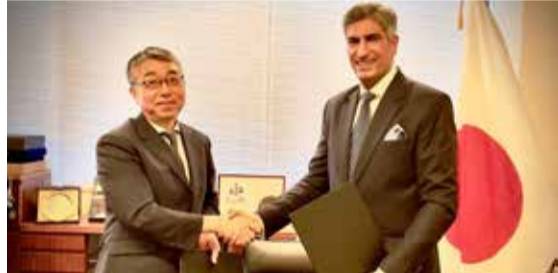


Polestar 2
Why wait
to go electric

\$10,000 trade-in support



4 Kuwait, Japan take first step towards waiving entry visas



8 Biggest-ever airline order on first day of Paris Air Show



13 Britain's balti restaurants keep calm and curry on



16 Balogun strike helps USA to Nations League title



Deputy Amir calls on govt to promote social justice

New Cabinet takes oath • PM vows to achieve reforms • Assembly set to open



KUWAIT: HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah and members of his Cabinet during their swearing-in ceremony on June 19, 2023. — KUNA (See Page 3)

UAE, Qatar reopen embassies after years of tensions



ABU DHABI: This handout picture released on June 19, 2023 shows the newly reopened Qatari embassy. — AFP

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates and Qatar announced on Monday the reopening of their respective diplomatic missions, six years after the Gulf rivals severed ties during a regional blockade that sent tensions soaring. The two resource-rich monarchies restored official relations in Jan 2021, after the end of the nearly four-year diplomatic and transport blockade that isolated tiny Qatar.

"The United Arab Emirates and the State of Qatar announced the restoration of diplomatic representation between the two countries," said a statement on the UAE's official WAM news agency. The sides are "resuming the work at the embassy of the UAE in Doha, and at the embassy of Qatar in Abu Dhabi and its consulate in Dubai", it said. A similar statement was released by Qatar's foreign ministry.

Continued on Page 6

By B Izzak & KUNA

KUWAIT: HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah called Monday on the new government to address shortcomings, enforce a state of law and achieve social justice amongst Kuwaiti people. "As you seek to achieve comprehensive development for our beloved nation, you should enforce a state of law and institutions, promote justice and quality and place the interest of Kuwait at the forefront and above anything else," HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince told the new govern-

ment after it took the constitutional oath before him.

"Exert utmost efforts in a balanced and wise manner, commit to our national principles, focus on priorities and achieve aspirations at all levels, follow up execution of your government programs in line with timetables, achieve social justice amongst the Kuwaiti people," said HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince. He told the Cabinet to address shortcomings to ultimately "develop in a confident and comfortable" environment.

HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince urged the ministers to "feel the problems of citizens and ad-

dress them" and explore every avenue to develop public services and infrastructure "so everybody would feel the achievements", noting this was the "least of (citizens') legitimate rights". Affirming his full support of the new government, HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince urged the ministers to select skilled leaders "who can contribute to the development and prosperity of our nation". He also reaffirmed the importance of cooperation among state institutions as the "proper way to tackle major issues that concern the nation and citizens."

Continued on Page 6

Zionists deploy helicopters, kill 5 Palestinians

JENIN: Zionist forces in the occupied West Bank killed five Palestinians including a militant on Monday, in a raid that saw eight Zionist security personnel wounded and rare helicopter fire. Palestinian authorities reported "intense gunfire" by Zionist forces in what the army described as "routine activity" in which an armored vehicle was said to have been hit by a "dramatic" explosion.

The Palestinian health ministry said five people had been killed and at least 91 others were wounded in the violence. It identified those killed as 15-year-old Ahmed Saqer, as well as Khaled Assassa, 21, Qais Jabareen, 21, Ahmad Daraghme, 19, and Qassam Abu Saria, 29. Among the injured was Palestinian journalist Hazem Nasser, who was hospitalized with a gunshot wound, according to the Palestinian journalists syndicate. The sound of gunfire was heard across Jenin as wounded Palestinians continued to arrive by ambulance to the northern West Bank city's

Ibn Sina hospital into the early afternoon, an AFP journalist said.

Continued on Page 6



JENIN: Palestinian mourners carry the bodies of three men killed during a Zionist military raid in the occupied West Bank on June 19, 2023. — AFP

China, US see progress but close no gaps

BEIJING: Chinese leader Xi Jinping said Monday he saw headway in the strained relationship with the United States on a rare visit by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, but the rival powers remained at odds over their core disputes. In a symbolic sign of lowering the temperature after soaring tensions, President Xi received Blinken in the vast Great Hall of the People and said the two powers had "made progress and reached agreement" on unspecified issues.

"I hope that Secretary Blinken, through this visit, can make positive contributions to stabilizing China-US relations," Xi told the top US diplomat, the highest-ranking American official to travel to Beijing in nearly five years. Both sides had played down prospects for breakthroughs, with Blinken saying his more than 11 hours of talks over two days were more about restoring dialogue. "We have made progress and we are moving forward," Blinken told reporters later, while adding: "None of this gets resolved with one visit."

Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang agreed to pay a return visit to the United States but Blinken acknowledged limited progress on jumpstarting communication with China's military, a key priority for the United States as tensions simmer over Taiwan.

Continued on Page 6



BEIJING: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken shakes hands with China's President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People on June 19, 2023. — AFP



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Local

Kuwaiti women second least fortunate in politics among Arab females: Report

Women in Kuwait largely absent from leadership roles

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: In a list of least Arab women's participation in political work issued recently by V-Dem Institute, Kuwait was ranked second among Arab countries, after Yemen. According to a report by the Arabian Gulf Center for Studies and Research (CSRGULF) – the first think tank in Kuwait – the index is about Arab women practicing politics and assuming leadership positions. The study shows although women represent the largest percentage of the total number of Arab voters, their representation in legislative councils remains weak and uneven.

The report noted that Yemeni women were the least fortunate in politics, followed by Kuwaiti women and Sudanese women. On the other hand, Emirati women topped most Arab women practicing political work because of the encouragement, training and empowerment programs supported by their country. Moroccan,

Iraqi and Mauritanian women followed Emirati women on the list. This reflects the remarkable presence of women in these countries in political work, especially in the legislative and governmental fields.

The report said some countries have succeeded in overcoming obstacles to support women's practice of politics and succeeded in empowering them through quotas in government or legislative councils, or by promoting a culture of political action among women and granting them confidence in assuming leadership positions. However, while women in these countries are fortunate, women in other countries have not had the same luck, such as women in Sudan, Syria and Oman, who followed Kuwait on the list.

In Arab countries, there is a large disparity between the sexes in this field, based on data on democracy and human rights in the Arab world, in addition to studying estimated variables of the percentage of Arab



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti women hold signs demanding their political rights in this file photo. — KUNA

women's representation in legislative councils and the extent to which they obtained an equal share with men in political power during

the last 10 years, which led to a conclusion on the order of assessment of the extent to which women exercised political work.

Politicians must find solutions to displacement: UNHCR

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) invited media representatives to present a report that shows the UNHCR annual global directions, which includes the main statistical directions, the latest numbers of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and stateless people around the world.

During the meeting, Communications Officer – Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (GCC) Khaled Kabbara explained that by the end of 2022, the number of people displaced due to wars, persecution, violence and human rights violations reached a record of 108.4 million people, an increase of 19.1 million people from the previous year, which is the largest increase ever. The rise in displacement continued in 2023, as the conflict in Sudan led to new inflows, pushing the global total to an estimated 110 million people.

Kabbara said the reason for highlighting this matter is for alerting politicians that we must work together to find solutions and bring peace, sustainable solutions and opportunities that ensure people have a decent life and enable them to have a role in the effectiveness of the community, in addition to alerting the importance of continuing to provide the necessary financial support and funding for humanitarian actors.

Host countries mainly low-income

The forced displacement categories include refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and other individuals in need of international protection. UNHCR protects and assists forcibly displaced



BAGHDAD: Evacuees from Sudan wait upon arrival at Baghdad International Airport on June 18, 2023. The rise in displacement continues in 2023, as the conflict in Sudan leads to new inflows, pushing the global total to an estimated 110 million people. — AFP

persons, returnees and stateless individuals, in addition to other groups in need of help. Kabbara explained the difference between internally displaced people and refugees. He said an internally displaced person is someone who is displaced within their own country without crossing international borders, whereas a refugee is someone who crosses into neighboring countries.

According to statistics in the report, Kabbara said Turkey hosts the most refugees, followed by Iran, Colombia, Germany and Pakistan. He emphasized there is an important point that needs to be highlighted due to some people's misunderstanding that a refugee is a person who travels to advanced countries to search for a better life. But the reality is not so, and this idea is nothing but a stereotypical picture of such individuals.

According to the statistics, data indicate 76 percent of the countries that host refugees are low-income countries, and another 70 percent of hosting is done by countries neighboring the refugees' home



KUWAIT: Khaled Kabbara speaks at the meeting. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

countries. This confirms that refugees prefer to be close to their original homelands so that they can return when solutions are available for the reasons that led to this situation.

Audit Bureau to support units in government agencies

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Undersecretary of State Audit Bureau Youssef Al-Mazrouei said during a forum held on Monday at the headquarters of the bureau that internal audit, which is affiliated to the administration of the State Audit Bureau, aims to provide answers to entities that monitor the bureau. "The internal audit committee was formed in Kuwait Audit Bureau more than 20 years ago under the supervision of a previous leader and chaired by a manager with supervisors, and every year its members are audited and changed," he said.

Mazrouei pointed out there is a potential project in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development to qualify a group of employees of government agencies in the field of internal auditing, indicating internal audit is an independent and objective consulting activity designed to add value to an entity and improve its operations. "It also helps the entity to achieve its objectives by finding a structured and rigorous approach to assessing and improving the efficiency of management operations," he added.

Meanwhile, he pointed out that the principles of internal auditing are based on integrity, objectivity and efficiency, and it is important to have cooperation and coordination between them to achieve the added value represented in improving the quality of performance.

Director of the Internal Audit Department at State Audit Bureau Dr Adnan Al-Hassan indicated the importance of internal audit lies in the fact that it is the first line of defense, and a consultant that provides high-quality services achieves added value. He clarified the State Audit Bureau is adopting a project to support internal audit units in government agencies.

Hassan reviewed the experience of the Audit Bu-



Dr Adnan Al-Hassan



Youssef Al-Mazrouei

reau in managing internal audit and defining terms of reference and independence, indicating auditors are working to familiarize themselves with the ex-

periences of international institutions, development of strategy, development of the charter and the ethics of the profession. In addressing future outlook, Hassan explained that auditing is based on risk and the use of technology in auditing, benefiting from artificial intelligence, business automation and value-added topics such as information security.

Finally, the forum recommended the need to achieve the added value of internal audit through several factors, the most important of which is independence and objectivity, and keenness to achieve the added value of internal audit work, which may be in-kind through improving procedures and enhancing the efficiency of control systems, or monetary and tangible, which is reflected in the form of refunds or financial savings.



KUWAIT: People listen to speakers at a forum held by the State Audit Bureau on Monday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

In my view

Free press



Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

Local@kuwaittimes.com

During the political crisis between US President Richard Nixon and the Washington Post newspaper because of the war in Vietnam, the Post in 1971 was able to uncover a series of special reports about the contents of what was called the "Pentagon Papers", which was a study prepared by the Pentagon on relations between US and Vietnam between 1945 and 1967.

The paper came under much pressure to cease publication, then after discussing the dispute at the supreme court, Justice Hugo Black wrote "the press was to serve the governed, not the governors". This is the press that serves the homeland, the press that believes in responsible freedom, that cares for the people and does not hesitate to serve them.

We miss this type of journalism greatly in our Arab countries, including Kuwait. Tens of major thefts of public funds took place in Kuwait, in which people's rights were lost, and our press did not investigate them and reveal their secrets to the people. Rather there are newspapers that shield public funds thieves and in fact opened the doors for them to own them and take over the freedom in them.

Sometimes, our press will assist the thieves and wage war against their enemies. I still remember the stand of one or two newspapers towards an audit committee that I personally participated in at the health ministry to uncover thefts of systems, only for those papers to attack the honorable members of the committee in favor of the thieves.

Free press should not be owned by a limited group of persons, except those took themselves away from conflicts of interest. Free press means a fourth authority that aims to expose corruption to fight the corrupt, and not accuse the honorable for the sake of threatening and intimidation.

Our press made everyone fear freedom, because they may become victims of slander and fraud. Confidence in papers must return. Papers must practice the fourth authority, so that journalistic investigations deal with collecting information with integrity and professionalism, and the law must side with this journalism, which the constitution has guaranteed freedom.

Honest journalism is one that stays away from rumors, is not under the control of interests and not for revenge. Free press satisfies people's needs, as they look for truth among tweets by bogus names and mercenaries' lies on social media. Free press is the support of the sincere members of parliament, to be their eyes and ears with which they hear and see the truth. Free press is a dire democratic need that we wish to see in Kuwait.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) will light up in blue as seen in this photo to mark World Refugee Day. — KUNA

KFAED has spent \$85m helping displaced people

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) has provided humanitarian aid worth \$85 million directed at refugees and displaced people, the fund's chief Waleed Al-Bahar said on Monday. KFAED remains diligent in its efforts to provide refugees with a "decent living", the official said a day ahead of the United Nations' World Refugee Day.

Through its solid rapport with various UN humanitarian agencies, Kuwait is dedicated to saving lives and protecting the rights of refugees across the globe, he underlined. Bahar highlighted that KFAED's headquarters will be lit blue in solidarity with the UN-designated World Refugee Day, on June 20. — KUNA

Local

Kuwait Deputy Amir, Crown Prince receives PM, ministers for oathtaking

Fifteen ministers featured in 43rd Cabinet in Kuwait's history



HH the Prime Minister
Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah



KUWAIT: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah is seen with the new Cabinet following the swearing-in ceremony Monday. — KUNA photos



First Deputy PM and Minister of Interior
Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah



Deputy PM and Minister of Defense
Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah



Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for
Cabinet Affairs, Minister of State for National
Assembly Affairs Essa Ahmad Al-Kandari



Deputy Prime Minister, Oil Minister and
Minister of State for Economic and Investment
Affairs Dr Saad Hamad Nasser Al-Barrak



Minister of State for Municipal Affairs
and Minister of State for Communica-
tions Affairs Fahad Ali Al-Shula



Minister of Information and Minister of
Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdulrahman
Al-Mutairi



Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Abdelwahab
Ahmad Al-Awadhi



Minister of Public Works Dr Amani Sulei-
man Abdelwahab Bugammaz



Minister of Education, Minister of Higher
Education Dr Hamad Al-Adwani



Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah
Al-Jaber Al-Sabah



Minister of Commerce and Industry and
Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad
Othman Al-Aiban



Minister of Finance and Minister of State
for Economic and Investment Affairs
Manaf Abdulaziz Al-Hajeri



Minister of Electricity, Water and Renew-
able Energy Dr Jassem Muhammad Ab-
dullah Al-Ostad



Minister of Justice and Minister of State
for Housing Affairs Faleh Abdullah Eid
Faleh Al-Ruqubah



Minister of Social Affairs, Family Affairs
and Childhood Sheikh Feras Saud Al-
Malek Al-Sabah

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his government for oathtaking Monday. Here are the biographies for the prime minister and 15 ministers included in the new Cabinet, which is the 43rd in Kuwait's history:

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah: Born in Kuwait in 1956, he is the son of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He got a BA in commerce from Kuwait University, joined the military and was promoted to the rank of General. After retirement from the Ministry of Interior, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad was named as Governor of Hawally. In November 2020, an Amiri Decree appointed him as Vice President of the National Guard with the rank of a minister. In March 2022, an Amiri Decree appointed him as First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior. In July 2022, an Amiri Decree designated him as Prime Minister for the first time. In August 2022, an Amiri Decree bestowed on him the title of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah: He got a Bachelor of Business Administration from a British college. Since 1983, Sheikh Talal had served in different capacities in the oil sector at Kuwait Oil Co. and then at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC).

He was named as Minister of Defense in March 2022 under an Amiri Decree. In July 2022, Sheikh Talal doubled as acting Minister of Interior. In October 2022, a decree was issued appointing him to the position of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior. In December 2022, Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah was doubled as Acting Defense Minister. In April 2023, a decree was issued appointing him to the positions of First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense in the government formed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fa-

had Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah: Born in 1963, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad holds a bachelor's degree in economics and political science. He undertook numerous national and international sporting positions. He was appointed Chairman and Director General of the Public Authority for Youth and Sports with the rank of Minister. On February 14, 2001, he was appointed Minister of Information, and he was appointed Acting Minister of Oil on February 10, 2003. In April 2005, he was named Minister of Energy and Acting Minister of Health. In 2006, he was appointed head of the National Security Apparatus, with the rank of minister. On May 29, 2009, he was appointed Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Minister of State for Development Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs. On May 8, 2011, he was named Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Minister of State for Development Affairs.

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Essa Ahmad Al-Kandari: He was born in 1963. He graduated from the Commercial Institute, majoring in banking. He was appointed Minister of Transportation and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs in 2013. In December 2020, he was appointed Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs and he kept his post in the government that was formed in March 2021.

In December 2021, a decree was issued naming him Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs. He worked at the Kuwait Airways Corporation as a development and research expert. He won membership in the National Assembly in 2013, 2016, 2020, 2022 and 2023 elections. He is a member of the Kuwait Journalists Association, the Arab Journalists Association, the Human Rights Association, and a board member of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Deputy Prime Minister, Oil Minister, and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr Saad Hamad Nasser Al-Barrak: He holds a BSc in Electrical Engineering, an MSc in Systems Engineering from Ohio University and a PhD in Information Systems and Technology Management from the University of London. He has been the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National

Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises Development since October 2018 and a member of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development since 2019, as well as the Vice-Chairman of the Office of Social Development which is affiliated to the Amiri Diwan. He served as CEO and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Zain Group between 2002 and 2010 and held the same positions in several companies. In 2005, he received the Middle East's 'CEO of the Year' award in the Information Communication Technology sector, and in 2003 he received the 'E-businessman of the Year' award in the region.

Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs Fahad Ali Al-Shula: Born in 1965, he got a BA in geography and a diploma in geodesy from the College of Technological Studies, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET). In April 2023, he was appointed Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs. He was appointed as Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs in 2018. He served as undersecretary at the Municipal Council's secretariat in 2011.

Minister of Information and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi: He holds a BA in psychology from Kuwait University. He served as Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs in the cabinets of December 2020, March 2021 and April 2023. In 2016, Al-Mutairi was appointed as Director General of the Public Authority for Youth, after serving as assistant undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs between 2014 and 2015. He also served as director of the technical office of the Minister of Information in 2012 and attache at Kuwait information office in Rabat between 2004 and 2007.

Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Abdelwahab Ahmad Al-Awadhi: He holds a PhD in Pediatrics (Kuwait Board) from the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization, a PhD in medicine (MD) from the Arabian Gulf University in the Kingdom of Bahrain and a BA in basic sciences from the same university. He worked previously as a pediatric consultant and director of Wara Hospital, head of the

Kuwait Cancer Control Center in Al-Sabah Specialized Medical District. He also worked as Director of the Palliative Care Center in the same area and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital. He served as Acting Director of Jahra Health District and Director of Jahra Hospital.

Minister of Public Works Dr Amani Suleiman Abdelwahab Bugammaz: She holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Kuwait University, a Master's degree in civil engineering from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara and a PhD in civil engineering from Columbus Ohio University. On October 16, 2022, she was designated as Minister of Public Works and Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy. On April 9, 2023, she was appointed Minister of Public Works. She served previously as an assistant professor at Kuwait University and a member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences.

Minister of Education, Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamad Al-Adwani: He holds a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the Kuwait University and a PhD degree in chemical engineering from the University of Texas. In October 2022 he was named as Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research. He kept his position in the Cabinet formed on April 9, 2023. He served previously as Director General of the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance (NBAQ), an Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering and Acting Dean of Admission and Registration at Kuwait University.

Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah: He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the American University of Beirut. He was named as Foreign Minister in the Cabinets formed on October 16, 2022 and on April 9, 2023. He served previously as Kuwait Ambassador to the United States of America until 2022. He was a member of the Kuwaiti permanent delegation to the United Nations, as Minister Plenipotentiary. He served as Kuwait's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea from 1998 to 2001, and in the Office of the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and a diplomatic attache at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Othman Al-Aiban: He holds a bachelor's degree in administrative science. He was named Minister of Commerce and Industry in the government formed on April 9, 2023. He served as deputy CEO of the Kuwait Finance and Investment Company (KFIC) in 2014.

Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Manaf Abdulaziz Al-Hajeri: He got a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Kuwait University in 1986 and a Master's degree in 1990. On April 9, 2023, he was appointed as Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs. He served as a Board Member of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance of Education.

Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr Jassem Muhammad Abdullah Al-Ostad: He held the position of Director of the Computer Department at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training and Deputy Director General of the Authority's Academic Support Services. He also held the position of Acting Deputy Director General for Planning and Development and a member of the Board of Directors of the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Education Quality Assurance.

Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Faleh Abdullah Eid Faleh Al-Ruqubah: He holds a master's degree in business administration from the University of Massachusetts, USA, in addition to a bachelor's degree in commerce, economics and political science from Kuwait University. He held several posts at the Kuwait Stock Exchange. He also worked in the Kuwait Clearing Company and was the Deputy General Manager of the company for Financial and Administrative Affairs.

Minister of Social Affairs, Family Affairs and Childhood Sheikh Feras Saud Al-Malek Al-Sabah: He served as Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for National Assembly Affairs. — KUNA

News in Brief

Thousands of students
get full marks in finals

KUWAIT: Around 5,200 grade 12 students received full marks in last week's exams, an official source said as exams near their end. Although many students in the science stream were baffled Sunday by two miswritten questions in the physics exam, sources added, the full-mark streak will likely continue for many of them as the ministry decided to consider all answers to the questions correct. After students take their last exam, the educational source said horizontal and vertical reviews of all exams will start Thursday and calculations are expected to be completed Friday afternoon. While the source said results will be ready Friday, he said the education ministry has not yet set a date for announcing them to the public.

MoI arrests labor law
violators, busts drugs

KUWAIT: The interior ministry announced the arrest of 11 suspects in possession of about 2,250 tablets of psychotropic substances and 500 grams of various types of narcotics. The Criminal Security Department at the ministry managed to arrest the suspects, who upon investigation confessed to owning the materials with the intention of sale and use. They were transferred to concerned authorities for further legal action, said the ministry. In other news, the General Administration of Residence Affairs Investigations arrested 27 people found in violation of the residence and labor law, the interior ministry announced. The violators, who are of various nationalities, were caught in Farwaniya and have been referred to authorities for further legal action.

Kuwaiti embassy in Egypt
urges citizens to declare funds

KUWAIT: The Embassy of the State of Kuwait in the Arab Republic of Egypt is calling on Kuwaiti citizens wishing to travel to Egypt to declare at Egyptian customs any amounts of cash they're carrying exceeding \$10,000, or equivalent in other foreign currencies. If Kuwaiti citizens are carrying money in Egyptian pounds, the embassy has asked them to declare any amounts exceeding 5,000 Egyptian pounds. The embassy urged citizens to follow directions when entering and leaving the country so that they are not subjected to legal accountability or to having their money confiscated. — KUNA

Kuwait, Japan take first step
towards waiving entry visas

Diplomats, officials will soon be able to enter both countries without visa

TOKYO: Kuwait and Japan have reached an agreement on waiving entry visa requirements for diplomatic and official passport holders in the two countries, the Kuwaiti Embassy in Tokyo said.

"The agreement constitutes the first step towards working on the waiver of visa requirements for regular Kuwaiti passport holders in the near future," the embassy said in a statement to Kuwait's state media agency KUNA.

Japan is a popular destination for Kuwaiti travelers, according to embassy officials in Kuwait.

"Though Japanese pop culture - anime (animation), manga (Japanese comic books), and J-POP (Japanese pop music) - play a role in shaping interest in Japan, traditional Japanese culture also offers deep fascinating experiences," said Arata Tatsumi, Second Secretary at the Embassy of Japan in Kuwait, in an April interview with KUNA.

Visa applications to the country have been on

the rise since last October, said Tatsumi, with a 20 percent jump in applications received by the Japanese embassy in Kuwait in January 2023 compared to the same period in 2020.

The embassy receives around 20 visa applications daily with the number reaching sometimes around 30 to 40 requests, said Tatsumi.

The agreement to waive visas for diplomats and officials, which the Kuwaiti embassy referred to as a "major achievement" for both countries, will be in effect 90 days after it comes into force.

Notes about the waiver were exchanged in a meeting by Kuwaiti Ambassador to Japan Sami Al-Zamanan and Assistant Foreign Minister and Director-General for the Middle Eastern and African Bureau of the Japanese Foreign Ministry Kansuke Nagaoka, the embassy said in a statement to KUNA.



TOKYO: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Japan Sami Al-Zamanan (right) and Assistant Foreign Minister and Director-General for the Middle Eastern and African Bureau of the Japanese Foreign Ministry Kansuke Nagaoka exchange notes on the visa waiver. — KUNA

Follow your passion;
have fun: Advice for
high school grads

By Munirah Al-Fayez

KUWAIT: As graduation season approaches, many graduates are entering into a big decision-making summer. Some students are not sure what to study, while others are not sure where to study. Some students are praying every day that they get into their dream major, while others do not know what they want to major in. To help these students, Kuwait Times interviewed two current university students and one university graduate, who have chosen three very different pathways, to ask them about their experiences.

Razan Al-Habishi, a Kuwaiti student studying computer engineering at Kuwait University, said the application process was easy, especially because she had friends that were going through the same process as her. She says that she first applied to study medicine, but after a few years changed her major to Computer Engineering because she is more passionate about it, and because she is a social person who likes to maintain a work-life balance, so this decision seemed best for her in the long run.

Habishi realized as the years went by that university gets harder over time, although the most difficult thing in her journey, she said, was change. She said changing majors and moving from high school to university was difficult. Some high school classes, according to Habishi, should be more like the classes at university, so the change would not be as overwhelming. She advises people who are in the decision-making process to make a balanced decision between their passion and what is needed in the Kuwaiti workforce. However, at



the end of the day, according to Razan, "you know what is best for you."

Fotouh Al-Roomi, a Management Information Systems (MIS) graduate of a well-known private university in Kuwait, said the application and preparation process was easy for her as well. She said she chose to attend this university after seeing many advertisements, which made her feel that studying at this specific private university was much better than other universities. When asked about the most difficult thing in her university journey, Roomi said her university experience had nothing that was difficult, stressing it was a "golden experience".

Roomi added the environment at her university was very student-oriented, which helped her enjoy everything, and that probably the most difficult thing for her was the fact that she graduated! If Roomi has any advice for recent high school graduates, it would be to take their time and enjoy their university experience. She added that change, for example in terms of major, university and plans, is totally acceptable and normal and that it needs to be viewed this way.

According to Layla Al-Azmi, a Kuwaiti stu-

dent who is studying politics in the United Kingdom, the process and preparation for studying abroad was time-consuming and can be complicated sometimes, but applying for university itself was easy. She said she chose this path because she knew that pursuing it will benefit her in many ways career-wise. She added she has always been interested in politics, so to her, studying politics seemed to be a clear choice.

Despite some of the difficulties of living abroad and being away from family, Azmi said "everything so far has been part of the university adventure". However, she said if students are planning to study abroad, they should research well the location, field of study and university, and should accept the fact that they will feel overwhelmed at times.

It seems like all students have found the university application process uncomplicated and that all students through time have found the pathway that is most suitable for them. They all seem to agree on a similar message to recent high school graduates: find the pathway that is best for you, even if it requires change and takes time and work.

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Acquire Professional Skills With NBK Aspire Program

NBK summer
internship program
attracts students

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is launching its Summer Internship Program on July 3, 2023. The three-week courses are especially designed for high school students, between the age of 14 and 18 years. Each session will include between 30-35 students. "NBK views the Aspire Summer Internship Program as an extension to its educational initiatives and as part of its corporate social responsibility," said Yaqoub Al-Baqer, NBK Public Relations Senior Manager.

"This annual program demonstrates NBK's long-standing social involvement as well as its national commitment towards providing young generations with the suitable opportunities to experience how the actual professional banking concerns and transactions are handled and processed."

"It has been 20 years since the establishment

of the program," added Baqer. "At the core of NBK's corporate social responsibility is our commitment to developing the youth in Kuwait. NBK invests at every level in the training, professional development and the growth of the youth cadres, to contribute to trainees' basic and professional competencies and abilities in fields of practical life."

The Aspire Summer Internship Program is made up of three different sessions, which go on for five hours a day each, over three weeks. The first session starts on July 3, while the following sessions start on July 23 and August 13, respectively.

All trainees will receive a condensed training program about NBK products, services and workshops with Creative Confidence. The trainees will have professional exams from the HR department about the knowledge of NBK.



Yaqoub Al-Baqer



Chinese PM in Germany as Western mistrust mounts

Armed group blamed in Uganda attack 'funded by Islamic State'

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Sudan truce holds on second day as donors set to meet in Geneva

Humanitarian situation is worsening after two months of war: UN



BAGHDAD: Evacuees from Sudan wait upon arrival at Baghdad International Airport. Among the 165 evacuees are "dozens of Syrians and Sudanese" nationals, the Iraqi foreign ministry said. Sudan's warring generals on June 18 agreed to a new 72-hour ceasefire according to US and Saudi mediators. — AFP

KHARTOUM: An international donors' conference is set to begin in Geneva for Sudan, where a ceasefire was holding but the UN says the humanitarian situation is worsening after two months of war. The conference comes mid-way through a three-day ceasefire which appeared to have brought calm to the capital Khartoum, after the failure of earlier truces to ensure secure aid corridors.

Several Khartoum residents told AFP they heard no air strikes, artillery or other fighting on Monday, a rare respite for the war-weary suffering shortages of medical care, electricity, water and other essentials. The army, led by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, has since April 15 been battling the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) commanded by his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, after the two fell out in a bitter power struggle.

Across the country, the death toll has topped 2,000, the Armed Conflict

Location and Event Data Project said. Hundreds of kilometres (miles) west of Khartoum, up to 1,100 have been killed in the West Darfur state capital El Geneina alone, according to the US State Department, blaming "primarily" the RSF.

A record 25 million people - more than half Sudan's population - are in need of aid, according to the United Nations, which says it has received only a fraction of desperately needed funding. Roughly 2.2 million people have been uprooted across Sudan by the fighting, which has forced more than 528,000 to seek refuge in neighboring countries, the International Organization for Migration said.

Monday's conference, which is set to open in the Swiss city at 3:00 pm (13:00 GMT), is to address the aid needs both in Sudan and in neighboring countries, now bearing an increased burden. The UN will be joined by Egypt, Saudi Ara-

bia, Qatar, the African Union and the European Union in convening the event.

Aid 'access impeded'

Donors are expected to "announce financial commitments to address the unfolding humanitarian crisis and reiterate the need for the parties to the conflict in Sudan to adhere to their obligations under International Humanitarian Law," the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in a statement. It said less than 16 percent of the needed \$2.6 billion for aid response has been funded, while the regional refugee response plan for \$470 million is similarly underfunded.

Despite the lack of money, the looting of aid facilities and the killing of humanitarian workers, aid agencies have increased their response to the tragedy but, according to UN figures, only a fraction of those in need have been reached.

William Carter, Sudan director for the Norwegian Refugee Council, said bureaucratic delays are also hindering the aid response. On Twitter, he said that about 100 visa applications are still pending from more than 30 organizations.

"We've had a team of 20 on standby for over a month — we could've helped 200,000 displaced by now," Carter said on the eve of the aid conference. "It's clear that humanitarian access is impeded but unclear if it's indecision or intention," he added.

The UN, African Union and east African regional bloc IGAD, in a joint statement ahead of the donors' meeting, expressed particular concern about "the rapidly deteriorating situation in Darfur where the conflict has taken on an ethnic dimension, resulting in targeted attacks based on people's identities and subsequent displacement of communities".

On Thursday UN Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths said the situation in Darfur is "rapidly spiralling into a humanitarian calamity." The western region on Sudan's border with Chad has never recovered from a years-long war that began in 2003 with a rebel uprising that prompted then-strongman Omar al-Bashir to unleash the Janjaweed militia. Its actions led to international charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The RSF have their origins in the Janjaweed. With their 72-hour ceasefire both the RSF and army "agreed to allow the unimpeded movement and delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout the country", US and Saudi mediators said on Saturday. The mediators repeated a previous warning that they would consider adjourning talks in Jeddah should the truce not be respected. — AFP

UK lawmakers to judge Johnson over 'Partygate'

LONDON: British MPs will cast their judgment on Monday on a damning report that found ex-prime minister Boris Johnson lied to parliament about lockdown-breaking parties. A House of Commons debate about the report is being held on Johnson's 59th birthday — likely leading to the removal of his pass to access parliament — as Prime Minister Rishi Sunak struggles to move the crisis-hit country on from his predecessor's many scandals.

Johnson and his dwindling supporters have portrayed the report by the Commons privileges committee as a "witch hunt", and he resigned as a member of parliament just before its publication. But Sunak, who has promised to restore integrity to government, said its bipartisan members had "done their work thoroughly".

However, Sunak's office refused to say whether he would attend the debate — and he declined to be drawn on how MPs should decide if the report is put to a vote. "This is a matter for the House rather than the government. That's an important distinction and that is why I wouldn't want to influence anyone in advance of that vote," he told ITV.

Opposition Labour leader Keir Starmer, however, tried to keep pressure on Sunak to avoid taking sides between the report's backers and Johnson's vocal supporters in the Conservative party at large. "He should show leadership. Come along! Get in the (voting) lobby and show us where he stands on this," he said on ITV, accusing Johnson of "miserable misbehavior".

In a 106-page report last week, the privileges committee found Johnson guilty of "repeated contempt (of parliament) and... seeking to undermine the parliamentary process". There was "no precedent for a prime minister having been found to have deliberately misled the House", it added.

Even as Sunak looks to draw a line under the "Partygate" scandal, another video emerged on Sunday of Tory party officials partying in December 2020 during one lockdown. Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove apologized for the COVID rule breach, at a time when the public was banned from socializing or meeting loved ones, even if they lay dying in hospitals or care homes.

He told the BBC the footage was "terrible" and "in-



Boris Johnson

defensible". Covid victims' support groups were outraged at the reminder of the blithe disregard for the rules that was also seen in Johnson's 10 Downing Street.

'Undimmed ebullience'

London's Metropolitan Police force confirmed that it was looking into the footage from a 2020 Christmas gathering at Conservative headquarters. Two of those present at the party were recognized in Johnson's controversial resignation honors list, and faced calls to withdraw their names.

By pre-emptively resigning, Johnson thwarted the committee's recommendation to suspend him as an MP for 90 days — which could have led to him facing a humiliating re-election battle. Instead, the committee could only recommend that his parliamentary pass be withdrawn, denying him one privilege normally offered to ex-members.

But it remains to be seen whether the debate ends in a formal vote later on Monday, or is simply nodded through by the Commons. Johnson has urged his supporters not to bring it to a vote, arguing the pass sanction is meaningless. His critics, however, note that any vote risks exposing how few supporters he has left among Tory MPs. — AFP

Jailed Kremlin critic Navalny goes on trial

MOSCOW: Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny went on trial on Monday on "extremism" charges that could see his prison time extended for decades as part of wider government efforts to silence dissent. The case comes more than a year into Russia's full-scale offensive in Ukraine, which ushered in a new wave of legal proceedings against Moscow's critics, with many now in exile or in jail.

An AFP journalist at the maximum security IK-6 penal colony 250 kilometres (155 miles) east of Moscow where the 47-year-old veteran opponent of Russian President Vladimir Putin is being held, reported that proceedings were underway.

Navalny once mobilized massive anti-Kremlin protests but is now serving a nine-year prison sentence on embezzlement charges that his supporters see as punishment for his political work. He was arrested in 2021 on his arrival in Moscow from Germany, where he had been recovering from a poisoning attack that he blamed on the Kremlin.

Navalny, who has experienced major weight loss in prison, now faces up to another 30 years behind bars. Navalny said that prosecutors had provided him with 3,828 pages describing all the crimes he is alleged to have committed while in prison.

"Although it's clear from the size of the tomes that I am a sophisticated and persistent criminal, it's impossible to find out what exactly I am accused of," Navalny quipped. He has been charged with financing extremist activity, publicly inciting extremist activities and "rehabilitating the Nazi ideology," among other offences.

'Tried for political work'

While he has been the target of multiple legal cases, this is the first formally political case against him, his team said. "He is being tried for his political work," Navalny's spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh told AFP. In April, Navalny said he was told he would be judged by a military tribunal over "terrorism" charges. He could face life in prison, he said.

Navalny's team says he has been harassed in prison, where he was kept in a "punishment cell" for perceived transgressions. He said prison officials forced him to share a cell with a sick, foul-smelling inmate and subjected him and other prisoners to "torture by Putin", making them listen to the Kremlin chief's speeches. The



MELEKHVOVO: Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny's lawyer, Vadim Kobzev (left), arrives for a court hearing to the IK-6 penal colony at Melekhovo, where Navalny is jailed. — AFP

opposition leader — a lawyer by training — has taken prison officials to court to retain access to what he sees as basic prisoner rights.

'Wake up in this hellhole'

He has also taunted his jailers, reporting that he has filed formal requests for a balalaika and a kimono and to be allowed to keep a kangaroo and a May bug in jail. On his third birthday behind bars in early June, Navalny said he was "in a really good mood".

"Of course I wish I didn't have to wake up in this hell-hole and instead have breakfast with my family, receive kisses on the cheek from my children, unwrap presents." Navalny has built a huge social media operation producing videos providing evidence of systemic corruption among Russian elites.

He still communicates on social media through his team. He said in February that Moscow's defeat in Ukraine was "inevitable" and Russia should pay for Ukraine's losses once the fighting ends. Navalny had set up a network of campaign offices across the country and aimed to run for president in 2018, but election authorities did not allow him to challenge Putin.

Navalny's offices were designated "extremist" organizations in 2021, putting employees, volunteers and supporters at risk of prosecution. In mid-June, a Russian court sentenced the head of Navalny's headquarters in the central city of Ufa, Lilia Chanyshva, to seven-and-a-half years in prison. Thousands of Russians have been arrested for protesting the conflict in Ukraine, and most high-profile activists still in Russia—including Vladimir Kara-Murza and Ilya Yashin—are behind bars. — AFP

International

Armed group blamed in Uganda attack 'funded by Islamic State'

IS has provided financial support to ADF since 2019, through a complex financial scheme

KINSHASA: A notorious armed group suspected of massacring at least 41 people at a Ugandan school has received funds from the so-called Islamic State (IS), according to a UN report seen by AFP on Monday. The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), accused of the attack last Friday in the western Ugandan town of Mpondwe, has been blamed for thousands of civilian deaths in neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo.

In a report due to be published this week, UN experts on the DRC shed light on the hazy financial connections between the two groups. The IS has "provided financial support to ADF since at least 2019, through a complex financial scheme involving individuals in several countries on the continent, emanating from Somalia and going through South Africa, Kenya and Uganda," it said.

The evidence comes from documents and testimony, it said. Historically linked to predominantly Muslim Ugandan rebels opposed to President Yoweri Museveni, the ADF established itself in eastern DRC in the mid-1990s.

It became one of scores of outlawed forces in the troubled region, but in 2019 pivoted towards radicalism, pledging allegiance to the IS. The IS describes the ADF as its regional affiliate, the Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP). In March 2021, the United States placed the ADF on its list of "terrorist groups" affiliated with IS.

In November 2021, Ugandan troops crossed into eastern DRC, joining Congolese forces in a crack-

down on the ADF after a string of bombings in the Ugandan capital Kampala. Military officials on both sides proclaimed Operation Shujaa to be a success, but attacks by the group have continued.

The new UN report says the ADF "sent combatants and/or collaborators on scouting missions" to try to expand beyond North Kivu and Ituri provinces. The group "sought to recruit and conduct attacks in Kinshasa as well as Tshopo, Haut-Uele and South-Kivu provinces," it adds.

The attack in Uganda occurred less than two kilometres (1.2 miles) from the border with the DRC. Officials said 37 students at the Lhubiraha Secondary School were killed - 17 in the torched men's dormitory, and 20 female students who ran, but were hacked to death.

Four non-students were also killed. Major General Dick Olum, who has been leading the Uganda side of the operation against the rebels in the DRC, told AFP that intelligence suggested the ADF had been in the area at least two days before the attack.

They were apparently on a scouting mission to plot the raid on the school, he said. "We have called for more firepower, planes to help in the rescue operation of those abducted, and locating the rebel hideouts for military action," he said.

In June 1998, 80 students were burnt to death in their dormitories in an ADF raid on Kichwamba Technical Institute, also near Uganda's border with the DRC. — AFP



MPONDWE: Mourners gather for funeral of Florence Masika and Zakayo Masereka during their burial rituals in Mpondwe. Grieving families prepared to bury their dead in western Uganda on Sunday while others desperately searched for loved ones still missing after militants killed dozens of students in a school attack. — AFP

Indonesia's PM Widodo hosts Japan emperor

BOGOR: Japanese Emperor Naruhito met Indonesian President Joko Widodo on Monday during his first state trip since ascending the Chrysanthemum Throne in 2019. Naruhito and Empress Masako's June 17-23 visit to Southeast Asia's biggest economy came after Widodo invited the emperor during a trip to Tokyo last year.

The royal couple arrived at a presidential palace south of the capital Jakarta, flanked by dozens of well-wishers shouting "Welcome to Indonesia!" and a marching band that played the Japanese national anthem.

"The visit of the emperor and empress to Indonesia has further strengthened the friendship

between our people," Widodo told reporters before a formal lunch meeting. "Such a solid foundation is necessary for the development of a strategic partnership between our two countries, especially in the economic field."

Widodo and first lady Iriana, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, walked with the royal couple around the palace gardens and held a tree-planting welcome ceremony. "We would like to... reflect on the history of Indonesia as well as the history of those who have dedicated themselves to promoting the friendship between our two countries," Naruhito said.

"We wish from the bottom of our hearts that the communication among a younger generation of people from our respective countries will further our friendship." Tokyo and Jakarta have moved to boost ties in recent years, with Japanese officials citing the importance of Indonesia's emerging economy and its strategic location close to global shipping lanes.

Japan ruled Indonesia from 1942 for more

than three years. Tokyo's surrender in World War II was followed by an armed uprising against Dutch rule and Indonesia's independence. On Tuesday, the royal couple will visit a military cemetery in Jakarta where 28 former Japanese soldiers who stayed and fought in the Indonesian War of Independence (1945-1949) are buried.

Naruhito is also scheduled to visit the central Javan city of Yogyakarta to meet the provincial monarch, and will also go to Borobudur, the world's largest Buddhist temple. The pair also visited a new mass rapid transit (MRT) train depot in Jakarta that was built with Japanese help and a Tokyo-funded pumping station that prevents flooding. The Japanese royal couple have gradually resumed public duties after limiting them during the COVID-19 pandemic. Last year, they made their first trip abroad since the enthronement to attend Queen Elizabeth II's funeral in London. Previous Japanese monarchs visited Indonesia in 1962 and 1991. — AFP



BOGOR: Japan's Emperor Naruhito (second left) speaks while Indonesian President Joko Widodo (second right) listens as Indonesia's First Lady Iriana Widodo and Japan's Empress Masako look on during a news conference after their meeting in Bogor. — AFP

Lula, Brazil's diplomatic dynamo

BRASILIA: President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has been in diplomatic hyperdrive since taking office, making Brazil a key global player again - but stoking controversy with some of his stances, including on Ukraine and Venezuela. Less than six months into his term, the veteran leftist has already met more foreign leaders than his predecessor, far-right ex-president Jair Bolsonaro, did in four years - 33 to 32, according to a count by newspaper O Globo.

Lula, who previously led Brazil from 2003 to 2010 - when he also played a starring role in international affairs - will be in diplomatic dynamo mode again this week when he travels to Europe for meetings with Pope Francis at the Vatican and French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris.

Since taking office in January, Lula, 77, has incessantly repeated that "Brazil is back" on the world stage, vowing a clean break with Bolsonaro, who

often appeared internationally isolated, apart from his tight relationship with his political role model, US ex-president Donald Trump. A string of world leaders have traveled to Brasilia to meet with Lula, who has in turn crisscrossed the globe from the Americas to Asia to Europe, securing big-money backing for key initiatives such as his Amazon Fund to protect the world's biggest rainforest. "Simply not being Jair Bolsonaro provided Lula with considerable global goodwill," international relations expert Oliver Stuenkel wrote recently in Brazilian Report.

Stumbling on Ukraine

But the charismatic ex-metalworker has also caused several diplomatic rows with his controversial, unfiltered statements. Lula has made a high-profile bid to set up internationally mediated talks to end the war in Ukraine, but is seen by many in the West as overly cozy with Russia. He has declined to join Western nations in sending arms to Ukraine or imposing sanctions on President Vladimir Putin's government over its invasion.

On a trip to China in April, Lula accused the United States of "encouraging" the war. The White House hit

back, saying he was "parroting Russian and Chinese propaganda."

In May, a planned meeting between Lula and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Japan fell through, officially because of "conflicting agendas."

Zelensky quipped he imagined Lula was "disappointed." Lula replied he was rather "upset." Lula's Ukraine stance is part of "the traditional anti-Americanism" of his left-wing Workers' Party (PT), said former Brazilian diplomat Paulo Roberto de Almeida.

But he told AFP it also shows Lula's close relationship with "the two big autocracies," China and Russia - Brazil's partners in the BRICS group of emerging countries.

Balancing act

Lula faces a tough balancing act on a global chessboard increasingly polarized between the United States and China. Brazil needs both: China is its biggest trading partner, the US a natural ally on key issues such as the environment and strengthening democracy. Lula was warmly welcomed by US President Joe Biden at the White House in February, but came

away with no big deals or announcements.

His China trip, in contrast, yielded a flurry of economic cooperation agreements. "Brazil's biggest risk and fear is having to take sides" between Beijing and Washington, said international relations specialist Pedro Brites of the Getulio Vargas Foundation.

Lula is also keen to strengthen regional ties in South America. But a key summit last month - the continent's first in nearly a decade - practically did the opposite, as Lula provoked a squabble with his controversial comments on Venezuela.

Lula warmly welcomed Venezuelan socialist leader Nicolas Maduro, a pariah in some quarters for his government's alleged rights violations and authoritarianism, painting him as the victim of a hostile "narrative." That drew criticism not only from center-right President Luis Lacalle Pou of Uruguay, but also from fellow leftist Gabriel Boric of Chile.

"Lula's unfortunate statements erased any evidence of the summit's success," Almeida said. At home, Lula meanwhile faces pressure to spend more time on domestic affairs, given the tricky, treacherous politics of navigating a virulent opposition and a Congress dominated by his conservative enemies. — AFP

Deputy Amir calls on govt...

Continued from Page 1

HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah voiced extreme thanks and appreciation to HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince for trusting him and his Cabinet colleagues, vowing to do their utmost to fulfill the dear nation's expectations and hopes for further prosperity and progress. He affirmed that he and other ministers would live up to their due responsibilities and demonstrate utter loyalty to Kuwait and its people during this critical stage, being well aware of the number of outstanding issues and serious challenges that need to be addressed.

The prime minister also vowed they would devote their experience and efforts to serving the nation, carrying out reforms and pushing forward comprehensive development in all fields, while sticking to the country's constitution and law and protecting the people's freedoms, interests and funds. He further underlined that his government would have positive and constructive cooperation with the National Assembly and all society organizations.

The new Cabinet, headed by HH Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf, was announced late Sunday and includ-

ed six new faces. The formation of the Cabinet came after snap parliamentary polls in which a group calling themselves "reformists" won a landslide victory. During the past two decades, Kuwait has been rocked by continued political disputes between MPs and governments that has stalled development and led to instability. About 10 new elections have been held in the country since 2006 due to political disputes.

Kuwaitis are hoping that after the June 6 elections and positive signs of cooperation between the government and the Assembly will finally achieve elusive stability. A number of lawmakers welcomed the new Cabinet with caution, saying their cooperation with the government will be linked to its program of action that will be presented to the Assembly in the next few weeks.

The new National Assembly will be inaugurated by HH the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince on Tuesday, with Sheikh Mishal, the prime minister and chairperson of the Assembly scheduled to deliver important addresses. The Assembly will then elect its speaker.

The Assembly will also elect other officers and permanent and temporary panels amid expectations that most of the panels will be elected by a unanimous vote after new MPs settled the issue during two informal meetings. MPs are also expected to press the government to agree to extend the term which is due to close at the end of the month. Lawmakers want it extended until a number of urgent laws have been passed.

rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran announced in March the end of a seven-year break in ties.

Among the round of reconciliation that has followed, Qatar and close neighbors Bahrain put aside a chronic feud to resume relations in April. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan visited Iran on Saturday, meeting President Ebrahim Raisi, in another major step in their rapprochement. Iran reopened its Riyadh embassy this month. The detente between the two countries appears momentous because they have long been vying for influence around the region, backing opposing sides in conflicts including Yemen. — AFP

Zionists deploy helicopters, kill...

Continued from Page 1

Crowds, among them Palestinian gunmen, gathered outside a government hospital in Jenin for the funerals of those killed in 11 hours of fighting. Jenin's deputy governor, Kamal Abu Al-Rub, told AFP the Zionist forces had launched the raid at around 4:00 am (0100 GMT). "The army stormed the (Jenin refugee) camp and the city after the dawn prayer in large numbers, and there was intense gunfire," he said. Jenin camp resident Bassem Talib, 38, said he "woke up to the sounds of gunfire at 4:15 in the morning". "The army targeted anything that moved... there is no safety," he said. An AFP journalist at the scene said Zionist forces withdrew from Jenin at around

15:10 (1210 GMT).

The Zionist army said an armored vehicle had been hit by a "very unusual and dramatic" explosive device at around 7:10 am (0410 GMT), during "routine activity" to arrest two "wanted suspects" — one affiliated with Islamist movement Hamas and the other with Islamic Jihad. The army said an Apache helicopter had fired missiles in support of the soldiers. A Palestinian intelligence official told AFP on condition of anonymity it was the first time since 2002 — during the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising — that the Zionist army has fired missiles from an aircraft during a raid in Jenin.

United Nations rights chief Volker Turk said he was "extremely worried by the deteriorating situation". "Unlawful killings of Palestinians by the (Zionist) security forces have increased, including apparent extrajudicial executions," he added. Palestinian health minister Mai Al-Kaila called for the "urgent" dispatch of blood and medical supplies to Jenin. — AFP

China, US see progress but...

Continued from Page 1

"Direct engagement and sustained communication at senior levels is the best way to responsibly manage differences and ensure that competition does not veer into conflict," Blinken told reporters.

"I heard the same from my Chinese counterparts. We both agree on the need to stabilize our relationship," he added. Blinken said the world's two largest economies would work together to expand flights — still at a bare minimum since the COVID-19 pandemic — and would explore ways to discuss Chinese exports of chemicals that make fentanyl, the painkiller behind an addiction epidemic in the United States.

At the ornate Diaoyutai State Guesthouse earlier

Monday, China's foreign policy supremo Wang Yi told Blinken that the United States and China need to "make a choice between dialogue and confrontation, cooperation or conflict". "We must reverse the downward spiral of China-US relations, push for a return to a healthy and stable track, and work together to find a correct way for China and the United States to get along," Wang said, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

Wang also issued a warning on Taiwan, the self-ruling democracy claimed by Beijing. In the past year, China has launched live-fire military drills twice near the island in anger over meetings between top US lawmakers and Taiwanese leaders. "On this issue, China has no room to compromise or concede," Wang told Blinken. Speaking later to reporters, Blinken voiced concern about China's "provocative" actions over Taiwan but insisted that "nothing has changed in US policy, including its opposition to a formal declaration of independence by Taipei. — AFP

UAE, Qatar reopen embassies after...

Continued from Page 1

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt imposed a diplomatic and transport blockade on Qatar in 2017, accusing it of supporting extremist organizations and becoming too close to Iran. Doha has denied the allegations. The reopening of the diplomatic missions comes at a time of an easing in Gulf enmities after heavyweight

International

Chinese premier in Germany as Western mistrust mounts

Li will also visit France for climate financing summit

BERLIN: Germany's president Monday urged Beijing and Washington to boost dialogue, as he hosted Premier Li Qiang at a time when China's policies on Russia, trade and human rights are receiving an increasingly hostile reception in the West.

Li, who was named China's prime minister in March, is on a two-nation visit which will also take him to France for a climate financing summit hosted by President Emmanuel Macron. German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier stressed the importance of ties between China and the United States for "global security and cooperation," wrote his spokeswoman Cerstin Gammelin on Twitter. "He called for the strengthening of communication channels between both countries," she added, after months of US-China tensions. Steinmeier also urged Beijing to use its "political weight and influence on Russia to bring about a just peace" in Ukraine, said Gammelin.

Li's European tour came as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was on a high-stakes trip to Beijing, where a glimpse of optimism was seen with President Xi Jinping assessing that "some progress" was made. In Berlin, Li and his cabinet will meet Chancellor Olaf Scholz and his team for so-called government consultations on Tuesday, when he is expected to outline China's "hopes to deepen and expand its relations" with the EU heavyweight. But Germany's first national security strategy, published days ago, could set the tone at the talks.

The blueprint stridently accused China of acting against German interests, putting international security "under increasing pressure" and disregarding human rights. At the same time, it underlined the necessity of getting Beijing's cooperation on global issues like fighting climate change.

Scholz himself had said the message sent by the document is that "China's integration into world trade and world economic relations should not be impaired". "But at the same time the security issues that arise for us must be taken into account."

Beijing has bristled at being described as a "partner, competitor and systemic rival" in the text, saying such labels would only "push our world towards a vortex of division and confrontation".

Push to diversify

Export giant Germany, by virtue of its economic might, has always enjoyed special ties with China. Under former chancellor Angela Merkel, Berlin took a pragmatic approach of talking up economic opportunities while keeping less flattering opinions on rights and freedom behind closed doors.

That made China a key market for Germany's exporters while also allowing Berlin to take in prominent human rights activists like Liu Xia, apparently without suffering any retaliatory consequences. But the coronavirus pandemic raised questions about relying on a far-flung partner with its own huge domestic needs



BERLIN: German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (right) and Chinese Premier Li Qiang shake hands at the presidential Bellevue Palace in Berlin. — AFP

for health essentials. And Russia's war on Ukraine turned the approach of economic rapprochement on its head. With China refusing to distance itself from Russian President Vladimir Putin, concerns mounted in the West over its motives and reliability.

The European Commission last week warned that Chinese telecoms giants Huawei and ZTE posed a risk to the EU's security and said it would stop using services that relied on the companies. Diversifying has now become a buzzword for Germany's elites, with Berlin wooing more partners beyond the world's biggest powers.

'Economy in trouble'

Inconveniently for China, the shift is happening when the Asian giant is experiencing an economic slowdown. Sluggish exports and domestic demand are weighing on China's post-COVID economy. No surprise, then, that Li had picked Germany as his first stop abroad, analysts said. Li is "in charge of fixing the economy, which is in trouble", Ian Johnson, China expert at the US think tank Council on Foreign Relations, told AFP. "So it makes sense to go to China's biggest trading partner in Europe," he said, adding that Beijing needs "further investment and better business ties with companies, such as BASF, VW and Siemens".

Thorsten Benner, director of the Global Public Policy Institute, told AFP that it was "open whether Germany continues to play the game of pretending there is broad agreement with Beijing", in a meeting he called a "stress test". Alternatively, it could choose "a new path of straight talk and limiting the final statement to areas where there is a genuine path forward for cooperation". — AFP

Mitsotakis on course to return as Greek premier in new vote

ATHENS: After an inconclusive election in May, Greece returns to the ballot box next Sunday with conservative former prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on course to win a second straight four-year term. Polls show that Mitsotakis' New Democracy party is in line to be the clear winner, with between 40 and 43.9 percent of the vote.

Mitsotakis, 55, last month cruised to victory with a score of 40.79 percent, more than 20 points ahead of his nearest rival, former leftist prime minister Alexis Tsipras. But he fell short of a workable parliamentary majority and declined to form a coalition government.

A Pulse poll for private Skai TV last week said nine out of 10 New Democracy voters would vote conservative again on Sunday. Mitsotakis says that under his stewardship, Greeks paid lower taxes and the country became a success story attractive to investors, posting growth above the European average and returning tourism revenue to nearly pre-pandemic levels.

'Growth will continue'

"I promise Greeks that (economic) growth will continue," he told Skai TV last week. "We are more experienced, more prepared and more determined." Mitsotakis' critics counter that he showered billions of euros on political allies and friendly media, tried to bury a major wiretapping scandal and attempted to

dodge responsibility for Greece's worst train disaster in February.

This time, Harvard graduate and former McKinsey financial consultant Mitsotakis faces a challenge on his right that could determine the size of his parliamentary group. A new hard-right party, Niki, narrowly missed out on parliamentary seats in May and is now polling over the required 3 percent threshold, as is the established nationalist party Greek Solution.

Another new party, Plefsi Eleftherias, headed by hard leftist former parliament speaker Zoe Konstantopoulou is also likely to clinch parliamentary representation. And former finance minister Yanis Varoufakis also seeks election under the radical left MeRa25 party.

If eight parties succeed in entering parliament on Sunday, the winner will need a higher percentage of the vote to maximize their parliamentary group in the 300-seat chamber. Mitsotakis has been criticized for warning that a third election could be held in August, at the height of the busy tourism season, if a government cannot be formed after Sunday.

A final vote?

Last month, the former PM blamed deep policy differences with his closest rivals, leftist leader Alexis Tsipras and socialist head Nikos Androulakis, for his refusal to form a coalition government after May's ballot.

And he has declined to cooperate with any hard-right party. The upcoming election is held under new rules that give the winner a bonus of up to 50 seats, facilitating efforts to form a single-party government. The vote will be conducted in the shadow of a migrant boat disaster on June 14 that claimed 78 lives, with hundreds more feared missing and unlikely to be found. — AFP



ATHENS: People walk past election campaign posters and kiosk of leftist Mera 25 (DIEM 25) (right) and leftist KKE-ML parties in central Athens. Greeks will vote for the second round of Greece's general elections on June 25, 2023. — AFP



BANGKOK: File photo shows the Thai Parliament complex in Bangkok, the meeting place of the National Assembly of Thailand. Thailand's Election Commission on June 19, 2023, confirmed the results of last month's general election, in which the pro-democracy opposition trounced the army-backed parties that have ruled the kingdom for nearly a decade. — AFP

Thai election body confirms vote results

BANGKOK: Thailand's Election Commission on Monday confirmed the results of last month's vote, in which the pro-democracy opposition trounced the army-backed parties that have ruled the kingdom for nearly a decade.

The commission officially ratified the results for the 500-seat lower house, which makes the progressive Move Forward Party (MFP) the largest group with 151 seats. MFP leader Pita Limjaroenrat is the front-runner to become prime minister, although he faces an investigation that could see him disqualified.

The election commission is investigating around 200 complaints about the conduct of the May 14 poll. "We decided to announce the ratification because not all of the complaints can be dealt with within 60 days," commission secretary general Sawang Boonmee said at a press conference.

Election law requires the results to be ratified inside 60 days, but the commission has a year to investigate complaints. Parliament will convene and elect a lower house speaker within 15 days, but there is no set timeline for when they will select a new prime minister.

MFP says it has secured a coalition deal with seven other parties, including the second biggest, Pheu Thai, which would command a large majority in the lower house. But to secure the prime minister's job, Pita has to win a majority across both houses — including the Senate, where the 250 members were handpicked by the last junta. — AFP

Afghanistan's 'gender apartheid' should be international crime

GENEVA: The UN's top expert on rights in Afghanistan urged countries Monday to consider making "gender apartheid" an international crime, helping hold the Taliban accountable for its grave and systematic abuses against Afghan women.

Since ousting a foreign-backed government in August 2021, the Taliban authorities have imposed an austere sharia law, barring girls from secondary school, pushing women out of many government jobs, preventing them from travelling without a male relative and ordering them to cover up outside the home.

"It is imperative that we do not look away," Richard Bennett told the UN Human Rights Council. Presenting his latest report, the UN special rapporteur on the situation in Afghanistan told the council that the Taliban's actions could constitute the crime against humanity of "gender persecution". In addition, "grave, systematic and institutionalized discrimination against

women and girls is at the heart of Taliban ideology and rule, which also gives rise to concerns that they may be responsible for gender apartheid", he said.

Such "serious human rights violations, which although not yet an explicit international crime, requires further study," he insisted. Framing gender apartheid as an international crime would highlight that other countries and the broader international community "have a duty to take effective action to end the practice", the report said.

"Women often talk about being buried alive, breathing, but not being able to do much else without facing restrictions and punishments," said Shaharazad Akbar, the head of the Rawadari rights group and former head of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. "Taliban have turned Afghanistan to a mass graveyard of Afghan women and girls' ambitions, dreams and potential," she told the council. The UN has already labelled the situation in Afghanistan under the Taliban as "gender-based apartheid", but the term is not currently recognized under the Rome Statute among the worst international crimes. Bennett and others called Monday for countries to consider changing that. Akbar backed the call, urging the council to "support the inclusion of gender apartheid in the Draft Convention on Crimes Against Humanity." — AFP

Thailand defends divisive Myanmar junta talks

BANGKOK: Thailand on Monday defended hosting talks with the Myanmar junta that have split the regional bloc leading diplomatic efforts to end the chaos engulfing the country since the military seized power. Myanmar has been in turmoil since a February 2021 coup that ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi, with more than 3,600 civilians killed in the military's crackdown on dissent, according to a monitoring group.

The generals have been barred from high-level meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) regional bloc, of which Myanmar is a member. But Thailand's caretaker government, which is dominated by army-linked parties, last week invited junta foreign minister Than Shwe to the informal two-day meeting. The move has split ASEAN and drawn criticism that it is undermining the bloc's ef-

orts to tackle the crisis. However, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-cha said the talks were needed. "We suffer more than others because we share more than 3,000 kilometres of land and sea border with Myanmar," Prayut told reporters. "We need to talk, otherwise people will be affected. Today is just a meeting, we did not agree on anything."

Indonesia and Malaysia — among the junta's harshest critics within ASEAN — snubbed the meeting, while Singapore warned it was premature to engage the junta at such a high level. Cambodia sent a junior foreign ministry official while China — long a key supporter of the Myanmar military — dispatched Deng Xijun, its special envoy for Asian affairs.

The split is a fresh blow to ASEAN's already faltering efforts to defuse the crisis. No progress has been made towards implementing a five-point peace plan agreed on two years ago and the last ASEAN summit, in May, ended without any significant progress on the matter.

Fighting between the army and rebel groups in Myanmar has periodically sent thousands of people fleeing across the border into Thailand. Thai Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai said the kingdom was suffering the effects of the crisis more than other countries in the region. — AFP

Ex-Pakistan PM gets bail extended again in graft case

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan's bail on corruption charges was extended again Monday, after he urged supporters to take to the streets if he is re-arrested. Khan's brief detention last month on graft charges sparked days of deadly violence as thousands of his followers rampaged through cities, setting fire to buildings and clashing with police.

He was freed from custody after the Supreme Court declared the arrest illegal, but he says the government still plans to detain him to quash his momentum ahead of elections due by October. "They believe that people will sit as silent spectators when they put me in jail," the 70-year-old said in a live-streamed address late Sunday night.

"Death is much better than subjugation. Make up your minds against fear. You have to stand up, peaceful protest is your right," he said. On Monday, a special corruption court in Islamabad extended bail for Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi until July 4. He was also bailed in 15 other cases before three courts, said Gohar Khan, a member of his legal team.

Since he was ousted by a no-confidence vote in parliament last year, Khan has waged an unprecedented campaign against Pakistan's powerful military. Supporters viewed his May 9 arrest as payback for that defiance. Following the former cricket star's release, his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party has suffered a major crackdown including widespread arrests.

The government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif accuses Khan of orchestrating anti-state violence and has pledged to try some protesters in military courts. "These cases are anti democratic," Khan told a judge in an anti-terrorism court in Islamabad where he faced eight cases on Monday. "I have never incited my supporters to violence," he added. "Peaceful protest is a democratic right."

Khan remains far and away the most popular politician in Pakistan. But after repeated detentions much of the key PTI leadership has defected, and numerous journalists sympathetic to the opposition leader are reported to have disappeared into custody. On Thursday, Amnesty International said it is "extremely concerned with the crackdown on voices critical of the state and military". Khan says the protest violence was a false-flag campaign to justify suppression of his party.

But he seems increasingly isolated in his mansion in the eastern city of Lahore, venturing out only for regular appearances in a slew of court cases which have plagued him since he left office. Analysts say legal challenges are often deployed by those in power in Pakistan to stifle dissent. — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 2023

Biggest-ever airliner order marks first day of Air Show

India's IndiGo makes record order for 500 Airbus A320



LE BOURGET: Photo shows models of the French multirole fighter aircraft Dassault Rafale C (center), Rafale (right) and Falcon Albatros on the booth of Dassault Aviation at the International Paris Air Show at the Paris-Le Bourget Airport. — AFP photos

LE BOURGET: European aircraft maker Airbus made a splash on the first day of the Paris Air Show with the announcement of the biggest-ever order for civil aircraft, as the French president joined a big crowd for the event's return after a four-year COVID hiatus. The 500-plane deal with low-cost Indian carrier IndiGo kicked off what organizers have billed as the "recovery airshow" after the coronavirus ravaged the sector and the biennial trade fair was cancelled in 2021.

Fighter jets and civilian aircraft streaked across the sky while besuited and uniformed delegations, including Ukrainian military officials and President Emmanuel Macron, toured the stands. This year's airshow has a new focus on defense following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, along with the industry's efforts to reduce its carbon footprint, with French President Emmanuel Macron arriving in a helicopter partly using sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

Macron called for "restraint" to protect the environment but said measures for aviation should be "reasonable" rather than "punitive", adding that the world shouldn't "give up on growth". Huge traffic jams around Le Bourget airport outside Paris were testament to the interest in this year's show, as aircraft makers field hundreds of orders and airlines brace for a near-record number of passengers this year.

The Ukraine conflict has also prompted countries to step up military spending, which could benefit aerospace defense firms. While Russia has been excluded from the event, Ukrainian military officials toured the huge exhibition space at Paris-Le Bourget airport, some taking photos of missiles on display. There were star turns for the Rafale fighter made by France's Dassault and the American F-35 jet, with hundreds of visitors turning their phone cameras to the skies and some plugging their ears against the deafening flypasts.

Le Bourget offers a forum to announce deals with some 2,500 firms lining up to show off their latest planes, drones, helicopters and prototypes such as flying taxis. With 125,000 square meters of exhibition space — the equivalent of nearly 18 soccer pitches — around 320,000 visitors are expected during the week-long event. "Passion for the air hasn't disappeared, that's good news," said Bertrand Godinot, Easyjet's Belgium and France director. Along with the Farnborough airshow in England, which takes place in even numbered years, Le Bourget is a key sales event for the civil and defense industries.

Big deals

Airbus and rival Boeing compete fiercely in announcing orders for aircraft running into the billions of dollars. Monday's IndiGo-Airbus deal covers A320 family planes at a list price of \$55 billion. Although closely-held actual sale prices are usually lower, it marks the largest ever civil aviation order by volume, hailed by Airbus chief executive Guillaume Faury as "an enormous milestone". Airbus and Boeing are also battling to solidify supply chains as they increase production to meet growing demand.

At least 158 planes, helicopters and drones will be on display, from the latest long-haul commercial jets to the F-35 stealth fighter. The United States has a strong presence with 425 exhibitors, while firms from 46 other nations are present. China, which lifted COVID restrictions only at the beginning of this year, is also represented. However, Beijing is not displaying its first homegrown medium-haul passenger jet, the C919, built to compete with the Airbus A320neo and Boeing 737 MAX.

ister Boris Johnson promised to hit net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. But Starmer claimed that too much time had been lost and there had been a lack of investment in green energy compared to countries such as the United States.

An over-reliance on imported fossil fuels had also left UK consumers exposed to international price fluctuations, he argued. "We will need to run fast to catch up, faster still to get ahead, faster again to stay there," he said. "Some nation will become a clean energy superpower. Why not Britain?" Central to Labor's plan is the creation of a new state-owned company, GB Energy, to deliver on its 2030 goal and ensure the country is self-sufficient for power.

Infrastructure investment from borrowing would aim at doubling onshore wind, trebling solar power and increasing offshore wind four-fold. Labor would also insulate 19 million homes to keep heating bills down, Starmer said. Local opposition has dogged the development of onshore wind projects in England for years but Starmer promised to provide financial incentives for local communities to give up land. Environmental campaigners have been angered by Labor refusing to rule out a complete ban on new North Sea oil and gas projects.

Starmer conceded that oil and gas would be "part of the mix for decades to come under exist-

Flying taxis

The airshow also hopes to open a window into the future as projects for flying taxis and other vertical takeoff aircraft abound. Several prototypes will be on display as part of a "Paris Air Mobility" exhibition to showcase the latest innovations that developers hope will change how people travel. Engine maker Safran announced early Monday that it would open four production lines in France and Britain making electric motors for small planes. For his part, Macron arrived aboard Airbus' latest helicopter, the H160, in a flight fuelled with 30 percent SAF before visiting the European group's stand laying out its net-zero-by-2050 plan.

Macron had on Friday announced \$2.2 billion to help develop technologies to reduce aircraft emissions. Air travel accounts for nearly three percent of global CO2 emissions but serves only a small minority of the world's population. With the industry targeting net zero emissions by mid-century, firms are turbocharging efforts to achieve it. The initial focus is on SAF, made from sources such as municipal waste, leftovers from the agricultural and forestry industry, crops and plants, and even hydrogen. But companies are also working to develop battery- and hydrogen-powered aircraft. — AFP



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak speaks at the opening of London Tech Week in central London. — AFP

ing licences well into the 2050s" but the sector was "dwindling". In Scotland, questions have been asked about whether a Labour government would give the go-ahead for the Rosebank oil and gas field west of Shetland, in the far north. "Rosebank is probably up for decision very soon now. And if it is granted, that falls into the category of existing licences" that Labor would promise to respect, he added. — AFP

News in Brief

More rate hikes to come

FRANKFURT: More interest rate hikes will be needed to rein in stubbornly high euro-zone inflation, two senior European Central Bank officials said Monday. "We need to remain highly data-dependent and err on the side of doing too much rather than too little," ECB executive board member Isabel Schnabel said in a speech in Luxembourg. "We thus need to keep raising interest rates until we see convincing evidence" of inflation returning to the ECB's two-percent target, she added. The ECB has hiked rates at the fastest pace ever over the past year in a bid to cool inflation after Russia's war in Ukraine sent energy and food prices surging. The Frankfurt institution raised borrowing costs by another 0.25 percentage points last week, taking the key deposit rate to a 22-year high at 3.50 percent. Another rate hike at the next meeting in July was "very likely" unless there was a "material change" to the economic outlook, president Christine Lagarde said at the press conference last Thursday. — AFP

Crypto fugitive found guilty

PODGORICA: A Montenegro court on Monday found fugitive cryptocurrency entrepreneur Do Kwon guilty of possessing forged documents months after he was arrested at an airport in the Balkan nation with fake passports. The Terraform founder is still awaiting trial for another charge regarding his possible extradition. Both Seoul and Washington are seeking Kwon's extradition for his suspected role in fraud linked to his company's dramatic collapse last year, which wiped out about \$40 billion of investors' money and shook global crypto markets. Kwon along with a travel companion "are guilty because they used a fake passport" from Costa Rica at the airport, said the court in a statement. The duo were also carrying Belgian passports under different names in their luggage, according to the court. Kwon was sentenced to four months in prison, the court said, while his attorney said there were no immediate plans to appeal the ruling. — AFP

Uzbekistan to import Russia gas

TASHKENT: Uzbekistan said on Monday it has signed a two-year contract with Russian energy giant Gazprom for deliveries of natural gas, as Russia seeks new markets for its sanctions-hit energy exports. Gazprom is to send about 2.8 billion cubic meters of gas a year, from October 1, said Uzbekistan's energy ministry, adding this will be the nation's first importation of Russian gas. The gas will be delivered via the Soviet-era Central Asia-Center pipeline that links Russia with the region's former Soviet republics. The contract was signed on Friday in Saint Petersburg against the backdrop of a sharp decline in gas deliveries to Europe, which has dramatically reduced imports of Russian gas since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. — AFP

UK Labor oppn sets out green energy policy

EDINBURGH: The UK's main opposition Labor party on Monday vowed to turn the country into a "clean energy superpower" if it wins the next election. A vote has to be held by the end of next year, and Labour is currently well ahead of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservatives in opinion polling. Outlining its green energy plans in Edinburgh, Labor promised that its plans to address the climate emergency would be "front and centre" of its economic strategy for government.

Leader Keir Starmer pledged "100 percent clean power" by 2030 creating 500,000 new jobs, including 50,000 in Scotland, to deliver energy independence from the likes of Russia and cheaper household bills. "It is an ambitious goal. It will put us ahead of any major economy in the world. But at the moment we're nowhere near the front of the pack," he said in a speech. "This is a race we have to win," he added. The Conservatives under former prime min-

Business

Zain Kuwait hosts insightful talk with Gartner at Innovation Campus

Focus on open banking and role of digital transformation



Malek Hammoud and Gartner VP Analyst, Vittorio D'Orazio with Zain officials and entrepreneurs.



CEO Eaman Al Roudhan at the talk.

KUWAIT: Zain Kuwait recently hosted an insightful talk with Gartner, the global research and consulting firm, to discuss the future of open banking and the role of technology and digital transformation applications in developing the banking sector. During the session, Zain executives explored the company's most recent efforts in empowering banks and financial institutions to embrace digitalization in order to keep up with the accelerating changes in today's markets.

The session was held at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) in the company's headquarters in Shuwaikh and was attended by Zain Kuwait CEO, Eaman Al Roudhan and the company's executive team. The talk was joined by Zain Group's Chief Investment and Digital Transformation Officer, Malek Hammoud and

Gartner VP Analyst, Vittorio D'Orazio and was also attended by many Kuwaiti entrepreneurs and startup owners whom Zain invited exclusively to the event.

The session covered a number of strategic topics related to the future of banking, such as banking-as-a-service, open banking, the recent accelerating growth of digital banks, and the role played by new technologies in developing the banking sector. Technologies such as 5G, managed cloud services, cloud computing, datacenters, digital applications, and more are offered by Zain to empower financial institutions and startups to keep up with the huge changes in local and regional markets.

The Kuwaiti entrepreneurs and owners of e-commerce and Fintech startups that attended the session benefitted

from the event's rich content and close-up insights. Among the attendees were alumni of the award-winning Zain Great Idea (ZGI) tech startup accelerator program, one of Zain's most successful initiatives to support entrepreneurship and innovation in Kuwait and the region.

The occasion also witnessed discussions around the latest projects and strategic plans of Zain Ventures, Zain Group's investments arm that aims to complement its existing investment portfolio and open the door to future investment opportunities in the venture capital, Fintech, and tech world, with a focus on digital innovations in the fast-growing electronic services and startups ecosystem.

Zain recognizes the importance of data technologies in driving digital transformation in the banking sector,

and it has partnered with renowned global providers in cloud computing, datacenter solutions, and IT services to bring the best-in-class solutions to its business customers. Today, Zain hosts a number of major local banks in its globally certified datacenter.

Investing in the world of venture capital provides Zain with a vast range of opportunities to diversify and expand its reach in the surrounding ecosystem. Over the years, Zain has expanded its relationship with regional and international venture capital funds to support the respective portfolio companies whenever appropriate. Zain Group has also continued its active engagement in direct strategic investments in a variety of promising startups from the region, offering them support on multiple fronts,

including a wide geographical reach and progressive customer base for expansion opportunities.

Recently, the Kuwaiti market witnessed an accelerated wave of digital transformation within private sector companies, SMEs and startups, and government institutions. However, at the same time, many new challenges surfaced along with this wave, emphasizing the importance of preserving data and protecting the digital infrastructures of companies from security breaches. To overcome such security challenges, Zain has proactively undertaken the responsibility to offer an all-inclusive and integrated portfolio of cloud services and digital solutions built on the latest world-class technologies and cybersecurity solutions.

KFAS honors Gulf Bank employees

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) honored Gulf Bank employees participating in the seventh edition of the Innovation Challenge Program (2022-2023). Organized by KFAS, and in cooperation with the London Business School, the program aims to stimulate innovation and enhance the creative skills in private sector companies – to support economic growth and contribute towards transforming Kuwait's economy into a knowledge-based economy.

The seventh edition of the Innovation Challenge Program witnessed the participation of several talented employees from Gulf Bank, and focused on the interests of the selected companies, to stimulate the financial sector in Kuwait and become more innovative with its various businesses and activities.

Throughout the four-month program, the teams worked together to find solutions and learn more about the experiences of business leaders who have succeeded in developing their projects. This experience helped enhance the participants' sense of innovation and creativity, providing them with the right tools to become successful business leaders.

The Innovation Challenge Program is a multi-stage program, that provides academic knowledge in business administration, through using practical tools that have been adopted and applied by international companies when facing challenges or de-



veloping new products or services that have been introduced to the market.

The program encouraged the participants to work together to find solutions and learn more about the experiences of business leaders who succeeded in developing their projects – providing them with all the appropriate tools to become innovative and creative business leaders. Gulf Bank plays an active role in the field of innovation amongst Kuwait's private and banking sector institutions and in nurturing national talents – starting with the recruitment process that deals with selecting young Kuwaiti talents and continuing their development following their employment through a series training and development programs.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engag-

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

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

US chip giant to invest \$600m in China plant

BEIJING: US chipmaker Micron said it would invest more than \$600 million in a packing and testing factory in northern China, less than a month after Beijing banned its chips from critical infrastructure projects. In a WeChat statement, the firm said it would invest more than 4.3 billion yuan (\$605 million) over the next few years in its plant in the city of Xi'an to acquire equipment and add a new factory at the facility.

China's cybersecurity watchdog last month said Micron had failed a national security review, telling operators of "critical information infrastructure" to stop buying its products. It was the latest escalation in a bitter chip war between the United States and China, which has seen

Washington move to block Beijing's access to cutting-edge semiconductors. "This investment project underscores Micron's unwavering commitment to our China business and our China team members," CEO Sanjay Mehrotra said in a statement.

Micron said it would buy chip-packaging equipment from the Xi'an-based Licheng Semiconductor, which had already been operating some equipment in the US company's facility under a previous agreement. "The investment is in line with Micron's global packaging and testing concept and would give the company the flexibility to manufacture a wide portfolio of products in Xi'an," the firm said in its WeChat statement. Micron will also build a new facility with production lines for mobile DRAM, NAND and SSD chips, it added.

Chip war

About 10 percent of Micron's \$30.8 billion annual revenue last year came from China, according to company data. But a large portion of Micron products sold in the country were bought by foreign man-



SHANGHAI: A person walks out of a building where the facilities of US semiconductor giant Micron is located in Shanghai. – AFP

ufacturers, analysts noted, and it was not clear if last month's decision by China's cybersecurity watchdog affected sales to foreign buyers. Washington has said it has "very serious concerns" about China's restrictions on Micron. Beijing began an in-

vestigation into Micron in late March, five months after the United States unveiled sweeping curbs aimed at cutting off China's access to high-end chips, chipmaking equipment and software used to design semiconductors. — AFP

Summit to push for global climate and debt reform

PARIS: World leaders will gather in Paris this week with ambitions to re-imagine global financing for a new era shaped by climate change, as a cascade of crises swamps debt-burdened countries. French President Emmanuel Macron has said the Summit for a New Global Financial Pact is aimed at building a "new consensus" to meet the interlinked global targets of tack-

ling poverty, curbing planet-heating emissions and protecting nature. Ideas on the table range from taxation on shipping, fossil fuels or financial transactions, to innovations in lending and a structural rethink of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. France says the two-day summit, which begins on Thursday and will bring together some 50 heads of state and government, was more of a platform for ideas sharing ahead of a cluster of major economic and climate meetings in the coming months.

In particular, the French Presidency said on Friday it wanted to give "political impetus" to the idea of an international tax on carbon emissions from shipping, with hopes of a breakthrough at a meeting of the International Maritime Organization later in June. With trust in short supply over broken climate financing promises from richer countries, developing

nations are looking for tangible progress. The V20 group of countries on the climate frontlines, which now includes 58 member nations, has said restructuring the global financial system to align with climate targets must be completed by 2030. "It's great we are talking about the international financial architecture, but we have to see timelines and we have not seen those timelines," Sarah Jane Ahmed, V20 global lead and finance adviser, told AFP. "If we're starting to do this stuff in the 2030s, it's going to be so much more expensive and the trade-offs are going to be far steeper." Leaders arriving in Paris to champion that message include Kenyan President William Ruto and Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo, as well as Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley, who has become a powerful advocate for reform and will speak at the summit opening on Thursday. — AFP

France to push shipping carbon tax at summit

PARIS: France said it would throw its weight behind an emissions tax on the heavily polluting shipping industry, adding momentum to a campaign long championed by Pacific island nations and environmental campaigners. French President Emmanuel Macron will push the issue at an international conference next week to discuss revamping the global development aid system where Brazilian leader Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as well as a host of African heads of state are expected.

The shipping industry transports around 90 percent of traded goods worldwide and accounts for around three percent of global carbon emissions, which are currently unregulated. Two Pacific nations exposed to the risk of rising sea levels, the Marshall and Solomon islands, have been pushing over the last decade for a \$100-per-tonne tax on maritime industry emissions which would create incentives for operators to cut their pollution.

"We hope that we will give a real political boost" to the proposal at the summit, an aide to said on condition of anonymity on Friday. Macron will host dozens of foreign leaders at the Summit for a New Global Financial Pact in Paris from June 22-23 and a pledge from participating countries such as China, Saudi Arabia or Brazil would represent a concrete achievement from the talks.

French officials believe it would add pressure on shipping groups and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a United Nations agency, which is set to host a summit in two weeks' time where the carbon tax is expected to be discussed. The Marshall and Solomon Islands proposals would add tax of around \$300-400 to the price of a ton of heavy oil used by container ships, raising approximately \$60-80 billion (55-73 billion euros) of tax receipts per year, according to the World Bank.

These funds could then be used by emerging countries to help finance their transition to a low-carbon economy and adapt to climate change. The shipping industry, which operates across multiple jurisdictions and often in international waters, is "currently completely exempt from tax either on their sales or their emissions," the French presidential aide said. "We need new resources" to fight climate change and poverty as the "needs are so huge", the official said.

The United Nations warned in November last year that carbon emissions from shipping were growing and it called on the vast industry to scrap old, polluting vessels and upgrade infrastructure to speed up its green transition. While the world is becoming increasingly aware of the need to slash greenhouse gas emissions to avert catastrophic climate change, the global maritime fleet saw emissions rise by 4.7 percent between 2020 and 2021 alone, the UN's trade and development agency UNCTAD.

It also raised concerns about the average age of ships sailing the seas, which currently stands at nearly 22 years, meaning they rely on older, more polluting engines. The IMO has set a target for shipping to halve its annual emissions between 2008 and 2050, which is less ambitious than other industries targeting net-zero over the same period. The European Commission says on its website that there has been "relatively slow progress in the IMO" to spur efficiency measures in the estimated 90,000 commercial vessels plying the world's seas. — AFP

Business

Vietnam power crisis hits local companies, foreign investors

Southeast Asian nation struggling with series of heatwaves

HANOI: An intensely hot summer and unprecedented drought are straining energy supplies in northern Vietnam, prompting rolling blackouts and sudden power outages that have led to "uncountable" losses among local firms and foreign manufacturers. Vietnam is a crucial part of the supply chain for some of the world's most important companies, and many of them — including Samsung and Apple supplier Foxconn — have factories in the north, not far from the capital Hanoi.

Operations at a large number of factories have been badly impacted by the lengthy power outages, business leaders told AFP. Some were given very little notice or had no warning at all. "We had a 26-hour power cut. It cost us tens of thousands of dollars that day. It's not nice at all," said Vu Chi Hieu, director of Vietnam's KingBill XNK Joint Stock Company that produces aluminum parts in Bac Ninh province, which neighbors Hanoi.

Last week, several northern areas — many of them home to key industrial parks — were told to cut their energy use in half, forcing the Japanese, Korean and European chambers of commerce to petition the government to find a quick solution to the crisis. Susumu Yoshida from Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry told AFP that direct damage from one single power outage affecting five manufacturers at an industrial park was over \$190,000. "Total damage among IPs (industrial parks) in northern Vietnam seems to be an unaccountable amount," he said.

The Southeast Asian nation has struggled with a series of heatwaves since early May when the mercury reached a record high, while rivers and reservoirs at hydroelectric power plants have dried up. Vietnam relies on hydropower for almost half its energy needs but 11 big plants in the north and central regions have had their power generation severely interrupted in recent weeks. Two out of three units at one of the biggest in Vietnam, Thac Ba, have stopped functioning.

At the same time, as the use of air conditioners and electric fans surged, there has been "a 20 per-

cent increase in demand on the network", National Load Dispatch Centre deputy director Nguyen Quoc Trung said. "The power shortage has been and will be intense in the north," until early July, Trung warned at a roundtable discussion in Hanoi late last week. Trung's boss, Nguyen Duc Ninh, was suspended Wednesday pending an investigation into the outages.

Bad image

In the port city of Hai Phong, several associations representing Vietnam's logistics and shipping industries — which rely on a digital network to coordinate deliveries and need power to operate loading equipment and keep trucks cool — filed complaints to state electricity company EVN.

For each power cut lasting over six hours, companies may have to compensate waiting vessels, which pay a docking fee of up to \$50,000 and also face fines themselves for a delay in delivery of the goods, the associations said in a public statement. South Korea — Vietnam's top foreign investor — also complained that power cuts two or three times a week "had badly affected production activities". "The power cut issue will be very serious for not only firms who have already invested in Vietnam, but also for us trying to call for investors to come to Vietnam," Hong Sun, chairman of the Korean Chamber of Business in Vietnam, told AFP.

Other investors agreed that the blackouts — along with an increasingly dark capital city that has turned off many street lights — are not a good look for Vietnam. "We have seen this issue raised both by clients operating in Vietnam and those clients seeking to invest, especially investment in the power sector," said Kevin Hawkins, a partner at DFDL law firm in Ho Chi Minh City who specializes in energy. "It is concerning and (they) question whether this is a short-term issue or a continuing problem."

'Slowly dying'

A recent government target to reduce energy



HANOI: A vendor transports packs of ice for sale on his motorcycle in Hanoi. — AFP

consumption by two percent per year until 2025 suggests the issue may persist. Vietnam has also made an ambitious pledge to shift away from coal-fired power by 2050 as part of efforts to counter climate change. Demand for electricity in fast-growing Vietnam is increasing by more than eight percent per year on average, according to an official statement in early June.

Power saving is therefore "an important and urgent solution to maintain energy security and sustainable development," the government said. Thibaut Giroux, chairman of the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry and CEO of steel parts producer

Stolz-Miras, told AFP his factory received a request to reduce average daily consumption by 10 percent from now to 2025, even though their facility is stationed in southern Dong Nai province.

"(To comply) I would have to reduce production, because basically what is consuming power is my production machinery," said Giroux, who provides parts for giants such as Nestle, Unilever and Bayer. "If I do that I'm slowly dying." If no solution is found, Japan's chamber of commerce warned in a letter to authorities that "some member companies... may even think of shifting their production facilities" out of Vietnam. — AFP



The Bank of England is pictured in the City of London on May 11, 2023. The Bank of England is forecast Thursday to deliver its twelfth straight interest rate hike as it seeks to dampen high inflation but risks worsening a cost-of-living crisis. — AFP

UK widens stress tests to include funds, insurers

LONDON: The Bank of England on Monday launched a new stress test that will for the first time cover non-banking financial institutions, which played a role in recent UK markets turmoil. So-called shadow banking institutions — including hedge funds, pension funds and insurers — will face a system-wide "exploration exercise" to assess the risks that they pose to stability, the BoE said in a statement. "The exercise aims to improve understanding of the behaviors of banks and non-bank financial institutions in stressed financial market conditions," it added. "It will explore how those behaviors might interact to amplify shocks in UK financial markets that are core to UK financial stability." After the 2008 global financial crisis, central banks imposed regular stress tests on major commercial lenders to test their ability to withstand another sector-wide meltdown and avoid further costly banking bailouts.

The BoE has repeatedly stated that it is satisfied with Britain's top banks. However, London markets have faced shocks in recent years as a result of the shadow banking sector. The BoE recently estimated that such institutions represent about half of total assets lent by the global financial system. Non-banking finance players face less regulation than traditional lenders. The industry played a key role in UK bond market chaos late last year.

The BoE was forced to buy UK debt in September 2022 in an emergency intervention to avert financial catastrophe, after a controversial tax-slashing budget by the short-lived government of ex-prime minister Liz Truss caused bond yields to soar and sparked panic. Some pension funds use Liability Driven Investments (LDIs), which are linked to financial derivatives and intended to help ensure that the income generated by the assets covers their long-term commitments.

However, the chaos caused the value of assets, notably government bonds, to dive and yields to jump. "We regularly run scenario exercises with a variety of firms which support our efforts to protect and enhance the stability of the UK financial system," said Jon Cunliffe, the BoE's deputy governor for financial stability.

"The launch of this exercise will provide valuable insight into the system-wide dynamics for banks and non-banks following a severe but plausible stress to financial markets." After UK markets calmed in the wake of Rishi Sunak replacing Truss as prime minister, bond yields have resumed their rise. The yield on Britain's two-year bond jumped above five percent Monday, striking a level last seen during the 2008 global financial crisis. It comes with the Bank of England set to raise interest rates once more on Thursday as the central bank struggles to cool stubbornly-high British inflation. — AFP

Markets drop as China stimulus hopes fade

LONDON: Asian and European stocks fell Monday as investors await more interest-rate decisions this week and fret over the lack of a stimulus plan to kickstart the Chinese economy. Equities enjoyed a strong run-up last week, partly on expectations that Beijing would unveil economic measures following two interest rate cuts. Investors expressed disappointment over the lack of new policy announcements on Monday, while sentiment was subdued with US markets shut for a public holiday.

Markets faced "continuing concerns about China's faltering recovery" following the end of COVID restrictions, said AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould. "The post-COVID surge anticipated in China appears to be losing momentum and there is uncertainty around how the authorities in the country might look to get things moving in the right direction." Oil prices also stumbled on worries over energy demand from China, a key crude consumer. On a positive note, hopes for a thaw in China-US relations were boosted as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken held meetings with President Xi Jinping and top envoy Wang Yi in Beijing.

Rate calls in Europe

Traders were on tenterhooks before interest rate decisions due Thursday in Britain, Norway and Switzerland following last week's US pause and euro-zone hike. The Bank of England is widely expected to lift its key interest rate for a 13th time in a row as it struggles to bring down high inflation. Investors are nervous over the size of the hike, as they also

UN adopts 'historic' high seas treaty

UNITED NATIONS: The world's first international treaty to protect the high seas was adopted Monday at the United Nations, creating a landmark environmental accord designed to protect remote ecosystems vital to humanity. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres hailed as a "historic achievement" the treaty that will establish a legal framework to extend swathes of environmental protections to international waters, which make up more than 60 percent of the world's oceans.

"The ocean is the lifeblood of our planet and today you have pumped new life and hope to give the ocean a fighting chance," he told delegates. Following more than 15 years of discussions, including four years of formal negotiations, UN member states finally agreed on the text for the treaty in March after a flurry of final, marathon talks. The text, since frozen, has been pored over by the UN's lawyers and translators to make sure it matches in the body's six official languages.

"Countries must now ratify it as quickly as possible to bring it into force so that we can protect our ocean, build our resilience to climate change and safeguard the lives and livelihoods of billions of people," said Rebecca Hubbard of the High Seas Alliance. Scientists have increasingly come to realize the importance of oceans, which produce most of the oxygen we breathe, limit climate change by absorbing CO₂, and host rich areas of biodiversity, often at the microscopic level.

But with so much of the world's oceans lying outside of individual countries' exclusive economic zones, and thus the jurisdiction of any single state, providing protection for the so-called "high seas" requires international cooperation. The result is that they've been long



BINZHOU: A worker produces medical supplies that will be exported at a factory in Binzhou, in China's eastern Shandong province. — AFP

wait on UK inflation data due Wednesday. The yield on Britain's two-year bond jumped above five percent on Monday, striking a level last seen during the 2008 global financial crisis. Markets are also uneasy because commercial banks are ramping up their own interest rates on home loan products, in anticipation of more BoE hikes. In turn, that threatens to slam consumer spending and worsen the UK's cost-of-living crisis. "The current reaction on markets could do the BoE's job for it, with mortgage deals already shooting up in advance of the bank's decisions, suck-

ing more demand out of the economy," said Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at stockbroker Hargreaves Lansdown.

The European Central Bank had last week hiked euro-zone borrowing costs to a 22-year peak to dampen inflation but the US Federal Reserve hit pause, while the Bank of Japan maintained its ultra-loose monetary policy. Investors will be closely watching Fed chief Jerome Powell's twice-yearly testimony to Congress this week, hoping for clues about the policy board's thinking. — AFP

Italy sets curbs on Pirelli's Chinese investor Sinochem

ROME: Italy's government said it would impose special conditions related to smart sensors in Pirelli tyres to protect national strategic assets, seeking to curb China's influence over the national tyre maker. The right-wing government of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni announced in a statement that it would exercise its "golden powers" on a pending shareholders' agreement ahead of Pirelli's general meeting of shareholders on June 29.

The government's intervention "endows Pirelli with a series of instruments to protect its strategic asset, including a strategic industrial security clearance that provides for limits on accessibility to information," it said. Pirelli's shareholder meeting had been postponed to give the government enough time to examine a shareholders' agreement with Chinese conglomerate Sinochem, Pirelli's largest shareholder with a 37 percent stake. Sinochem bought into Pirelli in 2015 in a 7.1 billion euro (\$7.8 billion) deal that raised serious concerns in Italy about the independence of the Milan-based group. Sinochem has a pact with Pirelli's second-largest investor, the Camfin holding company of Pirelli CEO Marco Tronchetti Provera, which holds a 14.1 percent stake.

In May 2022, the parties decided to extend their agreement for a further three years, and intended to submit it to the shareholders' meeting. The government has a say in the matter due to its special powers (called "golden power") in sectors considered strategic to safeguard the national interest. In its statement, the government cited the importance of vehicle data compiled by sensors implanted in Pirelli tyres, which, when combined with artificial intelligence, can create "complex digital models that can be used in cutting-edge systems such as smart cities and digital twins". — AFP

'Miracle molecules'

He called for a "sprint" towards ratification so that the accord enters into force by the next UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France in June 2025. The treaty, officially known as the treaty on "Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction" or BBNJ, also introduces requirements to carry out environmental impact studies for proposed activities to be carried out in international waters. Such activities, while not listed in the text, would include anything from fishing and maritime transport to more controversial pursuits, like deep-sea mining or even geo-engineering programs aimed at fighting global warming.

The treaty also establishes principles for sharing the benefits of "marine genetic resources" (MGR) collected by scientific research in international waters — a sticking point that almost derailed last-minute negotiations in March. Developing countries, which often don't have the money to finance such expeditions, fought for benefit-sharing rights, hoping to not get left behind by what many see as a huge future market in the commercialization of MGR, especially by pharmaceutical and cosmetic companies searching for "miracle molecules" The treaty will open for signatures on September 20, when dozens of heads of state will be in New York for the UN General Assembly. — AFP

Lifestyle

Paris Fashion Week looks to future with Pharrell Williams debut

The debut of multi-talented star Pharrell Williams at Louis Vuitton is the hottest ticket at Paris Fashion Week as it kicks off on Tuesday, seen as a significant moment in the evolution of the multi-billion-dollar industry. The renowned musician, DJ and producer takes over as artistic director for the fabled French brand, hoping to build on the shift towards US streetwear that helped it achieve more than €20 billion (\$22 billion) in revenue for the first time last year.

Williams offered a teaser on social media, sharing a photo of himself in front of the Orsay Museum featuring a giant billboard of singer Rihanna, heavily pregnant and sporting some colorful LV bags. "It's unprecedented

for a label at this level – a designer arriving with a first menswear campaign that features a woman... He is giving us an early taste," said Pierre Alexandre M'Pele, editor of GQ France.

The 50-year-old faces a major challenge filling the shoes of Virgil Abloh, the former Kanye West sidekick who breathed new streetwear-infused life into Louis Vuitton prior to his tragically early death from cancer in 2021. But Williams has long been a red carpet sensation, known for daring outfits that go far beyond the usual hip-hop stylings, and a string of collaborations with Chanel, Moncler and Tiffany – as well as Louis Vuitton.

"Williams has been living in hip-hop, and looking into the future, for more

than 20 years, a valuable perspective for a luxury men's wear world that has already absorbed hip-hop and is hoping to divine what might come next," the New York Times wrote after his appointment.

'Much more creative'

Williams's arrival comes at a time when men's fashion feels like the more exciting side of the industry. "Men's fashion took years to find fertile ground for evolution, but it's now doing so more visibly than womenswear," said fashion consultant Pascaline Wilhelm. "The way gender, masculinity and femininity are being called into question at the moment allows it to be much more creative with-

out falling into caricature," she added. One of the newcomers making a mark is Burc Akyol, a French-Turkish designer who is joining the official fashion week for the first time, showing just before Williams on Tuesday. His label, formed in 2018 after apprenticeships with Dior and Balenciaga, has already attracted the support of Cate Blanchett and Cardi B with his elegant, non-gendered style.

"There are several talents in Paris who are following this idea of non-gendered fashion. Or at least, the clothes are not gendered," said M'Pelé. Not that this should be seen as entirely a modern phenomenon, he added. "Several centuries ago, men wore dresses and high heels."

One big name that is not returning this week is Saint Laurent. Its artistic director Anthony Vaccarello made a surprise appearance at the last menswear week in Paris for the first time, but has preferred to stay away from the big fashion showcases and give one-off shows in places like Berlin, Malibu and Venice. Celine's designer Hedi Slimane, considered one of the most influential names in menswear, also likes to follow his own rhythm, and is holding his next Paris catwalk show a couple of weeks after everyone else on July 3. — AFP

Study: Night owls die earlier due to drinking, smoking

People who tend to stay up late are not more likely to die younger than early risers – as long as they don't use those longer nights for drinking and smoking, a 37-year-long study suggested. Previous research has shown that night owls, who stay up later and struggle to drag themselves out of bed in the morning, are more likely to suffer from a range of health problems.

In 2018, a large study in the UK found that evening people had a 10 percent higher risk of dying than morning people over a 6.5-year period. While that was potentially worrying news for the world's night owls, that research did not take into account factors, such as alcohol-consumption, that could be behind those deaths.

So researchers in Finland sought to find out more in a study published in the peer-reviewed journal *Chronobiology International*. The study followed nearly 24,000 same-sex twins in Finland, who were asked in 1981 to identify whether they were a morning or an evening person.

A third said they were somewhat an evening person, while 10 percent said they definitely were. The rest were morning people. The evening people tended to be younger, and tended to drink and smoke more. When the researchers followed up in 2018, more than 8,700 of the twins had died.

Over the 37 years, the researchers found that the definite night owls had a nine percent higher risk of death from all causes – a similar rate to the 2018 study. But that difference was "mainly due to smoking and alcohol", the study said. For example, it found that non-smoking night owls who were light drinkers were no more likely to die earlier than morning people.

Night owls and drugs

The study's lead author, Christer Hublin of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, told AFP the results showed that night owls can act if they want to lower their risk of an early death. "Clearly evening people should critically think about the amount of alcohol and tobacco they are using," he said. Independent of other factors, the time when people tend to sleep, known as their chronotype, has "little or no" contribution to their mortality, Hublin added.

Jeevan Fernando, a chronotype researcher at Cambridge University not involved in the study, told AFP that while the findings were sound, the research had limitations. That participants merely self-identified as morning or evening people was "unsatisfactory because it does not include any objective information" unlike more modern methods, he said.

The study also failed to include drugs other than alcohol and tobacco, he said: Cocaine in particular had been linked to people changing from early to late risers. Fernando has previously led research that showed night owls have worse mental health – particularly anxiety – and that drug use could exacerbate the problem. — AFP



Prada-Simons duo provide elegance, comfort at Milan show for men

Iconic designer Miuccia Prada teamed up with Raf Simons in Milan on Sunday to present their new men's collection, combining elegance and comfort with an aim to "free" men's bodies.

It was one of the most highly anticipated collections on the third day of Fashion Week, which focuses on the spring-summer 2024 period. Their show took place in the austere surroundings of the Prada Foundation, setting the scene for a sober but refined men's wardrobe. The starting point was "the simplest white shirt". From this base, said Miuccia Prada, "you can do whatever you want" and modify it according to the

individuality of each person.

The freedom of the body is reflected in the ubiquitous pair of shorts, available in an infinite variety of colors – black, white, beige or grey – matched with shirts and jackets in the same shade. Ties appeared to have been banished, unlike at other labels that have been bringing them back. The Prada silhouette was streamlined, the cuts supple and the fabrics fluid, in cotton, denim or leather. Shirts were tucked into shorts or trousers, and

the waist was tightened, in contrast to the width of the shoulder pads.

Revisiting the classics

The traditional shirt was dusted off, sometimes sophisticated, sometimes nonchalant, with ultra-long sleeves and whimsical touches such as floral motifs, fringes and a multiplicity of pockets. "When you follow the show, you see a classic men's suit," said Raf Simons. But on closer inspection, he added, it turns out to be "completely different". Instead, he said, it "allows the body, which is always moving and changing, to feel free".

This collection applied the same formula to a whole range of clothing, including mackintoshes, waistcoats and sportswear. But Prada has not abandoned classics such as its loose-fitting double-breasted coats in white, topped with a small collar in the same color, revisited for the occasion.

Raf Simons, a 55-year-old Belgian designer who has already worked with Jil Sander, Dior and Calvin Klein, has been co-creative director of Miuccia Prada since 2020. The label was founded in 1913 by Miuccia Prada's grandfather and is 80-percent owned by her family. In January, Andrea Guerra, former head of eyewear giant Luxottica, took over the reins of Prada for a transitional period until Lorenzo Bertelli, 35 – the eldest son of 74-year-old Miuccia Prada and former CEO Patrizio Bertelli, 77 – transitions into the role.

Fighting 'fast fashion'

Talking to AFP in January, Lorenzo Bertelli said he wanted to continue his mother's fight against "fast fashion" – the rapid renewal of clothes on sale. Miuccia Prada is instead an advocate of "sustainable" fashion. The mass production of clothes by certain brands has harmful consequences for the environment, and the textile industry is one of the most polluting on the planet.

As for Prada's pledge to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, Lorenzo Bertelli said the group hoped to make progress and interim targets were "on track". The luxury house says it plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 29 percent by 2026 compared to 2019, for its production sites and vehicle fleet, as well as electricity and gas consumption. — AFP



Models present creations for Prada Men's Spring - Summer 2024 fashion show as part of the Fashion Week in Milan, on June 18, 2023. - AFP photos



Lifestyle

FROM CORONATION TO EU'S POOREST NATION: BULGARIAN MAESTRO ON TOUR

On the same evening as Vasko Vassilev led the orchestra at King Charles III's coronation, the virtuoso violinist jumped on a plane to tour the EU's poorest nation — his native Bulgaria. A far cry from the splendor of Westminster Abbey, the stage in the northwestern Bulgarian town of Montana was dilapidated and poorly

moved. Of all his listeners, they were "the most important", he said. "It was wonderful. I'm shivering," businessman Micho Stavrov, 64, said of the electrifying performance. Economics student Eva Yanakieva described the rare, top-notch concert as "breathtaking".

In this part of Bulgaria — the European Union's poorest member state



Vasko Vassilev signs autographs after a performance.



Bulgarian violinist and conductor Vasko Vassilev performs in Montana, North-West Bulgaria, on June 1, 2023.

lit. But the audience was captivated. "For me it was very important to perform in these towns, where there aren't many music events and where people are prepared to deprive themselves of something else in their lives to spend money on a ticket," 52-year-old Vassilev told AFP.

The audience at these "very special", sold-out performances is "brimming with expectations", he said, visibly

— more than 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. It is precisely this "contrast" between his native country and his adopted home in the UK that energizes Vassilev. Bulgaria, where he indulges in local specialties like banitsa and boza (a savory pastry dish and a malt drink), "has never left his mind".



'All genres' of music

Three decades ago, aged just 23, Vassilev became the youngest leader and first ever concertmaster at London's prestigious Royal Opera House (ROH). Himself the son of musicians, the violinist is now the opera house's creative producer. When he learned he had been appointed concertmaster at King Charles III's coronation, he was "particularly proud as a naturalized British citizen". "By taking part in this sumptuous spectacle — which only happens once or twice

in 100 years — we have become an integral part of history," he told AFP of the royal ceremony on May 6.

But Vassilev would not have missed the tour through rural Bulgaria for the world, despite the stress of starting straight after the regal pageant at Westminster. Besides, the Bulgaria concerts were planned "long before the coronation", when Queen Elizabeth II was still alive, he added. The coronation "was squeezed in before the town of Vratsa", where the tour began.

Vassilev dislikes to be pigeonholed as a classical musician, playing "whatever he likes", from Bach to flamenco, and Paganini to tango. "It's important to be able to interpret all genres. Even Mozart played popular music," he said. Direct from Bulgaria, Vassilev has already moved on to Tokyo to tour with London's Royal Ballet. "We musicians are a nomadic tribe, always on the move." — AFP



Amanda Nell Eu

Acclaimed Malaysian horror film embraces 'female monstrosity'

One day they are little bundles of joy, the next mood-swung monsters called teenagers with spots, identity crises and oceans of anger. But in "Tiger Stripes", the first Malaysian movie to win a top prize at Cannes, these teen monsters don't just get acne, they start to morph and growl, sprout whiskers and claws and escape into the jungle. That's a truer face of puberty, insists director Amanda Nell Eu, a passionate advocate of "feminine monstrosity", which she uses to offer a wildly fresh take on female empowerment.

"It is not all beautiful — she's a monster, she's wild, she's violent and scary but also she is herself and we should celebrate that," Eu said of the film's hairy heroine. Eu, 37, wanted to challenge the silence and fear hanging over puberty she recalled growing up in Malaysia and England. "I feel like for a lot of girls once they hit the defining moment of puberty they start learning about shame, about insecurity," she said. "I suddenly became hyper aware of my body and I realized other people were hyper aware of it and that made me feel really uncomfortable."

In "Tiger Stripes" she exposes and explodes that discomfort, following three friends at a girls' school and the changing dynamics when one gets her period. As she begins to sweat more, smell differently and needs a bra, others look at her like she is dirty. But then the film veers off into uncharted territory. The girl whips off her full veil to reveal a tigerish monster, terrifying those around her, but also offering a new narrative of liberation. "I love the ambiguity of it. She turns into a creature instead of a woman, and that just makes it more open for everyone."

'Feminine monstrosity'

Eu's inspiration for her first feature came from the female monsters she read about in Malaysian folklore — and also her experience at a girls' boarding school. She has a British grandmother and moved to England when she was 11, enrolling in a school in High Wycombe. "It can be the most beautiful supportive place and the most horrible, lonely place at the same time," Eu said.

She studied graphic design at Central Saint Martins in London but discovered her true calling was cinema. Wanting to make films but feeling out of place in Britain, she moved back to Kuala Lumpur. "I didn't know who I was and... I couldn't find something that I wanted to tell a story about." The feeling of being an outsider only followed her back to Malaysia though, where she talked differently, and did not share the cultural references of her peers. — AFP

'THE FLASH' DASHES TO BOX OFFICE WIN BUT STUMBLES SHORT OF ESTIMATES

Warner Bros' "The Flash" sprinted to the top of North American box offices in its opening weekend, in a Friday-to-Sunday run dominated by spin-offs and sequels. But the live-action take on the DC Comics superhero only brought in \$55.1 million, according to figures released Sunday by Exhibitor Relations — earnings that analysts said were "far below estimates" for its debut.

Ezra Miller stars as the speedy protagonist, joined by other DC characters including Supergirl and Batman. It dethroned the latest "Transformers" installment, from Paramount, which was last weekend's top earner. Notching the number two spot this weekend was "Elemental", an animated immigrant fable from Pixar, which earned \$29.5 million in what was also its opening weekend.

Pixar's first totally original new film to hit theaters since the start of the pandemic is set in the fantastical Element City — where residents made out of fire, water, earth and air must learn to live in close proximity, despite their highly combustible differences. Out of the top five highest-earning films this



US actor Ezra Miller arrives for the world premiere of "The Flash" at Ovation Hollywood in Hollywood, California, on June 12, 2023. — AFP

weekend, the rest were rounded out by movies with characters already familiar to generations of audiences.

Sony's "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse" picked up \$27.8 million,

would not be screened if that section remained, and censors cut the offending dialogue for Nepali audiences. But since the film remained unchanged outside Nepal, Shah issued a wider ban in protest. "Banning only this film in the Kathmandu municipality while it runs in other parts of the country and abroad will establish a misleading fact," Shah wrote on social media on Sunday. "So screening of any Indian film will be prohibited from tomorrow (Monday) in Kathmandu municipality unless the objectionable part is removed from the film."

The film's distributor in Nepal, Shree Byankatesh Entertainment, said Monday that cinemas in several other cities and towns had postponed screening "Adipurush" over "security concerns". Nakim Uddin, founder of QFX Cinemas, Nepal's largest cinema chain, said they were challenging the ban. "The announcement has disturbed the screening of Indian films in Kathmandu, but we are moving to court against it," Uddin told AFP on Monday. — AFP

Nepal capital bans Indian films in protest against Hindu movie

The mayor of Nepal's capital launched a ban Monday on the screening of hugely popular Indian films after a movie inspired by the ancient Hindu epic Ramayana sparked controversy. Critics have taken issue with lines of dialogue in the film "Adipurush", which was released globally in Hindi and four other Indian languages on Friday. The inspiration for the movie, the Ramayana, centers on King Rama's attempt to save his kidnapped wife Sita. Sita was believed to have been born in Janakpur, a southern district of Nepal, but the film suggests she was born in India, triggering anger in Kathmandu.

Before the film's release, Kathmandu Mayor Balendra Shah warned it



(Left to right) Actors Devdatta Nage, Sunny Singh, Kriti Sanon and Prabhas attend the trailer launch of their upcoming mythological movie 'Adipurush' in Mumbai on May 9, 2023. — AFP

the latest spin on the Marvel Comics superhero, picks up the story of half-black, half-Latino Miles Morales, using an eye-popping blend of decades-old 2D comic book drawing techniques with the latest computer-generated visual effects.

Dropping to fourth place was "Transformers: Rise of the Beasts", which earned \$20 million, part of a \$103.6 million haul so far. Disney's "The Little Mermaid", a live-action remake of its 1989 animated tale of an underwater princess who gives up her voice in pursuit of true love, brought in \$11.6 million. It has now earned some \$253.5 million.

Rounding out the top 10 were:

"The Blackening" (\$6 million)
"Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 3" (\$5 million)
"The Boogeyman" (\$3.8 million)
"Fast X" (\$1.6 million)
"Asteroid City" (limited release, \$790,000). — AFP



In this handout photo taken on Feb 13, 2006, the eagle from the stern of WW2 German battleship "Admiral Graf Spee", scuttled on Dec 17, 1939 off the coast of Montevideo, is recovered from the depths of an estuary. — AFP

Uruguay abandons plan to melt, recast Nazi bronze

Uruguayan authorities are reversing plans to melt down a bronze eagle found on a sunken Nazi ship and recast it as a dove of peace, the president said Sunday. The imposing bronze eagle, weighing 350 kg and clutching a swastika between its claws, was recovered from a World War II-era German destroyer off Uruguay's coast 17 years ago. On Friday, President Luis Lacalle Pou had told reporters that this "symbol of violence and war" would be turned into a "symbol of peace and union."

But the plan drew concern from both cultural and political spheres. By Sunday, the president had reversed himself, saying: "There is an overwhelming majority that does not share this decision" to melt and recast the eagle. "And if one

wants to generate peace, the first thing one has to do is to generate union," he added. "Clearly this has not generated it"

The bronze eagle had adorned the stern of the Admiral Graf Spee, a battleship involved in one of the first naval skirmishes of World War II. The Graf Spee's captain, Hans Langsdorff, scuttled the battleship — one of the Third Reich's largest — on Dec 17, 1939, following the Battle of the River Plate, off the Uruguayan coast. The sculpture was found in 2006 after a 10-year hunt, but what to do with it has long been a source of controversy.

The German government complained when, after its discovery, it was briefly displayed in Montevideo, with Berlin discouraging the exhibition of Nazi paraphernalia. In 2010, the German foreign minister said his desire was "to prevent the remains of the symbols of the Nazi regime from becoming commercialized," and discouraged selling it to private collectors, fearing the eagle could fall into the hands of Nazi sympathizers. — AFP



UK BALTI RESTAURANTS keep calm and curry on

Head Chef Zaf Hussain creates a balti dish in the kitchen of his restaurant 'Shababs' in the 'Balti Triangle' area of Birmingham, central England on June 7, 2023. — AFP photos

They gave their name to an area of Britain's second city but Birmingham's celebrated balti restaurants are facing a battle to survive. The balti – a curry of spices, coriander, onions, tomatoes and green peppers with meat or fish – was created by Pakistani migrants in the mid-1970s to feed hungry customers from nearby pubs. But after the heyday of the one-pot dish in the 1990s, when more than 30 restaurants could be found in the so-called "Balti Triangle" in the southeast of the city, today only a handful remain.



A chef cooks naan breads in the kitchen of the authentic balti restaurant 'Shahi Nan'.



Staff prepare ingredients used in balti dishes in the kitchen of 'Shababs'.



Ingredients, including herbs and spices, used by Head Chef Zaf Hussain to cook a balti dish.



sively popular in the 1990s, I think landlords thought, 'This is a golden ticket and I can put the rents up,'" Munro told AFP. "They were family businesses and they couldn't afford to pay that." Restaurants also closed because the children of the first Pakistani immigrants to Birmingham did not want to go into the trade.

Popular

Zaf Hussain has bucked the trend, taking over Shababs, on Ladypool Road, which his father and brother ran before him. In his small kitchen, he passionately explains and shows how to cook a balti, deftly throwing oil, curry powder, coriander and other spices into a small steel dish with handles. He adds pieces of chicken and a little stock, and a warm spicy aroma fills the kitchen. Just a few minutes later, it's ready to eat.

the responsibility of holding on to that tradition for as long as we can," he said.

The goal, he added, was to "be able to serve something that would have tasted the same 60 years ago". "That's the challenge." In the restaurants, the clientele has changed over the years. There are now more families, who prefer to take their time eating.

Legacy

David Pariera, 38, has been eating baltis in the area since he was a child and calls them "the best (dish) in the world". "It's a bit sad to learn that they're closing," he said, sitting at a table at Shababs, but insisted the balti houses were still popular. "Come back on a Friday night. The weekend's absolutely rammed," he said.

The origin of the word "balti" remains contested but it could come from the Urdu word for "bucket" – a reference to the metal dish in which it is cooked and served. The small, flat-bottomed metal bowls, made of pressed carbon steel with handles for stability on the gas stove, are made locally. Balti champions have tried to get the dish European heritage status but their plans were scuppered by Brexit, Britain's departure from the European Union.

Now Munro, author of "Going for a Balti: The Story of Birmingham's Signature Dish" and who runs a website for balti lovers, is looking to the local authorities for support. In the meantime, Hussain has big plans and work is already under way to expand his restaurant. "I want to carry on this heritage. I want to carry this legacy forward for my family and for Birmingham," he said. "Even though the restaurants are in decline in the area, we are still going positive and looking on the up." – AFP



Butchers prepare meat for sale in the 'Balti Triangle' area of Birmingham.



A worker stamps a balti bowl with its logo at the factory of metal fabricators Lee-Mark Spinnings in Birmingham.



Mark Sheppard works to create a balti bowl at the factory of metal fabricators Lee-Mark Spinnings.

also of the inner-city area of Sparkbrook, where the Irish pubs of old have closed and the population has diversified significantly.

"Most places didn't own their own property – they rented it off landlords – and when balti became mas-

Hussain first learned to cook baltis as a teenager and sees it as his duty to keep the tradition alive. Shabaz Khan, son of the owner of another remaining restaurant, the Shahi Nan Kebab House on nearby Stratford Road, agreed. "We have



People walk in the streets of the 'Balti Triangle'.



A woman walks past a food store in the 'Balti Triangle'.

Sports

Martin holds off Bagnaia to win German MotoGP

Emotional moment after fighting for almost two years

SACHSENRING: Jorge Martin edged world champion Francesco Bagnaia after a cut-and-thrust battle over the last 10 laps to win Sunday's German MotoGP, to trim the Italian's lead in the standings. It was Martin's second Grand Prix victory. His last was in the Styria Grand Prix in Austria in 2021. "Emotional moment after almost two years fighting for it, finally it arrived," said Martin in the winner's enclosure. "It was a tough, tough race. Peco (Bagnaia) was pushing so hard." After beating Bagnaia in Saturday's sprint race, Martin, a Spaniard who rides for the Pramac Ducati team, this time resisted late counter-attacks to win. Frenchman Johann Zarco, on another Pramac, completed the podium.

On Saturday, Martin, starting from the second row of the grid, overtook pole-sitter Bagnaia, on a factory Ducati, on the fourth lap. On Sunday, he made his move even earlier and took first on the third lap. Bagnaia gave chase and overtook with 10 laps to go but Martin hit back and regained the lead. Bagnaia pressed hard and the bikes touched on the second-last lap, but both riders remained upright. Martin stayed ahead to close out the win.

The Spaniard had built a large lead by the middle of the race before Bagnaia started clawing back his advantage. "I had some issues at the middle of the race with the rear tyre so I didn't strain too much." He responded aggressively when Bagnaia grabbed back the lead. "To be in front was my target so when he passed me I tried to keep the front," said Martin. "The last two laps I was just trying to

push the maximum." Bagnaia said he had been out-fought in the final laps. "I was gaining and gaining but wasn't enough. I tried in second-last lap but I touch him and then to recover was a bit on the limit and he was too fast."

Martin picked up a maximum 37 points by winning both the weekend's races and with 144 overall. Martin, has cut Bagnaia's championship lead to 16. "Happy with the second position," Bagnaia said. "I gave my maximum." Marco Bezzecchi was fourth and Luca Marini fifth, both on Mooney Ducatis, giving the Italian manufacturer the top five places and eight of the top nine, with only Australian Jack Miller on a KTM in sixth breaking their domination. Last year's winner and former world champion, Frenchman Fabio Quartararo trailed in 13th on his Yamaha. Six-time world champion Marc Marquez withdrew an hour before the start after breaking a thumb in a crash in the morning warm-up session.

The Spaniard, who went over the handlebars of his Honda at full speed shortly before 10:00 am (0800 GMT), appeared to be completely stunned. He took several minutes to recover before limping away and heading back to the pits. Marquez missed three races earlier this season after undergoing hand surgery following a spill in the season-opener in Portugal. It was his fifth operation since crashing in Jerez in 2020. Marquez had been enduring a nightmare weekend, with no less than five crashes. The next race is at Assen in the Netherlands on June 25 before a six-week summer break. — AFP



SACHSENRING: Ducati Pramac Racing Team's Spanish rider Jorge Martin (right) celebrates after winning the Sprint race with second placed Ducati Lenovo Team's Italian rider Francesco Bagnaia during the MotoGP German motorcycle Grand Prix at the Sachsenring racing circuit in Hohenstein-Ernstthal. — AFP

News in Brief

Boulter wins battle of the Brits, claims first WTA title

NOTTINGHAM: Katie Boulter won her first WTA Tour title on Sunday, beating Jodie Burrage 6-3 6-3 in the Nottingham Open in the first all-British final at this level for 46 years. Boulter cemented her position as British number one and will move to a career high inside the world's top 80. "I'm definitely going to be sleeping with this trophy tonight," said Boulter, who grew up in nearby Leicester. "I dreamt of this moment since I was a little girl, training here at four or five years old, coming here as a fan and now having coming here as a player. I dreamt big and it means more than everything to me." The last all-British final on the WTA Tour was in 1977 when Sue Barker beat Virginia Wade in San Francisco. — AFP

Ireland's Maguire secures LPGA Meijer Classic title

GRAND RAPIDS: Ireland's Leona Maguire made an eagle and four birdies in the last six holes on Sunday to win the Meijer Classic for her second career LPGA title. Maguire, a runner-up in the event each of the past two years, fired an eight-under-par 64 to finish on 21-under 267 for 72 holes at Blythefield Country Club in Belmont, Michigan. "It was nice to go bogey-free on Sunday," Maguire said. "I tried to be patient. My goal was to get to 20-under and it was nice to go one even better than that." Thailand's Ariya Jutanugarn was second on 269 after a closing 66 with China's Lin Xiyu and South Korean Amy Yang sharing third on 270 and South Korean Kim Hyo-joo fifth on 272. — AFP

Griekspoor, Alexandrova claim grass court titles

'S-HERTOGENBOSCH: Tallon Griekspoor claimed his second title of the season when he came from a set down to defeat Jordan Thompson in the 's-Hertogenbosch grass court final on Sunday. The 38th-ranked Dutchman came through 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 after two hours and 37 minutes against number 103 Thompson of Australia. Griekspoor, 26, had also won the Pune hard court title in India at the start of the year. He is the second successive homegrown champion at the Wimbledon warm-up event after Tim van Rijthoven upset Daniil Medvedev in the 2022 final. In the women's event, Ekaterina Alexandrova came from behind to defend her title, battling past fellow Russian Veronika Kudrmetova in three sets. — AFP

Tiafoe eyes Wimbledon after Stuttgart success

STUTTGART: Frances Tiafoe is serious about his Wimbledon chances after winning his first grass-court title on Sunday at Stuttgart. The American, who saved a match point against German Jan-Lennard Struff in a 4-6, 7-6 (7/1), 7-6 (10/8) win will move into the world top 10 for the first time on Monday, joining eighth-ranked compatriot Taylor Fritz among the elite. The last time the United States boasted two men in the top 10 at the same time was in July 2011 courtesy of Mardy Fish and Andy Roddick. "To win the title in a match like that and be in the Top 10 - that's a lot of emotions for a guy like me," he said. Tiafoe snuck over a diving volley to take victory on his third match point and will carry that confidence onto the grass at Queen's Club from Monday as well at Wimbledon next month. — AFP

Clark wins maiden major at US Open

LOS ANGELES: Wyndham Clark held his nerve to win the 123rd US Open on Sunday, capturing his first major title and denying four-time major winner Rory McIlroy his first in nine years. Clark, whose previous best finish in six prior major starts was a tie for 75th, shrugged off two late bogeys to close with a pair of confident pars for an even-par 70 to seal victory with a 10-under-par total of 270 at Los Angeles Country Club.

That was good enough for a one-shot win over McIlroy, who also closed with a 70. World number one Scottie Scheffler carded an even-par final round to finish third on 273. Clark dedicated his Father's Day victory to his late mother, who died from breast cancer in 2013. "I just felt like my mum was watching over me today. She can't be here. I miss you mum," said Clark, who had broken through for his first US PGA Tour victory at Quail Hollow just last month. "I just feel like it was my time."

Clark, ranked 32nd in the world, started the day tied for the lead with Rickie Fowler and had a three-shot lead after his fourth birdie of the day at the par-five 14th where he reached the green in two and two-putted for birdie from 20 feet. McIlroy, playing a group ahead, had bogeyed the same hole. But Clark's lead dwindled to one after bogeys at 15 and 16, and McIlroy kept the pressure on with an unlikely par at 17 - where his errant tee shot ended up on the fairway of the neighboring second hole.

Clark missed the green at the par-four 17th, but stuck his third shot within two feet of the pin for a needed par. His approach at 18 left him 60 feet from the hole, and he made a confident run with his first putt and sealed the victory with a par putt from within three feet. "I hit some great shots coming down at the end, and although I made a couple bogeys and it seemed like maybe the rails were coming off, I was inside pretty calm," Clark said. "I'm really pleased with myself with how I performed."

McIlroy had opened with a birdie, then parred 12 straight, finding green after green but unable to get any birdie putts to drop. He bogeyed 14, where his third shot was plugged deep in the muddy bank of



LOS ANGELES: Wyndham Clark of the United States poses with the trophy after winning the 123rd US Open Championship at The Los Angeles Country Club on June 18, 2023. - AFP

a bunker and he received a free drop, only to miss a nine-foot par-saving putt. "I hung in there and fought right to the end and didn't quite get the job done," said McIlroy, who won the last of his four majors in 2014. "But I'll keep coming back until I get another one." — AFP



Kuwaiti costumes showcased at the Special Olympics

KUWAIT: The Olympic Stadium in the German capital Berlin witnessed the opening ceremony of the 16th Special Olympics World Games "Berlin 2023", which will end on the 25th of June, with the participation of 7,000 players - representing more than 170 countries competing in 26 sports, including 27 athletes from Kuwait participating in 10 sports. The games were declared open by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier in the presence of 50,000 spectators, where the flame was lit, marking the official launch of the events of the sixteenth edition.

The opening ceremony was attended by the Deputy Director General of the competitive sports sector of the Public Authority for Sport Bashar Abdullah

and the ambassador of Kuwait to Germany Najib Al-Bader, who greeted Kuwait delegation and congratulated them.

Following the German president's opening of the games and speeches by Timothy Shriver, president of Special Olympics International, Mary Davis, CEO, regional presidents, and official speakers who appeared at the main podium, including Kuwait's Maryam Theyab, the official spokesperson for the Middle East and North Africa region, the ceremony kicked off. There were many impressive artistic performances that embody the message of the Special Olympics as the largest humanitarian sporting event in the world focused on empowering Special Olympics players in society through sports.

Hanaa Al-Zawawi, chairwoman of Kuwait Special Olympics Board of Directors and head of the delegation expressed her pleasure with the honorable appearance of the Kuwaiti delegation at the opening ceremony. She added that many delegations were keen to wear national and folkloric costumes, pointing out that the Kuwait delegation represented

the Kuwait culture by wearing dishdasha, (Kuwaiti besht), (ghatra and Aqal), while the Kuwaiti girls players wore (Darraal) and presented a wonderful image that was appreciated by everyone.

She added that players and administrators from all over the world shared photos and memorable shots with them. The Kuwaiti player Mohammed Al-Naijbari also participated with the athletes of participating countries in the River of inclusion celebration by pouring an amount of water he brought from Kuwait to make a symbolic river flowing with the aspirations of the Special Olympics to achieve sports and social integration of people with disabilities.

Zawawi added that the celebrations of the games began three days before the opening ceremony through the host cities program, which included cultural, entertainment and tourism events that had a positive effect on the athletes. She concluded by affirming her confidence in Kuwait Special Olympics athletes to continue their journey of brilliance, make achievements and present an honorable image of the Kuwaiti disabled sports, and wished them success.

Palou wins IndyCar Road America title

WASHINGTON: Spain's Alex Palou won the IndyCar Grand Prix of Road America on Sunday, stretching his season points lead with his third triumph in four races and seventh career victory. The 26-year-old Spaniard overtook US leader Colton Herta with seven laps remaining and cruised to the finish to capture the 55-lap feature on the 4.014-mile, 14-turn permanent road course at Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. Palou won last month's Indianapolis road race, settled for fourth in the Indianapolis 500 then won two weeks ago on the streets of Detroit before adding Road America to his trophy haul. "I'm super happy," Palou said. "We're going to try and keep it rolling."

Indy 500 winner Josef Newgarden of the United States, last year's Road America winner, was second with Mexico's Pato O'Ward third, New Zealand's Scott Dixon fourth and pole-sitter Herta fifth. Palou leads the season points race on 324 points with Sweden's Marcus Ericsson falling from 51 to 74 points adrift in second. Newgarden is third, 81 adrift, with Dixon and O'Ward 98 back. "We're good on points so far but IndyCar, you never know," Palou said. "We're going to focus on every race and keep going on it." The triumph followed a practice crash that forced the team to rebuild Palou's car for qualifying and the same mechanics formed the pit crew that got him refueled quickly to set up the pivotal pass.

"It has been an amazing weekend," Palou said. "We started with a lot of speed, big mistake by my part in practice. It was amazing. They had only an hour and a half to rebuild all the car. We went back on track and it was even better than in practice. They

gave me the pit stop that gave us the win as well. Cannot thank them enough." Herta led most of the race, Palou grabbing a brief lead on a lap-29 pit stop before Herta quickly overtook him. Herta made his final pit stop with 15 laps remaining while his rivals stayed on the course one more lap before pitting.

Herta won the race back for track position just ahead of Palou, who lurked until making the most of his first chance with seven laps to go and went by on the outside then raced ahead to the end. "He was really quick and I thought I was not going to catch him," Palou said. "Kept on pushing, put on some pressure and we finally made it happen." Herta fell back late trying to save fuel to reach the finish. "It's frustrating," Herta said. "We had the best car and we were cruising the whole time. I had so much more in it and I never got to show it because we were always trying to save fuel and go that lap later. That's a killer." — AFP

Sports

Australia captain Cummins rocks England in Ashes Test

Ashes-holders get better of a rain-marred third day

BIRMINGHAM: Australia captain Pat Cummins starred with both bat and ball as the Ashes-holders had the better of a rain-marred third day in the first Test against England in Birmingham on Sunday. The lower-order batsman made a useful 38 in a total of 386 that left Australia just seven runs behind on first innings. And the fast bowler then dismissed Ben Duckett before England also lost their other opener, Zak Crawley, in a dramatic 20-minutes' play between the showers. England were 28-2 in their second innings, a lead of just 35 runs, at stumps after a huge downpour at 1450 GMT had sent the players from the field. They had made steady progress when an initial rain delay stopped play for an hour-and-a-quarter.

But after the match resumed in overcast skies, with the Edgbaston floodlights piercing the gloom, conditions were now hugely in favor of World Test champions Australia's pace attack. And they made the most of a brief 22-ball session by taking two wickets for no runs as England slumped from 27-0 to 27-2. Cummins led the way, with Duckett edging the 30-year-old low to all-rounder Cameron Green, who dived forward to hold his latest excellent catch in the gully. Three balls later, Scott Boland had Crawley caught behind off a superb full-length delivery that angled in and straightened to take the edge.

were both yet to get off the mark when the umpires finally abandoned play for the day at 1713 GMT. "It's nice to have two wickets overnight," said Australia wicketkeeper Alex Carey. "It's pretty evenly poised... It was an exciting 20 minutes, the lights came on and the ball was moving around a bit more." England seamer Ollie Robinson, who took 3-55, insisted the hosts had no complaints about a tough batting stint. "That's the game," he said. "If the umpires say it's fit to play, it's fit to play. You won't hear any excuses from us."

Khawaja's epic innings

Earlier, England finally saw the back of Usman Khawaja but only after his painstaking 141 had effectively turned the first of a five-match series into a one-innings showdown.

Australia, bidding for a first Ashes series win in England in 22 years, resumed on 311-5. Khawaja was then 126 not out, having ended his decade-long wait for an Ashes hundred in England, with Alex Carey on 52 after Australia had recovered from 67-3. Both batsmen should have already been out, with Khawaja bowled off a Stuart Broad no-ball on 112 and Carey dropped by opposing wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow on 26.

Bairstow had made a run-a-ball 78 in England's first innings, but his bad time behind the stumps continued with just the fourth ball of Sunday's play as he gave Carey another reprieve by dropping a one-handed chance off James Anderson. But Anderson, the most successful fast bowler in Test history, took matters into his own hands as the 40-year-old bowled

Carey between bat and pad for his first wicket of the series. New batsman Cummins launched off-spinner Moeen Ali for two sixes and later hoisted Broad high over the rope as Australia moved closer to drawing level.

Broad had labelled the pitch "soulless" on Saturday, but the innovative tactics that have characterized the leadership of England captain Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum helped wrap up the Australia innings quickly. Khawaja was finally bowled by Ollie Robinson trying to pierce an unusual "umbrella field" as an impressive 321-ball innings, including 14 fours and three sixes, finally came to an end. The final four Australian wickets fell for just 14 runs in 23 balls, Robinson ending the innings when he had Cummins caught in the deep by Stokes. — AFP

Spain's triumph calms fears on Fuente project

ROTTERDAM: Spain coach Luis de la Fuente has quelled the doubts around him by leading his country to Nations League glory and ending a decade-long trophy drought. La Roja needed penalties to see off Croatia and triumph in Rotterdam, but doing so helped ease tensions following their Euro 2024 qualifying defeat by Scotland in March. De la Fuente's appointment by the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) to replace Luis Enrique raised eyebrows — the 61-year-old is a relative unknown as a coach, having worked within the country's youth ranks from 2013 onwards.

After an unconvincing performance in a win over Norway in his opening game, defeat in Glasgow sparked alarm. However matches three and four proved far more enjoyable for the coach, beating Italy and then Croatia to lift the cup. The king of Spain, Felipe VI, will welcome the team home at Zarzuela Palace on Monday after they earned their first trophy since Euro 2012. That conquest, along with World Cup 2010 and Euro 2008, was a golden era for Spain, which all future teams are judged against.

Although the Nations League is a new competition, this only its third edition, Spain and De la Fuente are hopeful that it can prove a springboard for more success, with the waters now more tranquil around him. "All projects are better constructed on a base of victory and this gives us more strength, confidence, calm," said the coach. RFEF president Luis Rubiales defended De la Fuente and said stories that he considered ousting him were false.

"The coach has always been very secure, and we believe in him to the maximum," Rubiales told reporters on Sunday. "We have no problem, the coach has always been 100 percent in his job, and we have always trusted in him. He's been at 100 percent since the beginning. Starting a new project is hard, and with new players, so young — that's hard too." Rubiales pointed out winning the Nations League meant beating Europe's top teams, with England, France, Germany and Portugal eliminated by the final four.



ROTTERDAM: Spain's players celebrate with Spain's head coach Luis de la Fuente (left) on the podium after winning the penalty shootouts and the UEFA Nations League final football match between Croatia and Spain at the De Kuip Stadium in Rotterdam on June 18, 2023. — AFP

Rodri the key

With reduced concerns around his capability, attention has turned to how the coach's side is shaping up to mark Spain's new era. One of De la Fuente's biggest choices has been a shift to a 4-2-3-1 formation, instead of Spain's typical 4-3-3. The key cog is Manchester City midfielder Rodri, who was named the player of the Nations League finals.

While Luis Enrique drew criticism for playing Rodri as a centre-back at the 2022 World Cup to make room for veteran Sergio Busquets, his successor has reinstalled him in the centre of the pitch. Rodri, arguably the best in the world in his position, linked well with Mikel Merino against Italy and then Fabian Ruiz against Croatia. The 26-year-old, who scored City's Champions League final winning goal in Istanbul against Inter Milan earlier in June, has even been touted as a potential Ballon d'Or winner. Speaking with clarity and confidence and leading by example on the pitch, Rodri has become his country's torchbearer.

"This generation promises a lot," he said after the Nations League triumph. Before, he had called for Spain to start a new winning cycle. Rodri's emergence as the team's "frontman" is in part due to an absence of star power in the attack, with Spain boasting a host of dangerous — but not elite — forwards. Barcelona's Ansu Fati was bright off the bench against Croatia and showed he can have a big impact if he can stay fit, while Yere-my Pino, Dani Olmo and Marco Asensio are all similarly bright, but inconsistent.

Alvaro Morata has played at many of Europe's top sides without fully convincing, while back-up striker Joselu has just joined Real Madrid, his career best form coming at the ripe age of 33. Spain could not find a breakthrough against Croatia and needed penalties to triumph, which De la Fuente said added extra spice to the victory. "We deserved to win before, but the penalties give it a dash of the epic," said the coach, who expects to continue thriving. "Obviously, winning gives you more shine, and I expect more joy to come in the future." — AFP

Assembly of 'Salwa' renews confidence in Board of Directors

KUWAIT: The General Assembly of Salwa Al-Sabah Sports Club on Sunday approved the financial and administrative reports for fiscal year ending 2022-2023 during the assembly's meeting at the club's premises in the presence of a large number of members of the general assembly members. The meeting was chaired by the Chairwoman of Salwa Al-Sabah club, Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmed, and in the presence of Deputy Chairwoman Nayla Al Ali, Secretary Engineer Rasha Al Sayegh, Treasurer Suad Sadek, in addition to Assistant Secretary Khuloud Baqer and Assistant Treasurer Jehan Al Shatti.

The General Assembly meeting of "Salwa" witnessed the presentation of the most important and most prominent achievements of the club's teams by Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmed, who pointed out that the season was full of local and foreign participations, and witnessed many achievements by the players with the major support of the club's Board of Directors. She also thanked them for renewing confidence in the board of directors, which draws its strength from the General Assembly, in order to continue the March of success and excellence of Salwa Al Sabah club, and that ambitions are great to make more achievements.



She said "Last season witnessed many achievements for the club, including winning the volleyball league's championship for the third consecutive time that in addition to the Super and Cup championships. As for the U-18 volleyball team, it also achieved the league championship for the second consecutive season, in addition, the table tennis players won a large number of medals with the national team, and at the local level achieved titles of all competitions in various age groups.

"The athletics team also achieved first place in the refresher tournament in its first and second editions, and first place in the first preliminary tournament," Al-Ahmed added. At the level of the national teams, Salwa Al-Sabah club player Dana Al-Azmi won the gold

medal in the West Asian Championship in discus throw. The player Madawi Al-Shammari won the silver medal in the Sports and Cultural Olympiad - Iran. She thanked the Public Authority for Sport for supporting women's sports movement, especially Salwa Al-Sabah club.

In turn, the members of the General Assembly of Salwa Al-Sabah club praised the Board of Directors' efforts and gave it unlimited support headed by Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmed, and their confidence in the continued development of women's sports and all club teams to win more championships next season, especially after the great and wonderful work done by the board last season, and place the club in the ranks of advanced clubs in women's sports.

Rodgers returns for second spell as Celtic boss

GLASGOW: Brendan Rodgers made a dramatic return as Celtic manager on Monday, four years after walking out on the Glasgow giants to join Leicester. Rodgers agreed a three-year contract with the Scottish champions, who were searching for a new boss after Ange Postecoglou left to take charge of Tottenham. Former Liverpool boss Rodgers had been out of work since being sacked in April by Leicester, who went on to be relegated from the Premier League.

"I am really delighted to return to Celtic and I am hugely excited by this great opportunity. When I was given the privilege of being asked to join the club again, it was a very simple decision for me and my family," Rodgers said. "Ange has done some brilliant work across the last two years and I will be doing all I can to maintain Celtic's momentum as we face into all our domestic and European challenges." The manner of Rodgers' exit in February 2019 infuriated sections of the Celtic support. A banner in the first game following his departure read: "You traded immortality for mediocrity. Never a Celt, always a fraud."

However, time has been a healer, at least for the Celtic board as they have turned to the Northern Irishman to maintain the Hoops' domestic dominance. "We have enjoyed some great times at Celtic before and this will be my goal again, to deliver good football, ensure we have a team we all love to watch and ultimately bring more success to our fans," Rodgers said. "The club is in fantastic condition at all levels and I would like to thank the board for putting their trust in me to take the team forward."

A proven winner

Celtic chairman Peter Lawwell added: "We wanted a proven winner and that's what Brendan is. Through the process of identifying the new manager, it was clear that Brendan was the outstanding choice. He has delivered before for Celtic and we are sure through his many qualities, he will do so again."

Celtic have won 11 of the last 12 Scottish Premiership titles and five domestic trebles in seven seasons. Rodgers more than played his part in that success, winning all seven available trophies during his two-and-a-half years at Parkhead and left with Celtic eight points clear at the top of the Scottish Premiership. The 50-year-old went onto enjoy success with the Foxes too, leading Leicester to back-to-back fifth-placed finishes in the Premier League in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and winning the club's first ever FA Cup two years ago. However, it all went horribly wrong for Leicester this season. Rodgers was fired with 10 Premier League games remaining after dropping into the relegation zone.

But after winning only twice under interim boss Dean Smith, Leicester went down just seven years after winning the Premier League. As his former employers prepare for the Championship, Rodgers will return to the Champions League next season with Celtic guaranteed a place in the group stages. Rodgers is the only Celtic manager to have won a Champions League match beyond the qualifying stages in the past 10 years and making a long-awaited impact on Europe is one of his major challenges. — AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134

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

Change of Name

I, Leena Castalino, holder of Passport No. M6714512, do hereby change my name to Leena (as given name) Castalino (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Leena Castalino and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. **(#3810) 20-06-2023**

I, Khojema, holder of Indian Passport No. V3753960, having permanent address Rajasthan, India - 314026, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: Khojema (given name) and Gadi (surname). **(#3809) 20-06-2023**

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US clinch Nations League title

Balogun shines as US blank Canada 2-0

LAS VEGAS: Folarin Balogun scored his first goal for the United States as they clinched the CONCACAF Nations League with a 2-0 win over Canada at Allegiant Stadium on Sunday. Arsenal striker Balogun, making just his second appearance since switching his national team allegiance from England, grabbed the second goal for the US after Chris Richards had headed them in front in the 12th minute.

The US have won both of the Nations League tournaments held in the CONCACAF region and will now look for a regional double in the Gold Cup later this month. Both goals were created by midfielder Gio Reyna, a player who found himself involved in the off-the field sagas surrounding head coach Gregg Berhalter, who was re-appointed on Friday.

Reyna's perfectly floated corner was firmly headed in by Richards, who arrived at the back post with little close attention from the Canadian defense. The Borussia Dortmund midfielder then set up Balogun's maiden goal for his new team, bursting out of midfield before slipping the ball through the defense and into the path of the striker who confidently drove home. It was a natural striker's finish, with Balogun taking the ball in his stride and drilling home first-time from an angle.

Balogun spent last season on loan from Arsenal to French Ligue 1 club Reims where he scored 21 goals and while his club future remains uncertain, he looks set to be a firm part of the American squad heading into the 2026 World Cup which they will co-host with Canada and Mexico. The New York-born forward, who moved to England when he was a two-year-old, was part of the England Under-21 team before switching to the US in May. He made his debut in the 3-0 semi-final win over Mexico and on Sunday's final he struck up a strong understanding with wingers Tim Weah and Christian Pulisic in what now looks a very promising US forward line.

"I'm just over the moon we were able to win tonight," said Balogun. "It's going to take time to build relationships with my team-mates. I'm just delighted that (the goal) helped us to win this



LAS VEGAS: Team USA celebrates a 2-0 win against Canada during the 2023 CONCACAF Nations League final at Allegiant Stadium on June 18, 2023. — AFP

game. I've only been here a short time, but I feel like I'm part of something big and it's a great feeling," he added. Despite their midfield being weakened by the absence of first choices Tyler Adams and Weston McKennie, the Americans were dominant for large stretches. Reyna had to go off at the interval with an ankle injury and the US looked less fluent without him but they showed plenty of spirit to neutralize Canada.

"We got the result tonight and we put in a top performance once again. We fought, we battled,"

said captain Pulisic. "It's another step in the right direction. It's just going to be about these knockout games come those big tournaments – Copa America, World Cup – when times get tough we've got to step up, score the goals when it counts and keep them out of our goal. We did a good job of that tonight," he said. The US, being led by interim coach BJ Callaghan ahead of Berhalter's return to the team, gave few opportunities to a Canada team who remain without a trophy in 23 years.

The best chance for John Herdman's team fell

to Cyle Larin in the 67th minute but after his drive was blocked, he put his second attempt high over the bar. Alphonso Davies, the Bayern Munich winger who is so often the danger man for Canada, was kept quiet for much of the game with the US doubling up their marking on him. Davies' chances only came in the final stages when some desperate blocks from the Americans kept him out. Mexico claimed third place in the tournament after beating Panama 1-0 thanks to a fourth minute goal from Jesus Gallardo. — AFP





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