watch when the season gets underway on the weekend of August 19-20. Previous coach Luciano Spalletti ended Napoli's 33-year title drought last month but left shortly afterwards, and fans are hoping that Garcia won't have stars Victor Osimhen sold out from under him this summer.

Frosinone return to the top flight for the first time since 2018-19 after dominating Serie B, finishing seven points ahead of Genoa who swap places with relegated local rivals Sampdoria and begin their campaign with the visit of Fiorentina. Champions League finalists Inter Milan host Monza, who will face the new season without Silvio Berlusconi as the face of the club after the former Italian prime minister died last month.

Monza finished 11th in their first ever season in Italy's top flight after rising from the third tier following their purchase by long-time AC Milan owner Berlusconi in 2018. Simone Inzaghi's Inter have their derbies with Milan in the fourth week and with six matches remaining, the two sides battling in the last two seasons for the Serie A title and a place in the Champions League final. There will be only one mid-week round of matches, in late September, which will please coaches who had a crammed schedule last term due to the World Cup in Qatar taking place in the winter. — AFP

Man United seal swoop for Chelsea midfielder Mount

LONDON: Mason Mount set his sights on winning major trophies with Manchester United after the England midfielder completed his move from Chelsea for a reported fee of £55 million (\$70 million) on Wednesday. Mount agreed a five-year contract with United with the option of a further year, and becomes Erik ten Hag's first major close-season signing. The 24-year-old graduated from Chelsea's youth academy and made 129 Premier League appearances for the Stamford Bridge club, scoring 27 goals.

"It's never easy leaving the club where you grew up, but Manchester United will provide an exciting new challenge for the next phase of my career," Mount said. "Having competed against them, I know just how strong a squad it is that I'm joining, and I can't wait to be part of this group's drive to win major trophies." Mount won the Champions League with Chelsea in 2021, providing the defense-splitting pass that led to Kai Havertz's winner in the final against Manchester City. United manager Ten Hag will hope Mount can

provide energy and goals from both a central midfield berth and on the flanks at Old Trafford.

Describing himself as "hugely ambitious", Mount cannot wait to start the new chapter in his career. "Everyone can see that the club has made big steps forward under Erik ten Hag," said Mount, whose fee could rise by a further £5 million in add-ons. "Having met with the manager and discussed his plans, I couldn't be more excited for the seasons ahead, and am ready for the hard work expected here. "I am hugely ambitious. I know how amazing it feels to win major trophies and what it takes to do it. I will be giving everything to experience that again at Manchester United."

After emerging as a key figure in Chelsea's team under Frank Lampard and then Thomas Tuchel, Mount endured a dip in form last season. Hampered by injuries, he struggled during a turbulent campaign marred by the sackings of Tuchel and his successor Graham Potter. Chelsea were reported to have made several contract offers to Mount in a bid to keep the homegrown star at Stamford Bridge. Mount had signaled his move to United by posting an emotional farewell message to Chelsea fans on Instagram late on Tuesday. "I feel you deserve more than just a written statement, so I wanted to tell you directly how grateful I've been for all of your support over the last 18 years," he said. — AFP

Galaxy defeat LAFC in front of record 82,000 crowd

LOS ANGELES: Spaniard Riqui Puig grabbed a 73rd-minute winner as the Los Angeles Galaxy beat Los Angeles FC 2-1 at the Rose Bowl on Tuesday in front of an MLS-record 82,110 spectators. The July 4th Independence Day crowd beat the previous league record of 74,479 set by Charlotte in their debut in MLS last year, also featuring the Galaxy.

The Galaxy moved the game, from their own 27,000-capacity Dignity Health Sports Park, in a bid to set the record at the Rose Bowl, the venue for the 1994 World Cup final. The Galaxy have had a dire season and sit next to bottom of the Western Conference, but they looked fired up for the latest edition of 'El Trafico'. The record five-times MLS Cup winners,

took the lead in the 26th minute when Tyler Boyd cut in from the left and unleashed an unstoppable, curling drive into the far corner. LAFC, the defending MLS champions, drew level in the 57th minute when Timothy Tillman whipped in a dangerous near-post corner and Ilie Sanchez glanced in a perfectly angled header. But the Galaxy were in determined mood and another superbly worked goal earned them the three points — Brazilian Douglas Costa swung the ball out left to Boyd who broke down the flank and put in a low cross which Puig, who had run half the field, slid into the net.

There were late chances to level for LAFC but Denis Bouanga could not keep a close-range header down and then saw a fierce shot well-parried by Galaxy keeper Jonathan Klinsmann. Inter Miami, who ended a seven-game losing streak with a draw against Austin on Saturday, earned another point thanks to a late equalizer from Venezuelan Josef Martinez. Lionel Messi's future club fell behind against the Columbus Crew to a Darlington Nagbe volley in the 23rd minute but fought back after the break with a header from Ecuadorian Leonardo Campana. — 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
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Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	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, Fathima Muneeb holder of Indian Passport No. V1965265, having permanent address 23-2-519/1, Hyderabad, Telangana, India, Pin Code - 500002, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as **Fatima** (given name) and **Ayub Baig** (surname). **(#3824) 06-07-2023**

I Sabira Banu holder of Indian Passport No. Z6929011, having permanent address 14, Gali-G, Kharol Colony, Fatehpura, Girwa, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India-313001, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare

that henceforth my name will be read as **Sabira** (Given Name) and **Hita** (Surname). **(#3823) 06-07-2023**

I Shabbir holder of Indian Passport No. Z4825725, having permanent address 14, Gali-G, Kharol Colony, Fatehpura, Girwa, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India-313001, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as **Shabbir** (Given Name) and **Hita** (Surname). **(#3823) 06-07-2023**

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**

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

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

Swiatek breezes into 3rd round

Rain, protests cause disruption; Djokovic targets third round



WIMBLEDON: Poland's Iga Swiatek returns the ball to Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo during their women's singles tennis match on the third day of the 2023 Wimbledon Championships. — AFP photos

LONDON: Iga Swiatek eased through at Wimbledon on Wednesday while Novak Djokovic prepared to take another step towards a record-equalling eighth men's title as the All England Club reeled from rain delays and climate protests. World number two Djokovic will claim a 350th Grand Slam match win if he defeats Australia's Jordan Thompson on Centre Court. Only the retired Roger Federer, an eight-time Wimbledon champion, and Serena Williams, have won more matches at the majors.

The 36-year-old Djokovic is also chasing a 24th career Grand Slam title, which would take him level with Margaret Court's all-time record. However, he will not underestimate the 70th-ranked Thompson, who reached the final of the 's-Hertogenbosch grass-court event last month. Djokovic swept past Pedro Cachin in the first round on Monday on a damp Centre Court surface, jokingly attempting to mop up excess moisture with a towel at one stage. The unseasonable cold and wet have given officials a scheduling headache.

Tuesday's torrential downpours meant only one hour's play was possible on the outside courts and just eight matches completed. In all, 87 ties were on Wednesday's menu, but rain again played spoilsport, with the start delayed by 90 minutes. Eventually

14 matches were pushed back to Thursday. Once play got underway, two climate protesters from the Just Stop Oil environmental activist group ran onto Court 18, one of the showpiece arenas, to scatter orange confetti and jigsaw pieces during Grigor Dimitrov's match against Sho Shimabukuro.

Two arrests

The two, both in their 60s, were removed by security staff. "Following an incident on Court 18, two individuals have been arrested on suspicion of aggravated trespass and criminal damage and these individuals have now been removed from the grounds," said a Wimbledon spokesman. Just hours later, the match between Katie Boulter and Daria Saville on the same court was held up when another protester repeated the confetti-jigsaw gesture to jeers from frustrated fans. Women's top seed Swiatek beat Sara Sorribes Tormo 6-2, 6-0 to cruise into the third round.

The reigning US Open and French Open champion has never been beyond the fourth round at Wimbledon but has dropped just six games so far in this year's tournament. World number three Daniil Medvedev marked his return to Wimbledon after last year's ban on Russian players with a first-round win. Former US Open champion

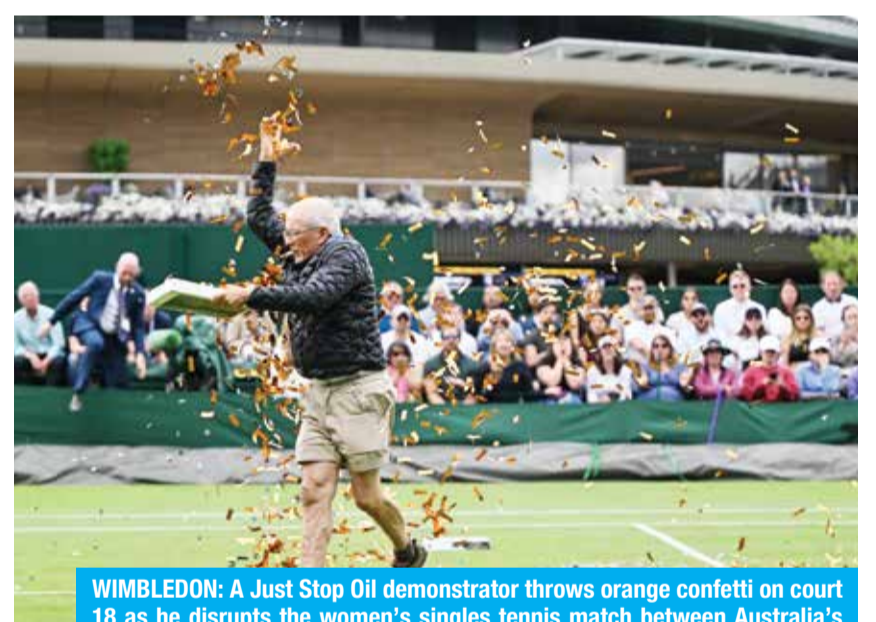
Medvedev defeated French-born British wild card Arthur Fery 7-5, 6-4, 6-3. In 2022, the All England Club banned all Russian and Belarusian players in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

'Playing Superman?'

US ninth seed Taylor Fritz saw off Germany's Yannick Hanfmann in five sets in a match which had started on Monday. Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk clinched the day's first shock by coming back to down Greek eighth seed Maria Sakkari 0-6, 7-5, 6-2 in a first round tie twice interrupted for the rain. Men's 10th seed Frances Tiafoe, who made the last 16 in 2022, saw off China's Wu Yibing in straight sets.

Wu needed a medical time out at the end of the first set after falling ill but still pushed his American opponent with some impressive shot-making. "Am I playing Superman right now?" asked a bemused Tiafoe. Later Wednesday, Petra Kvitova, widely seen as a contender for a third women's title, begins her campaign against Jasmine Paolini. The veteran Czech defeated the 44th-ranked Italian at the same stage in 2022 and arrives at the All England Club fresh from winning her sixth career grass-court title in Berlin.

Kvitova's compatriot, Karolina Pliskova, the 2021 Wimbledon runner-up, tackles



WIMBLEDON: A Just Stop Oil demonstrator throws orange confetti on court 18 as he disrupts the women's singles tennis match between Australia's Daria Saville and Britain's Katie Boulter on the third day of the 2023 Wimbledon Championships on July 5, 2023.

Serbia's Natalija Stevanovic, ranked at a lowly 225. After falling in qualifying 10 times at the Slams, Stevanovic is finally making her Grand Slam main draw debut at the age of 28. Fifth-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas resumes his clash

with former US Open champion Dominic Thiem after dropping the first set on Tuesday. Holger Rune, the world number six, is back on court to complete his first round clash with Britain's George Loffhagen. — AFP

Hindley takes lead as Pogacar suffers in Pyrenees

LARUNS: Australian Jai Hindley crossed the line alone to win stage five of the Tour de France on Wednesday to take the overall leader's yellow jersey as defending champion Jonas Vingegaard won a tactical battle with key rival Tadej Pogacar. Hindley leads Vingegaard with the Dane pulling off a major coup on the final mountain and now has a 53-second advantage on Pogacar in the overall standings, which took a major shake up.

Bora-Hansgrohe rider Hindley, the 2022 Giro d'Italia winner, shook off his rivals on the Col de Marie-Blanc to break clear in the yellow jersey standings.

The 27-year-old finished 32 seconds ahead of Italy's Giulio Ciccone and Austrian Felix Gall with Vingegaard fifth at 34sec. Ciccone climbed to third in the overall with his second place. "I'm here for the overall win and the aim was to put as much time as possible into the others," said Hindley. "It has been a dream since I was six years old but I never thought I'd find myself in the yellow jersey," he said. "It was chaotic behind with different teams riding with various aims. I got the in and the lead so I'm delighted, it's going to be a crazy bike race."

Jumbo tactical lesson

Vingegaard's Jumbo-Visma stunned the UAE Team when Wout Van Aert dropped back from an early break and led Vingegaard uphill with an impressive 500m pull. Jumbo climber Sepp Kuss then took the relay until he too peeled away before Vingegaard broke free and put the hammer down over the remaining 15km to the finish line. "It was a really hard day," admitted Van Aert, one of the stars of the peloton with three stage wins on the 2022 Tour. "This puts pressure on them (Team



PAU: UAE Team Emirates' Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar (2nd left) cycles with the pack of riders during the 5th stage of the 110th edition of the Tour de France cycling race on July 5, 2023. — AFP

UAE)," he said. "Hindley and Ciccone got away from us, but I was holding back to help Jonas," he explained.

Meanwhile, UAE Team rider Pogacar, the 2020 and 2021 champion, was left isolated as overnight leader Adam Yates appeared unable to help in the chase. "It's not lost yet," said Pogacar, who broke a wrist in April and missed some key training time in the saddle. "He (Vingegaard) was much faster on that climb. He was really strong and there was just nothing you can do," he said. "It's a blow but it's only the first mountain stage, we shall keep fighting and try to win back time."

The AG2R rider Felix Gall took the king of the mountains polka dot jersey after coming third behind Hindley. On Thursday, trademark Tour climbs Col d'Aspin and Col du Tourmalet will mark out stage six as the toughest test so far with further tremors expected on the second mountain day over 145km from Tarbes to Cauterets-Candascasque. But those two ascents make only 30km and are only part of the story with a 16km slog to a summit finish coming after an epic descent from the 2150 metres altitude Tourmalet. — AFP

PSG appoint Luis Enrique as coach

POISSY: Former Barcelona and Spain coach Luis Enrique has been appointed as the new coach of Paris Saint-Germain on a two-year deal, the French champions announced on Wednesday. The 53-year-old, who had been a free agent since being sacked as Spain coach last December, replaces Christophe Galtier after his departure from the club was confirmed earlier in the day.

Luis Enrique was unveiled by PSG at a press conference alongside the Qatar-backed club's president Nasser Al-Khelaifi at their brand new training complex in Poissy, to the north-west of the French capital. "I'm delighted to be joining Paris in order to enjoy a new experience," Luis Enrique said in a club statement. "It's so exciting to meet new people, to live in this city, to learn a new language and, above all, to manage PSG."

The new coach, whose full name is Luis Enrique Martinez Garcia, is the eighth man to lead the club since the transformative Qatari takeover of 2011 and, like those before him, will be charged with bringing them the success in the Champions League that has so far proved elusive. PSG have never won Europe's most prestigious club competition, coming closest when they lost in the final to Bayern Munich in 2020.

They have gone out in the last 16 in five of the last seven seasons, losing to Bayern at that stage in the campaign just finished. That defeat proved costly for Galtier. Luis Enrique arrives with pedigree in the Champions League, having won it as coach of Barcelona in 2015 when a brilliant team led by an attack of Lionel Messi, Neymar and Luis Suarez beat Juventus in the final. He now joins a club beginning their latest rebuild following the departure of Messi at the end of his two-year stay.

There are doubts surrounding the future of super-



POISSY: Paris Saint-Germain's newly appointed Spanish head coach Luis Enrique (left) and Paris Saint Germain's Qatari president Nasser Al-Khelaifi pose during a press conference to announce the presentation of the new coach. — AFP

star forward Kylian Mbappe after he told the club he would not renew a contract that expires next year. Several high-profile new signings are expected to be confirmed as the club prepares to start pre-season training in the coming days, with a tour to Japan scheduled for later this month. Luis Enrique brought to an end a three-year stay at Barca in 2017 and then became Spain coach in 2018.

However, he quit in June 2019 and announced the death of his nine-year-old daughter from bone cancer two months later. He returned to the Spain post in November of that year, retaking the reins from Robert Moreno, and took La Roja to the Euro 2020 semi-finals and the 2021 UEFA Nations League final before being fired after their elimination from last year's World Cup in the last 16 in a penalty shoot-out against Morocco. Galtier had only been in charge for one season and still had a year to run on his contract, but his departure had been expected ever since the end of the last Ligue 1 season a month ago. — AFP