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**NOTICE**

Eid Mubarak to all our readers! Kuwait Times will not publish its print edition from June 29 to July 2, 2023. Readers can stay informed with breaking news and information via our website [Kuwaittimes.com](http://Kuwaittimes.com) and our digital media channels on Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and Facebook.



# Hajj climaxes on Mt Arafat

## Amir exchanges Eid greetings with Arab, Muslim leaders

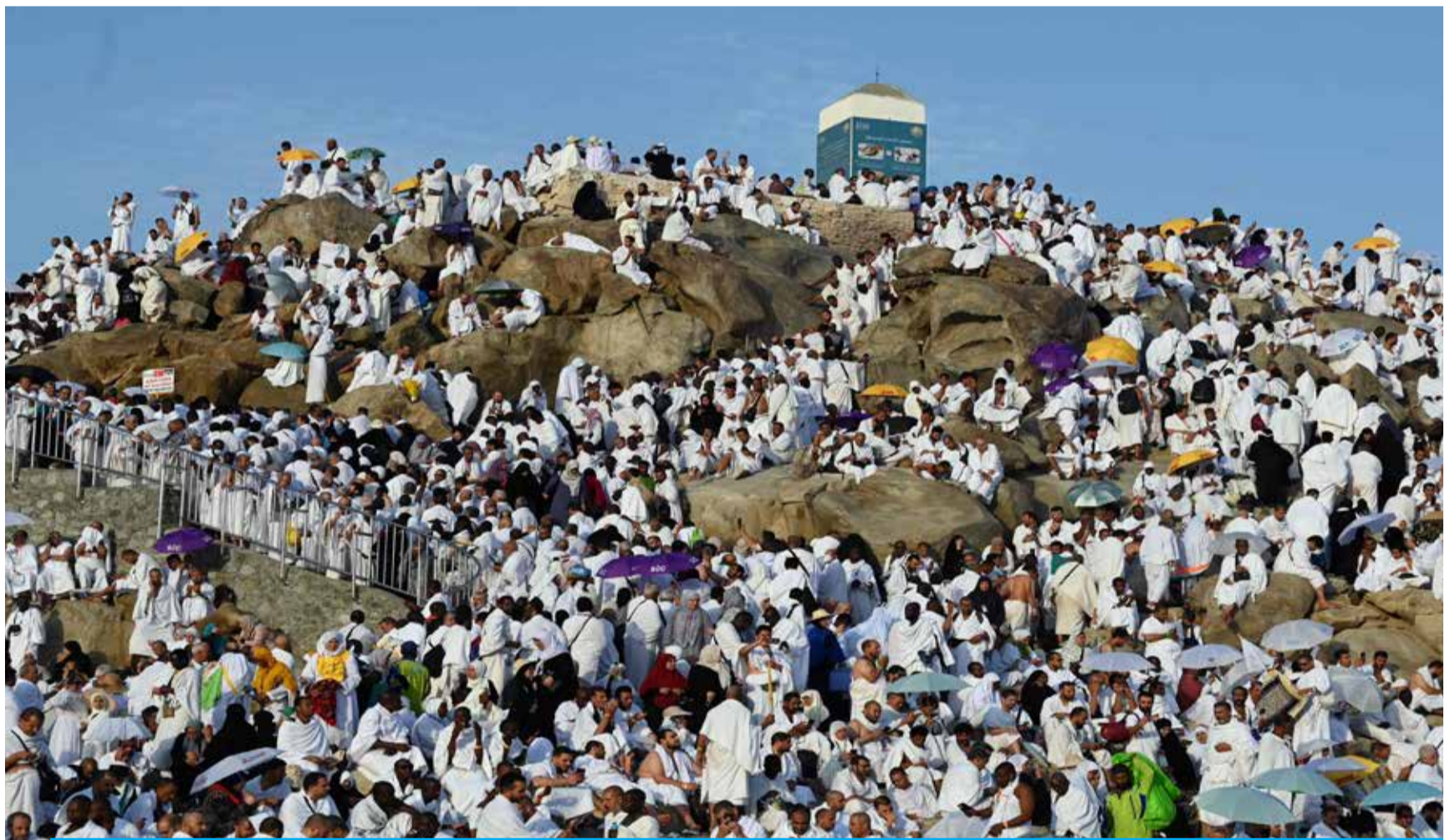
**MOUNT ARAFAT:** Hundreds of thousands of Muslim pilgrims prayed at Mount Arafat in searing heat on Tuesday at the height of an annual hajj pilgrimage held in the fierce Saudi Arabian summer. Worshipers crowded the rocky rise and surrounding area from before dawn and when the sun appeared, it revealed vast numbers of white-robed worshippers thronging the sacred site. The ritual is the high point of the annual pilgrimage, one of the five pillars of Islam. "I'm very happy. It's a moment I have been waiting for my entire life," said Fadia Abdallah, 67, from Egypt, wearing a white abaya and sitting on the ground beneath an umbrella.

High temperatures have been a constant challenge for the pilgrims, who come from around the world, and the mercury hit 44 degrees Celsius before midday on the hajj's most physically demanding day. As the pilgrims prayed and recited from the Holy Quran, helicopters hovered low overhead, monitoring the crowds. Tree-shaped water towers sprayed cooling showers on the visitors, and free water bottles and snacks were handed out from large trucks.

Six field hospitals with more than 300 beds have been arranged in Arafat, Yasser Bair, a Saudi defense ministry official, told the state-run Al Ekhbariya TV. "I can't believe I'm God's guest," said Rahma, a 57-year-old Libyan housewife, fighting back tears as she spoke. The hajj is a life goal for many Muslims, who are expected to perform the pilgrimage at least once if they are financially and physically capable.

The pilgrims pray all day at Arafat, where Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) gave his final sermon. After sunset, they will travel the short distance to Muzdalifah, where they will sleep in the open air. On Wednesday, they will gather pebbles and hurl them at three giant concrete walls in the symbolic "stoning of the devil" ritual.

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**MOUNT ARAFAT:** Muslim pilgrims crowd Mount Arafat, also known as Jabal al-Rahma or Mount of Mercy, during the climax of the hajj pilgrimage on June 27, 2023. — AFP

## WHO warns COVID 'has not gone away'

**COPENHAGEN:** The World Health Organization's European office on Tuesday warned the risk of COVID-19 has not gone away, saying it was still responsible for nearly 1,000 deaths a week in the region. The global health body on May 5 announced that the COVID-19 pandemic was no longer deemed a "global health emergency". "Whilst it may not be a global public health emergency, however, COVID-19 has not gone away," WHO Regional Director for Europe Hans Kluge told reporters. The WHO's European region comprises 53 countries, including several in central Asia.

"Close to 1,000 new COVID-19 deaths continue to occur across the region every week, and this is an underestimate due to a drop in countries regularly reporting COVID-19 deaths to WHO," Kluge added, and urged authorities to ensure vaccination coverage of at least 70 percent for vulnerable groups. Kluge also said estimates showed that one in 30, or some 36 million people, in the region had experienced so called "long COVID" in the last three years, which "remains a complex condition we still know very little about".

"Unless we develop comprehensive diagnostics and treatment for long COVID, we will never truly recover from the pandemic," Kluge said, encouraging more research in the area which he called an under-recognized condition. The health body also urged vigilance in the face of a resurgence of mpox, having recorded 22 new cases across the region in May, and the health impact of heat waves. — AFP

## Putin says Russia dodged civil war, to disarm Wagner

**MOSCOW:** President Vladimir Putin aimed to rally Russia's military and security services Tuesday, telling them they halted a slide into civil war when Wagner mercenaries rebelled and marched on Moscow. As Russia announced preparations to disarm Yevgeny Prigozhin's private force, Putin and his supporters were insisting his rule was not weakened by the revolt widely seen as the biggest threat to Kremlin authority since he came to power.

Asked whether Putin's power was diminished by

the sight of rebel mercenaries seizing a military HQ, advancing on Moscow and shooting down military aircraft along the way, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "We don't agree." Putin himself, attempted to portray the dramatic events at the weekend as a victory for the Russian regular military which has shown restraint in not being drawn into fighting with the Wagner force.

"You de facto stopped civil war," Putin told troops from the defense ministry, National Guard, FSB security service and interior ministry gathered for a televised address in a Kremlin courtyard and a minute's silence for airmen slain by Wagner. "In the confrontation with rebels, our comrades-in-arms, pilots, were killed. They did not flinch and honorably fulfilled their orders and their military duty," Putin said.

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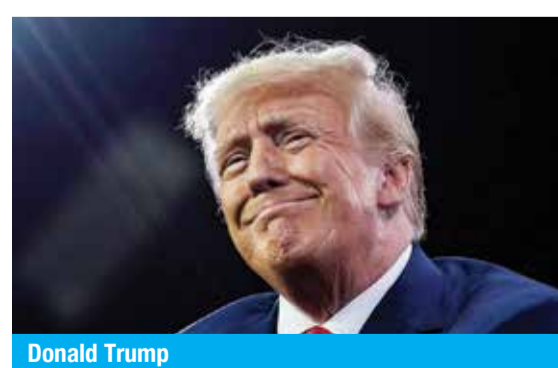


**MOSCOW:** Russian President Vladimir Putin addresses troops gathered on Sobornaya (Cathedral) Square from the porch of the Palace of the Facets on the grounds of the Kremlin on June 27, 2023. — AFP

## Trump heard discussing secret docs on tape

**WASHINGTON:** Former US president Donald Trump can be heard discussing secret documents he had apparently held on to after leaving the White House and acknowledging they had not been declassified, in an audio recording aired by US media. The two-minute clip, played by CNN late Monday and later obtained by ABC and CBS, comes from an interview Trump gave at his Bedminster, New Jersey golf club in July 2021 for people working on a memoir by his former chief of staff Mark Meadows.

Parts of the recording's transcript were cited as evidence in special counsel Jack Smith's 49-page indictment of Trump on charges he had mishandled classified documents after leaving office. The audio file includes a moment when Trump seems to indicate he is holding a secret Pentagon document with



Donald Trump

plans to attack Iran. "These are the papers," Trump says in the recording, a quote that was not included in the indictment.

He also refers to something as "highly confidential" and "this is secret information" as he seems to be showing something to the others in the room. "This was done by the military and given to me," Trump continues, before noting that one would need to "declassify it" for it to be used in the book. "You see, as president I could have declassified it."

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## Football pitch of tropical forest lost every 5 secs

**PARIS:** Earth lost an area of carbon-absorbing rainforest larger than Switzerland or the Netherlands in 2022, most of it destroyed to make way for cattle and commodity crops, an analysis of satellite data released Tuesday revealed. That is nearly a football pitch of mature tropical trees felled or burned every five seconds, night and day, and 10 percent more than the year before, according to the World Resources Institute (WRI).

Tropical forests destroyed last year released 2.7 billion tons of CO2 into the atmosphere, equivalent to the fossil fuel emissions of India, the world's most populous nation, the WRI's Global Forest Watch unit reported. Brazil accounted for 43 percent of the loss, with the Democratic Republic of Congo and Bolivia

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# Q8 to open first hydrogen refueling station in Rome

Move to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 75%



ROME: (Left) Kuwaiti Ambassador to Italy Nasser Al-Qahtani with Italian government officials. (Right) Rendering of the new filling station. — KUNA photos

ROME: Kuwait Petroleum International (Q8) announced Monday it has laid the foundation of the first hydrogen refueling station in the Italian capital Rome. In a press statement sent to KUNA, the company said that it would "launch the first station to supply hydrogen in Rome in collaboration with the specialized Maire Group". The announcement was made at a ceremony attended by the company's representatives in Italy along with Italian government officials and energy and transport industry leaders.

Q8 noted that the project comes in implementation of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's strategy to provide its customers with a variety of clean and sustainable petroleum products made from renewable raw materials. It clarified that the provision of hydrogen fuel would transform the station into an integrated center to support sustainable and low-emission mobility. It is a valuable addition to Q8 fueling stations and to its current services which include providing conventional fuel of liquefied petroleum gas and methane, electric car charging ser-

vice, as well as hydrogen fuel once construction is completed by 2026, added the statement.

It pointed out this initiative will enable Q8 customers in the future to travel about 100 km using one kilogram of hydrogen fuel for small vehicles and eight kilograms for large buses, which would reduce carbon dioxide emissions compared to conventional fuel by more than 75 percent. "This project was developed in cooperation with the Italian government within the framework of its national plan for economic recovery and resilience aimed at developing a sustainable mobility network by supporting renewable energy and hydrogen projects," it stated, unveiling that it would be funded equally by the partners and the European Union's Fund for Future Generations.

The statement quoted the CEO of Kuwait Petroleum International Shafi Al-Ajmi, as saying: "Italy is considered the most important European market for the company due to the volume of its operations there: Over 2,800 fueling stations in addition to the

Naples depot and the Milazzo refinery". "We will continue to implement KPC's approach to the energy transition for the year 2050, by supporting the global movement to reduce harmful gas emissions in all of our global operations," he asserted. He congratulated CEO of Q8 Italy and its leadership for their great role and efforts to make this achievement.

Executive Director of Q8 Italy Fadhel Al-Faraj said: "Q8-Italy seeks to transform from a conventional fuel provider into a diversified energy company, within the framework of its energy transformation strategy. We welcome all sustainable products as they help us achieve our first goal, which is to respond to the needs of our customers, thus preserving our market share, and our second goal which is to establish a sustainable supply network for future vehicles in Italy."

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Italy Nasser Al-Qahtani hailed Q8's initiative to establish the first hydrogen refueling station in Rome and its contribution to the transition to clean sustainable

energy. "The adoption of this new pioneering step by Kuwait Petroleum International and its branch in Italy to contribute to the development of the Italian network for the transportation, storage and use of renewable products is directed towards transforming the vast Q8 network stations into an integrated center for renewable products with low emissions," Qahtani told KUNA.

He underlined that the step shows the Kuwaiti company's role in achieving the goals of environmental sustainability and the Italian and European policies for energy transition through joint investment with the Italian government within the framework of its national plan for economic recovery, flexibility and sustainable mobility. Qahtani admired KPC's strategy goal of energy transition by 2050 to contribute to the global efforts aiming to reduce harmful emissions, and the importance of Q8 investments in Italy, which has contributed over 30 years to the growth of the Italian economy and the strengthening of bilateral relations. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Kuwait Chung Byung-Ha cuts the cake at the opening ceremony of "Taste of Korea" event.

## Weeklong 'Taste of Korea' event opens in Kuwait

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Embassy of the Republic of Korea and Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) held on Monday the grand opening of "Korean Product Week: Taste of Korea" at Monoprix in Assima Mall, bringing signature Korean products to local customers. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Ambassador of the Republic of Ko-

rea to Kuwait Chung Byung-Ha emphasized that food represents culture, and culture can be best understood by food. "If people are willing to feel and experience Korea, the 'Taste of Korea' event is not to be missed," he said.

The ambassador affirmed that "Taste of Korea" is crucial for fostering bilateral trade and providing citizens and residents with high-quality Korean cuisine and beverages, calling on people to embark on a culinary and cultural journey through the enchanting world of Korea as the joyous occasion of Eid Al-Adha coincides with the delightful "Taste of Korea" event.

"Taste of Korea" will be held from June 25 to July 2 to celebrate the rich and diverse cuisine of Korea. The festival was inaugurated by Chung in the presence of top management officials, as well as a large gathering of shoppers and well-wishers. This marked



Ambassador Chung Byung-Ha speaks at the ceremony.

the beginning of an exciting week filled with promotions, offers and the opportunity to explore a wide range of authentic Korean food products.

Shoppers can look forward to discovering an extensive array of carefully selected Korean products from leading brands such as Samyang Foods, CJ, Binggrae, Cook-tok, Crown, Daesang, Dongseo, Haitai, Jaeho, Kwangdong Pharmaceutical, Lotte, Nongshim, Ottogi, Samjin, SPC Samlip, OKF, SFC, Wooyang, Young poong, Youus, Dong-A, Haepyo, HBAF, Namyang Dairy, Paldo, Sempio, etc.

"Taste of Korea" aims to bring the best of Korean products to consumers in Kuwait, offering exceptional value at competitive prices. This initiative reflects KOTRA's commitment to providing a diverse and exciting shopping experience that caters to the multicultural tastes and preferences of customers.

## Kuwait to participate in Expo 2023 Doha

KUWAIT: Acting Director-General of the Environment Public Authority Samira Al-Kandari announced on Monday Kuwait's participation in the Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha, which will be held for the first time in a Gulf country from Oct 2, 2023 to March 28, 2024 in the Qatari capital Doha. "The leadership of Kuwait pays great attention to protecting the environment and addressing all environmental problems," Kandari, who is also the Commissioner-General of the Kuwaiti pavilion participating in the exhibition, said after signing the contract to participate in the exhibition.

The theme of the exhibition — Green Desert, Better Environment — will help the international community explore and adopt innovative solutions to combat desertification as well as achieve environmental sustainability. "The event will be held over an area of 1.7 million square meters in Al-Bidda Park with a view of the waters of the Arabian Gulf with three different sections — international, family and cultural, where visitors will enjoy beautiful gardens, lectures and conferences, in addition to organizers from 80 countries and the participation of a number of non-governmental organizations," she said.

Several official bodies expressed thanks for the warm reception and the great efforts made to make this global exhibition a success and their keenness to make achievements to be an example to be followed for future editions. It is noteworthy that the pillars of Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha are modern agriculture, technology, innovation, environmental awareness and sustainability. It also offers a program whose most important objectives are to encourage, inspire and inform the public about innovative solutions aimed at reducing desertification. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, in the presence of the Chief of Kuwait Fire Force Khaled Al-Mekrad, attends the graduation ceremony of 51 officers. — KUNA photos

## Interior minister attends graduation of 51 KFF officers

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah witnessed on Monday the graduation and swearing-in ceremony in the Kuwait Fire Force of the 21st batch of officers, numbering 51. "The ceremony was held at the Kuwait Fire Force building in the presence of KFF Chief Lt Gen Khaled Al-Me-

krad, where Sheikh Talal congratulated the graduates and conveyed to them the congratulations and blessings of the political leadership represented by HH the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," KFF said in a press statement:

Sheikh Talal expressed his pride in the sacrifices firefighters make to save lives and property. He called on the graduates to raise the level of their performance, pointing out the protection of lives and property is a great responsibility that needs vigilance and work at a high level to achieve community security. — KUNA



## Local

# Pediatric occupational therapist details challenges, rewards of job

## Caring for children can be difficult but job skills transferrable to home

By Ghadeer Ghloom

**KUWAIT:** Pediatric occupational therapist Eman Jafer Abdullah took Kuwait Times on a journey to explore a day in her life that is almost never without surprises, as she spends most of her time in the company of children, which brings unexpected disruptions, such as getting injured while dealing with children with different abilities and special needs. Kuwait Times discovered the sacrifices that healthcare professionals make, alongside the great rewards that come from their work and life.

### Beginning of the day

During weekdays, Abdullah prefers to wake up early in the morning to avoid the traffic, so she sets her alarm at around 6:00 pm. She starts her day by preparing for her tasks at work, then goes for a 15- to 30-minute walk. For breakfast, Abdullah noticed her eating habits and food preferences have recently changed. She now prefers to have a piece of toast or bread with cheese, vegetables and juice. She then heads to her workplace, which involves dealing with children who face difficulties in performing their daily activities or have delayed cognitive, perceptual and sensory integration difficulties. She provides therapeutic services that include individual and holistic assessment sessions and individual and group therapeutic sessions.

Abdullah always ensures that these sessions come with training services for parents: whether providing awareness lectures or training sessions to involve them in the treatment plan and therapy sessions, because they are the most important part in implementing the treatment plan in the child's actual environment and applying the activities and challenges that the child faces within it.

One of the challenges that Abdullah faces during



Eman Jafer Abdullah

her job is children's non-responsiveness, as she once had to carry a child whose weight required more strength than she has, which caused an injury to her shoulder. Her work hours are usually during official working hours from 7:30 am to 1:45 pm. Abdullah has created a rule for herself that she will not discuss work outside official working hours.

This helps her to complete her work during working hours and have the rest of the day for herself to enjoy as she wishes.

Abdullah obtained her master's degree with honors in public health from the Faculty of Medicine at Kuwait University in 2016 and her bachelor's degree with honors in occupational therapy (OT) from Kuwait University in 2013. She is certified in sensory integration from USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy at the University of Southern California. She currently works as an occupational therapist for children with hearing problems and cochlear implants. She adopts a family-centered, team-based and play-based approach in her practice.

### Midday and after work

As she goes back home, Abdullah spends time playing with her nephew, Hussein, the first grandchild in the family. They play outdoors or at home, where Abdullah applies the playing skills that she has gained from the nature of her job. She also practices some of her hobbies, such as cooking and trying



A painting of the northern lights made by Eman Jafer Abdullah.

out new recipes. She also loves decorating the dinner table with different styles and themes, and usually incorporates her love for cooking into gatherings of family and friends she hosts at her house.

Another thing she loves to do is print photos and write the occasion and date on each photo and keep them, especially photos from her trips to special places and special experiences. She also draws, because drawing is an activity that contributes to improving mental health for relaxation, tranquility and self-expression. She sees such activities are necessary for those who work in physically and mentally stressful jobs such as hers.

### Evening, end of the day

Abdullah prefers to get enough sleep, especial-



**KUWAIT:** Eman Jafer Abdullah, a pediatric occupational therapist, decorates a birthday cake during her free time.

ly since the workday is long and requires effort and activity, because dealing with children is very demanding, so she has to be cheerful and comfortable because her mood reflects on the child's psyche.



**KUWAIT:** Minister of Information and the Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi (center left) briefed the Cabinet on the preparations made to facilitate the journey for pilgrims. — KUNA photos

## Cabinet congratulates Kuwaiti leadership, people on Eid Al-Adha

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Cabinet on Monday congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Kuwaiti people on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, which begins Wednesday, June 28. In its weekly meeting, held at Seif Palace under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Cabinet welcomed the return of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to Kuwait after an overseas trip and wished him everlasting wellbeing.

The Cabinet congratulated the newly elected officials of the National Assembly including Speaker MP Ahmad Al-Saadoun, his Deputy MP Mohammad Al-Mutair, Secretary MP Mubarak Al-Tasha and Observer MP Mohammad Al-Huwailah as well as the chief of the all parliamentary committees.

The Cabinet also reviewed His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal's speech at the inaugural session of the National Assembly's 17th legislative term last Tuesday. It lauded His Highness Sheikh Mishal's calls for sticking to democracy and preserving national unity as well as working for the development and progress of Kuwait.

The Cabinet promised that the committee in



Education Minister Hamad Al-Adwani (right) presented a report to the Cabinet on the results of secondary school exams for the academic year 2022/2023.

charge of coordinating between the government and the National Assembly, which met a few days ago, would continue its efforts to set work priorities to achieve Kuwaiti people's aspirations and goals.

The Cabinet also praised the role played by the eldest member before the selection of a speaker, MP Marzouq Fahh Al-Habini, for his good management of the session. They lauded the speech he gave at the opening session, in which he stressed the need for concerted efforts of the executive and legislative authorities to produce the best legislative, political and executive reform projects so that Kuwait enjoys a parliament that reflects the desires of its honor-

able people in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and the law.

Minister of Information and the Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi briefed the Cabinet on the preparations made by the Supreme Committee for the Kuwaiti Hajj Mission to facilitate the spiritual journey and religious rituals for pilgrims. Minister of Education Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani presented a report to the Cabinet on the results of secondary school exams for the academic year 2022/2023 and the preparations of the Kuwait University and other educational institutions to enroll the new students. — KUNA

## Eid Al-Adha Greetings

By Hans-Christian Freiherr von Reibnitz, German Ambassador to Kuwait

**T**o the friendly people of Kuwait, to all pilgrims – whether they perform hajj or celebrate at home, and to all Muslims around the world, I wish to extend my heartfelt wishes for a blessed and joyful Eid Al-Adha 2023.

We are well aware that global peace, one of our utmost aspirations, remains elusive in our troubled world.

Eid Al-Adha is a welcome and special occasion to remind ourselves that we are not alone in our struggle for a peaceful world – a world built on the solid foundations of mutual respect and brotherly compassion for all humans. These values are deeply embedded in the traditions of this festive season.

May the blessings of Eid Al-Adha fill your homes and hearts and the minds of your loved ones. And as we begin to celebrate, our thoughts go out to the less fortunate, destitute people of this world whom we include in our prayers for peace and happiness.

Eid Mubarak.



Hans-Christian Freiherr von Reibnitz

## Fire Force, food authority safeguard pilgrims, sacrificers

**MAKKAH:** A Kuwait Fire Force delegation participating in the Kuwaiti hajj mission completed inspection tours at the headquarters of 53 Kuwaiti campaigns in Makkah, the force announced in a statement. The delegates carried out the tours to ensure that the headquarters meet safety and fire prevention requirements and keep pilgrims safe.

The inspection was done in cooperation with inspectors from the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs over two periods, morning and evening, said Head of the delegation Brigadier General Abdulaziz Abdullah Nasser.

Brigadier Abdulaziz Nasser praised the cooperation of all Kuwaiti campaigns with the delegation of the Kuwait Fire Force and the continuation of the team's work until the end of the hajj season and the return of all pilgrims to the homeland safely.

At home, the General Authority for Food and Nutrition will be inspecting animals sacrificed for Eid Al-Adha at Al-Mawashi to make sure they are safe for



**MAKKAH:** Pilgrims make their way to Arafat on Tuesday morning. The Day of Arafat, as the second day of the annual pilgrimage is called, is the most sacred day of the year in Islam. — KUNA

consumption, said the Kuwaiti Livestock Transport and Trading Company (Al-Mawashi) CEO Osama Budai. He added that the company will have capacity to slaughter up to 1,000 sheep per hour during Eid. He

added that the company has completed the necessary preparations in cooperation with authorities to facilitate procedures for sacrifices and provide a seating area for more than 500 people. — Agencies



## Defense minister, US Central Command Chief hold talks

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a phone call on Tuesday from Commander of US Central Command General Michael Corella, and discussed latest developments on regional and international fronts. The Defense Ministry mentioned in a press release that General Corella congratulated Sheikh Ahmad on his recent appointment and wished him all success. The minister thanked the General for this gesture that reflects the depth of relations between the two countries, and voiced intent on boosting cooperation and joint work across various levels.

In other news, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Sheikh Fares Saud Al-Malek Al-Sabah explored on Tuesday with Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Talal Al-Mutairi and Advisor Sheikha Jawaher Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah, family and childhood affairs. The Ministry of Social Affairs said in a statement that during the meeting, Kuwait's international commitments, along with a number of important issues, were discussed. — KUNA

## News in Brief

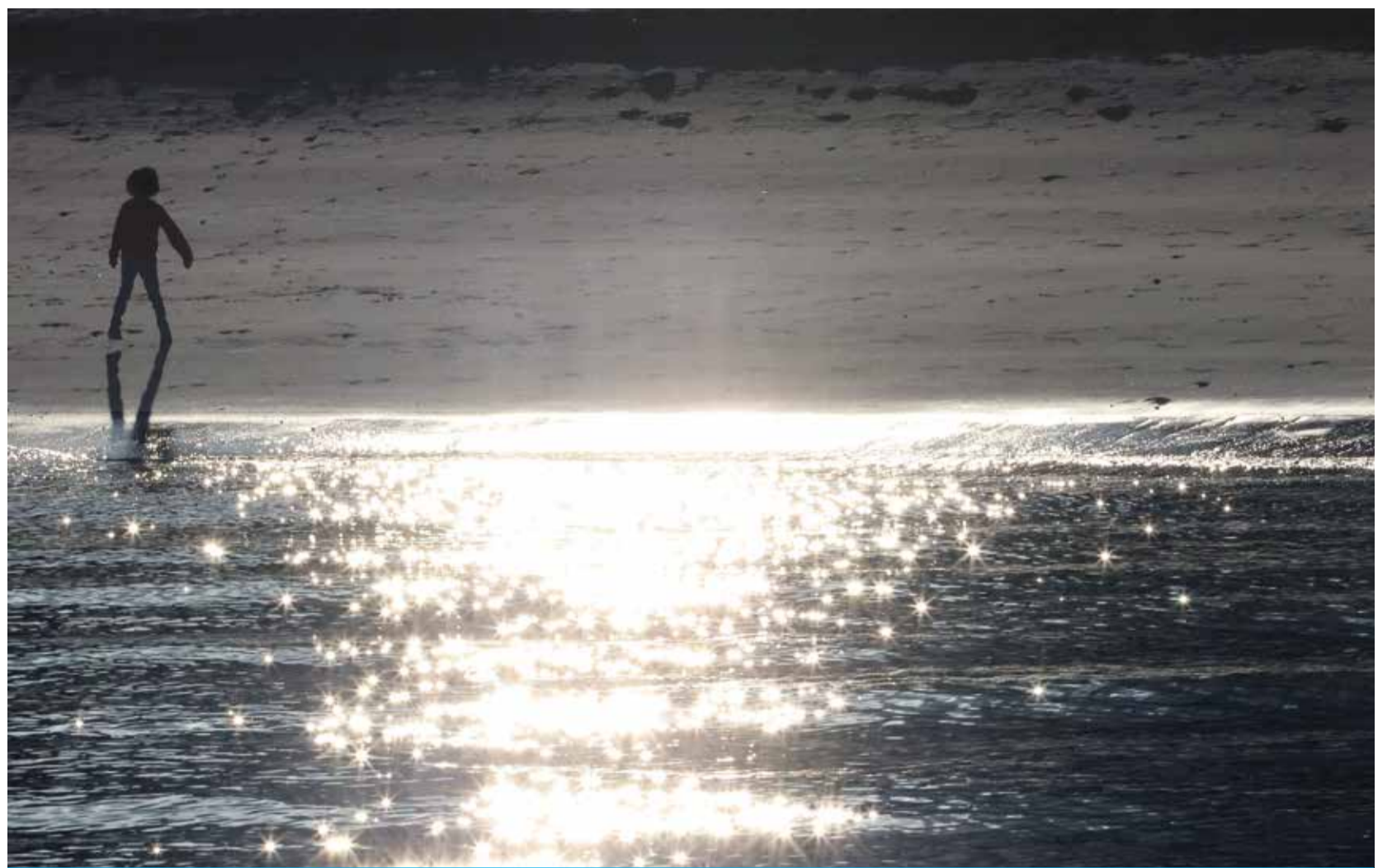
Hot weather expected  
during Eid holiday

**KUWAIT:** The Meteorological Department announced that the country's weather in general during the Eid Al-Adha holiday will be very hot during the day and moderately hot at night. The weather forecast observer in the department Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi told KUNA that weather maps and numerical models show that the country is affected by the Indian low-pressure system, accompanied by a hot air mass. On the first day of Eid, Kuwait will see light to moderate northwesterly winds which are active at intervals, with speeds between 12 and 42 kilometers per hour, leading to dust in open areas. The expected maximum temperatures are between 46 and 48 degrees Celsius, and waves will be light to moderate, sometimes rising to between 2 and 6 feet. On Wednesday night, light to moderate northwesterly winds are also expected, with speeds reaching 12 and 35 kilometers per hour. Temperatures will get as low as 32 degrees Celsius. Temperatures will rise on Thursday to reach 47-49 degrees Celsius. Weather conditions will be similar to Wednesday, but wind speeds are expected to be slightly lower at 10-40 kilometers per hour. Thursday night will be slightly to moderately hot with light to moderate northwesterly winds at speeds between 12 and 35 kilometers per hour. Temperatures are a little cooler than Wednesday, reaching no higher than 30 degrees Celsius. — KUNA

Officials discuss ways to combat  
smuggling of subsidized goods

**KUWAIT:** The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas discussed with officials from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the General Administration of Customs to coordinate efforts to combat the smuggling of subsidized monthly food rations outside the country. Although the re-sale and export of subsidized food items, known as Tamween, is illegal in Kuwait, smuggling has been a recurrent problem for years. Solutions offered to eliminate the phenomenon, where items are typically hidden by smugglers inside cargo trucks which leave the country through land border crossings, have been largely unsuccessful so far. Most recently, the Kuwaitization of administrative positions at co-op societies has been enforced in part to tackle the issue, with the assumption that hiring Kuwaitis will result in better control of the distribution of rations. — Agencies

## Photo of the day



**KUWAIT:** A child stands next to the sparkling waters of the Arabian Gulf as the sun sets at a beach in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## The study abroad experience: UK vs US

## Two students share the pros and cons of studying in each country

By Munirah Al-Fayez

**KUWAIT:** Many recent high school graduates planning to study abroad in an English-speaking country do not know which one to choose. Many choose to study in Canada, Australia, Ireland or New Zealand. However, the biggest debate and countries most people do not know how to choose between are the United States and the United Kingdom, due to the different pros and cons of living in these countries. Kuwait Times interviewed two Kuwaiti students: one studying in the US and the other in the UK to see how different or similar their experiences are.

Mohammad Al-Fayez, a biochemistry student at a major university in the Midwest, said his favorite thing about living in the US is learning about different cultures, both American culture and cultures of minority groups of immigrants. Living in the United States is a "quick travel throughout the world", according to Mohammad, who added it opens your eyes and changes the way you think.

However, he said the US is a very individualistic society, which makes it easier to feel lonely. Mo-

hammad thinks that it is not due to missing family as much as it is missing meeting people every day and having three meals together and having someone you can go out with anytime you want. Although he said he is lucky he has many friends, it is not as easy. Kuwait is more communal, according to Mohammad; you meet with your family regularly and it is easier to make friends.

Mohammad said the best thing about studying in the US is flexibility. He has noticed that the system and professors are more flexible compared to what he hears from his friends who study in the Arab world. He has also noticed how respectful the Western world is towards people with disabilities. When it comes to enjoying time outside classes, the study abroad experience is not necessarily fun, according to Mohammad. "Fun is not the first word that comes to mind," he said, adding it is fun traveling, having new experiences and going to different events.

The advice Mohammad would give to recent graduates is "make sure the university, city, country, and major you choose is the right one for you, and that you have read about it, studied your decision and planned well. Ask yourself questions like: Are you social? Do you want to have a lot of Kuwaitis around you? Do you care about the location more than the university? Is your dream to study in a big city? Is it to study at a top university?"

Alaa Ghloom, an environmental geoscience student in the United Kingdom, said her favorite thing about studying in the UK is meeting new people, from students to elderly natives, because you will slowly see them as family and will learn from their experiences firsthand. She also likes getting to know herself and her potential. According to Alaa, there is this beauty in getting accustomed to a new place; for example, finally being able to go somewhere without using Google Maps.

But Alaa said she does not like "the quietness



of it". She said after the Christmas break, when many students have just come back from Kuwait, the sun sets early and it gets a little scary. Before the Christmas break, according to Alaa, it would get dark as well, but there would be decorative lights on buildings for the celebrations, which would make the night fun. When the decorative lights are gone, "the streets feel empty, and when you call your parents and siblings, especially on Fridays and they are at a gathering and they can't really be with you, it can get a bit lonely."

Alaa said finding an apartment is also arduous, even if you start searching early, because sometimes landlords do not trust students and student accommodations are always full and are not preferable. Even with the difficulties, she said "studying abroad is the most fun I have ever experienced in my life." Although there are down moments, the highs are high. Getting a good grade, making your family happy, joining societies and finding a good friend group "is the most fun ever."

When it comes to decision making, Alaa advises students: "Go with a degree you like, because then your degree will motivate you, and do not care about people who judge you about your degree because you are the one living with it, not them." She concluded by telling people to not decide based on job opportunities, because at the end of the day, everyone is going to find a job. "Your story will be different than others, so do what is right for you."

Government, KU to  
ease registration  
for bedoon grads

**KUWAIT:** The Central System for the Remedy of Situations of Illegal Residents will be working with Kuwait University to facilitate the registration of illegal residents, commonly known as bedoon, who achieved outstanding grades in their high school final exams and do not meet the Kuwait University conditions.

The Director of the Central System for the Remedy of Situations of Illegal Residents Abdullah Al-Farhan told KUNA on Tuesday that the central system will be coordinating with the university in that regard.

Illegal resident students whose registration will be facilitated include those whose family was included in the 1965 census, the children of Kuwaiti women, the children of martyrs, prisoners and the children of war participants, Al-Farhan added.

He explained that the system will provide Kuwait University with all the data required for registration in addition to providing the service of expediting the issuance of cards to complete the registration process.

Farhan said the decision to determine the number of accepted students is subject to the admission policy set by the university administration, noting that the number of students enrolled at Kuwait University who are residing illegally reached 1,126 students during the academic year 2022-2023.

In related news, Kuwait University expects to accept 300-500 non-Kuwaiti students for the 2023-2024 academic year, according to sources.

Sources said expatriate students wishing to enroll at Kuwait University will continue to pay KD 100 per unit as "there is no decision to increase or decrease



these fees in the new academic year".

Students will have to register electronically, sources added, starting at the beginning of August and for one week only. Those accepted will be informed immediately following that by telephone so they can complete their registration process.

In 2021-2022, expat students eligible to apply at Kuwait University were required to have achieved an average of 75 percent or more for those in the science stream and 80 percent or higher for those in the arts stream, according to local media.

The fields expat students are allowed to major in are limited to the following faculties: engineering, science, arts, social sciences and law, with medical specialties being off limits.

Those applying to study with Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) might not get accepted until the second semester, sources said. This doesn't include seats allocated to the 50 students on the Minister of Education's annual list.

"The number of Kuwaiti students who meet the admission requirements covers the total number specified for admission to the authority in the fall semester," they said. — Agencies



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Philippines detains over 2,700 in anti trafficking raid

## Zionist entity volunteers help Palestinians travel to hospitals

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BAKMUT: This handout picture taken and released by Ukrainian Presidential press service on June 26, 2023 shows President Volodymyr Zelensky posing with servicemen at a gas station during a visit to Donetsk region, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Zelensky visited the frontline Donetsk region in the east of his country, which is partly occupied by Russian forces. According to a statement from his office, Zelensky visited military units involved in heavy fighting around the city of Bakhmut, and met soldiers relaxing at a highway gas station. — AFP

# Russia executed 77 detainees in Ukraine

## It is a war crime... it's also a violation of international human rights law: Bogner

GENEVA: Russia summarily executed 77 civilians being held in arbitrary detention during its invasion of Ukraine — killings which constitute war crimes, the United Nations said Tuesday. Since the invasion, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine has documented 864 individual cases of arbitrary detention by Russia — 763 men, 94 women and seven boys — many of which also amounted to enforced disappearances.

"We documented the summary execution of 77 civilians while they were arbitrarily detained by the Russian Federation," Matilda Bogner, head of the mission, told a press briefing in Geneva. "It is a war crime... it's also a gross violation of international human rights law," said Bogner, speaking via video-link from Uzhhorod in western Ukraine.

"Clearly there are more" summary executions than the mission was able to document, "but we don't expect it to be enormous numbers", she added. The UN human rights office published a 36-page

report on civilian detentions in the war, based on the mission's findings. It covers the period from the start of the Russian invasion on February 24 last year until May 23 this year.

"Russian armed forces, law enforcement and penitentiary authorities engaged in widespread torture and ill-treatment of civilian detainees," said Bogner, presenting the report.

More than 91 percent of civilians detained by Russia told interviewers they had been subjected to torture and ill treatment, and in some cases sexual violence including rape and electric shocks to genitals. "Torture was used to force victims to confess to helping Ukrainian armed forces, compel them to cooperate with the occupying authorities, or intimidate those with pro-Ukrainian views," said Bogner.

The torture methods used included punching and cutting detainees, strangling, waterboarding, electric shocks, deprivation of water and food, putting sharp objects under fingernails and mock executions.

Conflict-related detainees were also subjected to so-called welcome beatings and random group beatings, the report said.

The report's findings were based on 1,136 interviews with victims, witnesses and others, plus 274 site visits and 70 visits to official places of detention run by Ukrainian authorities.

Ukraine gave the monitoring mission unimpeded confidential access to official places of detention and detainees, with one exception. Russia did not grant such access, despite requests.

Bogner said that beyond the documented cases of civilians being arbitrarily detained, "clearly the numbers are much higher".

In around a quarter of the known cases, civilian detainees were transferred to other locations within Russian-occupied territory or deported to Russia, she said. More than half of those civilians arbitrarily detained have been released, while some remain "disappeared", said Bogner.

Besides those held by Russia, the mission documented 75 individual cases of arbitrary detention of civilians by Ukrainian security forces, mostly of people suspected of conflict-related offences.

A significant proportion of these cases also amounted to enforced disappearances, perpetrated mainly by the Security Service of Ukraine, said Bogner. "Over half of those arbitrarily detained were subjected to torture or ill-treatment by Ukrainian security forces. This happened while people were being interrogated, usually immediately after arrest," she said. The mission has not documented any summary executions of civilian detainees by Ukrainian forces.

The report said grave violations of the human rights of conflict-related detainees, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment, "must be immediately halted". Russia must "immediately cease the summary execution of civilians and take necessary measures to guarantee its non-repetition", the report said. — AFP

## Muslims feast a distant dream in war-torn Sudan

WAD MADANI: For many Sudanese struggling to survive the war, a taste of the sheep Muslims traditionally sacrifice for the feast of Eid Al-Adha is but a distant memory. The conflict, now in its third month, has brought death and turmoil and displaced millions in the country that was already poverty-stricken before the fighting erupted.

Like many Khartoum residents, Hanan Adam fled with her six children when the battles broke out in mid-April between the regular army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Now living at a makeshift camp south of the city, her family is trying to celebrate Eid far from home and without much joy. "Under these conditions, Eid will be sad," she told AFP from the camp in Al-Hasaheisa, about 120 kilometres (75 miles) from the capital. Not a day goes by without her children, aged between two and 15, asking when they will return home, she said.

Well before the conflict began, two-thirds of Sudan's population was living below the poverty line, and one in three relied on humanitarian aid to make ends meet, according to UN figures. In past years, those Sudanese Muslims who could afford it would slaughter an animal, in reference to the story of the lamb that God provided the prophet Abraham for sacrifice in order to spare his son Ismail.

However, this year meat is a rare luxury as the war

has disrupted daily life and trade, shuttered markets and banks, and left millions trapped inside their homes, running low on bare essentials.

### 'Unattainable dream'

"We cannot even buy mutton," said Mawaheb Omar, a mother of four who has refused to abandon her Khartoum home despite the gun battles and air strikes. Eid will be "miserable and tasteless" this year, she added.

Omar Ibrahim, who lives with his three children in Khartoum's Shambat district, said the rituals of Eid have become an "unattainable dream". Khartoum has been the main battleground of the conflict between army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

The RSF has announced a unilateral Eid ceasefire, but many Sudanese are wary after a series of previous truce pledges were all quickly violated by both sides. "Will the guns be silent for Eid?", asked Ibrahim.

The war has also raged in Sudan's cattle-raising regions: Darfur and Kordofan, which were already among the country's poorest before the war. Mohammed Babiker, a livestock trader in Wad Madani, 200 kilometres south of the capital, said he used to bring his animals to the capital and elsewhere to sell for Eid.

But now "herders can no longer bring their cattle," he told AFP, surrounded by a flock of sheep on one of the city's main streets. Othman Mubarak, another trader, said this year he has "sold nothing" in Khartoum. "The Feast of Sacrifice is the time of year when we would make the most sales," he said. "But this time my colleagues and I are forcibly unemployed." In



GEDAREF, Sudan: Sheep eat at a livestock market in Sudan's eastern Gedaref region ahead of the feast of Eid Al-Adha on June 27, 2023. — AFP

Sudan's north, which has so far been largely spared by the war, Abdallah al-Nemir gathered his sheep to sell at the Wad Hamed market, some 150 kilometres from Khartoum. "We have sheep to sell, but people don't have money, so we don't make sales," he told AFP. "People have no income because of the war."

Khartoum has placed civil servants on open-ended leave, and many are now struggling to meet their basic needs. "The war has affected them, they have not received their salaries and will not receive them for a while," Moawiya Mohammed, another livestock

trader, told AFP.

"The situation is difficult and the purchasing power is weak." Traders say they have lowered their prices to make some sales. Sheep are being sold this year for between \$175 and \$240, down from \$300 for the biggest ones last year.

Civil servant Imad Mahieddine, who was among those wandering through the Wad Madani livestock market, said this year he was only looking. He said he had gone without pay for three months and "will not buy sheep this year". — AFP

## Troubled Guatemala headed for runoff after inconclusive election

GUATEMALA CITY: A former first lady and the son of an ex-president — both social democrats — will go head-to-head in Guatemala's August runoff after no candidate secured enough votes to win Sunday's first round of presidential elections. The battle between Sandra Torres and Bernardo Arevalo — who unexpectedly ended in second place having polled at number eight — means Guatemala will have its first leftist leader in more than a decade.

Torres, the ex-wife of deceased former president Alvaro Colom, came in first Sunday with about 15.8

percent of votes cast, followed by Arevalo with just under 12 percent, according to the near-complete count early Monday. Both oppose the legalization of same-sex marriage and elective abortion in this staunchly Catholic Central American country. Career diplomat Edmond Mulet and rightwinger Zury Rios, daughter of a former dictator, placed fifth and sixth respectively, having polled in the top three with Torres ahead of the vote.

The candidate from outgoing President Alejandro Giammattei's Vamos party, Manuel Conde, came in third out of a crowded field of 22 candidates. "We are very pleased with the results," said Arevalo, son of Juan Jose Arevalo who in 1945 became Guatemala's first democratically-elected president after decades of dictatorship.

"We did not feature in the polls, but we always said that we didn't come to win polls, we came to win at the

ballot box," the 64-year-old sociologist added. For her part, Torres, 67, declared: "We are ready, ready and willing to win." Representing the same National Unity of Hope (UNE) party as her ex-husband, Torres had lost her last two races in 2015 and 2019. Sunday's election saw low turnout and a high rate of invalid ballots cast, with few Guatemalans holding out hope that their next president will solve the problems of crushing poverty, violence and corruption. "We woke up very early to vote. We vote with enthusiasm — and afterward, the presidents, it's always the same thing," voter Maria Chajon told AFP, resigned.

"There are no options to improve the country. They are the same as always," added lawyer Manuel Morales, 58. More than 17.3 percent of all votes were invalid, more than the percentage won by any single candidate and four times higher than in the first round election in 2019. — AFP



GUATEMALA CITY: Guatemalan presidential candidate for the Movimiento Semilla party, Bernardo Arevalo, celebrates the results of the national election outside the Presidential Palace in Guatemala City. — AFP

## International

# Zionist entity volunteers help Palestinians travel to hospitals

## 'This is an opportunity for all the volunteers to meet Palestinians'

**REHAN:** As dawn broke over the occupied West Bank, Mamoun Abu al-Rob and his son crossed into Zionist entity, where a volunteer was waiting to take them to a hospital. Past the Rehan crossing in the northern West Bank, where Palestinian workers were passing through a dimly lit corridor, Abu al-Rob walked towards Yael Noy's car as his six-year-old son, Adam, dozed in his arms.

Their destination was a hospital near Tel Aviv, where Adam was to receive follow-up treatment after suffering from eye cancer. He is one of tens of thousands of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip crossing annually into Zionist entity for medical treatment unavailable in the impoverished Palestinian territories.

For Palestinians from the West Bank like Abu al-Rob, the Palestinian Authority pays for these treatments, but does not cover the cost of transportation to and from hospitals which can be prohibitive for many families.

Road to Recovery, the Zionist group established in 2010 that Noy now heads, takes Palestinians, mostly children, from West Bank and Gaza crossing points to hospitals inside Zionist entity and back. Today it boasts some 1,000 active members helping some 2,700 patients annually. "There's no one like Yael," said 40-year-old Abu al-Rob in Hebrew, which he picked up working on Zionist construction sites. "She's always happy, it fills my heart".

### 'Our neighbors'

Adam, who lost an eye due to cancer, fell asleep snuggled up to his father in the back of Noy's car. The volunteer smiled at her passengers through the rearview mirror and exchanged a few words with Abu al-Rob. "Adam's mother, Sabah, usually accompanies him. She doesn't speak Hebrew, and I don't speak Arabic. So we speak the language of the heart," she said.

"This is an opportunity for all the volunteers to meet Palestinians," added Noy. "We do not know them, we never meet them. We have an entire population that lives next to us, they are our neighbors." Zionist entity has occupied the West Bank — now home to some three million Palestinians — since the 1967 Six-Day War, when it also seized the Gaza Strip, the densely populated coastal enclave it has since withdrawn from.

Last year, Zionist entity issued entry permits for more than 110,000 medical visits for West Bank residents, according to COGAT, the Zionist defence ministry body overseeing civilian affairs in the Palestinian territories. More than 17,000 such papers were issued during the same period to Palestinians from Gaza, where 2.3 million people live under an Zionist entity-led blockade since Islamist movement Hamas rose to power in 2007, which has also obstructed medical supplies. Numerous Palestinians remain unable to access treatment in Zionist entity, due to permit denials by Zionist entity or Palestinian authorities refusing to pay for treatment.

### 'Small peace'

Noy's car sped towards the hospital, down a highway that runs alongside a barrier Zionist entity had built to separate the country from the West Bank. "I couldn't live here without doing something," she said. "We live in such a complex and difficult reality. This is a tiny gesture I do in order to face this reality."

Not all volunteers share Noy's objection to the Zionist occupation, she stressed, noting they include "settlers, religious people and right-wingers". One of them, 72-year-old retired army officer Noam Ben Zvi, said "the war with the Arabs will continue".

This hasn't prevented him from transporting a girl for years from a checkpoint to a Jerusalem hospital, waiting for hours as she is treated before driving her back nearly 150 kilometres (90 miles) to the north-



**JALBUN:** Adam Abu al-Rob, a six-year-old Palestinian eye cancer patient, is assisted to dress up by his mother Sabah at home in the village of Jalbun. The Palestinian Authority pays for the treatments of Palestinian patients, but does not cover transportation to and from hospitals. — AFP

ern West Bank crossing point. "I love Marie and her father. I don't want them to wait for hours at the hospital," Ben Zvi explained.

The patient transfers are coordinated on the Palestinian side by Naem Abu Yussef, 57. He lives in a village near Qalqilya in the northern West Bank, an area of frequent clashes with Zionist forces. "When I heard what (Road to Recovery) was doing, I couldn't believe that Jews could do things like that," he said.

Recalling the months-long detention without mer US national security advisor John Bolton and ex-vice president Mike Pence.

But detractors regard the group as a cult and argue it does not represent the Iranians who poured into the streets from September last year in a new protest movement. This could make it vulnerable as Europe seeks to keep contacts alive with Iran in search of a revival of the 2015 nuclear deal, an accord the MEK bitterly opposed.

French President Emmanuel Macron and Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi held telephone talks on June 10 while EU foreign policy number two Enrique Mora met his Iranian counterpart last week in Doha.

Paris is meanwhile keeping a close eye on the fate of four French nationals held by Iran, regarded as hostages by rights activists. Iran last month released a Belgian aid worker in exchange for an Iranian diplomat convicted by Belgium over a plot to attack a 2018 NCRI rally outside Paris.

### 'Raises questions'

Jason Brodsky, policy director at US-based group United Against Nuclear Iran, said the juxtaposition of events "certainly raises questions". "The Islamic Republic has long complained about MEK's presence in Western countries, so I would not be surprised if its officials raised the issue in their conversations with Western counterparts," he said.

If MEK's status in Europe was up for discussion,

charges of two of his sons, Abu Yussef added: "People here often only know Zionist entity by the soldiers raiding homes at night, the occupation, fear, hatred and revenge." Road to Recovery was born after Palestinians, belonging to an inter-communal group of families bereaved by the Zionist-Palestinian conflict, asked for help. For founder Yuval Roth, "the end of the conflict can only come from a political agreement. But in the current reality, every trip like this is a small peace for an hour." — AFP

## Exiled group feels heat as Europe ups Iran contacts

**PARIS:** A controversial exiled Iranian opposition group is coming under increased pressure in Europe as it nervously eyes the intensification of European talks with Tehran in search of reviving a deal on the Islamic republic's nuclear drive.

Supporters of the People's Mujahedin (MEK) regard it as the sole credible opposition group based outside Iran, although it is held in deep suspicion by many Iranians, including those opposed to the clerical authorities.

The MEK and the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), an umbrella group that essentially acts as its political wing, have accused the West of "appeasement" towards Iran over the troubles that it has faced. Last week, French authorities cited security concerns for banning a major rally organized by the NCRI on July 1 which the group hoped would gather tens of thousands of people.

On June 20, Albanian authorities launched a raid against a MEK camp that has housed its members

for a decade as part of a deal agreed in the wake of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The NCRI said one MEK member was killed, a claim denied by Tirana. It also said Albanian police seized 200 computers.

And in an incident whose circumstances have yet to be fully explained, a bomb was thrown into an office of the NCRI outside Paris earlier this month without causing injuries, according to police and the group.

### 'Policy of appeasement'

Maryam Rajavi who leads both the MEK and NCRI, told a meeting outside Paris that the incidents were the products of a "policy of appeasement" by the West, alleging they "took place at the request of the Iranian regime".

The MEK is outlawed by the authorities in Iran, which accuses the group of carrying out a violent campaign of attacks in the early 1980s. It had for decades worked to oust the shah and initially backed the 1979 revolution. But it rapidly fell out with the new authorities and backed Saddam Hussein in the Iran-Iraq war, meaning its members had to be moved after the US-led 2003 invasion.

It still claims to have a network inside Iran and boasts of exposing the existence of Iran's then-secret nuclear programme in 2002, which led to confrontation with the West. It has high-profile Western supporters, including for-

of the National Guard HH Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on the holy occasion of Eid Al-Adha.

In their cables, the officials wished HH the Amir everlasting wellbeing and the dear nation more progress and prosperity. In reply cables, HH the Amir thanked the senior officials for their sincere sentiments, expressing best wishes for them and the nation and all Arab and Muslim nations.

HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal on Tuesday also exchanged congratulations and greetings with kings and presidents of Arab and Muslim countries, as well as GCC crown princes on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha. In his congratulatory cables, HH the Crown Prince expressed sincere wishes for Arab and Muslim nations to enjoy more security, stability and progress.

HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal also received on Tuesday congratulatory cables from National Assembly Speaker Saadoun, HH Sheikh Salem, HH Sheikh Nasser, HH Sheikh Jaber, HH Sheikh Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha. In their cables, the senior officials congratulated HH the Crown Prince on the holy occasion and wished him everlasting good health. HH the Crown Prince replied with letters thanking them for their greetings and wished them all a happy feast and a prosperous future in serving the nation. — Agencies

emissions increased by half. Some 1.6 billion people, nearly half of them members of indigenous groups, rely directly on forest resources for their food and livelihoods. Deforestation in Brazil surged during the four-year rule of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, and increased 15 percent last year compared to 2021.

Bolsonaro's administration gutted environmental policies, turned a blind eye to illegal deforestation, and weakened protections of the rights of indigenous peoples proven to be effective stewards of healthy forests. President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, sworn in at the start of this year, has vowed to end deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon by 2030 but will face many challenges in doing so, experts say.

Scientists fear that climate change and deforestation combined could trigger the accelerating transition of the Amazon basin from tropical forest to savannah, which could profoundly disrupt weather not just in South America but across the globe. Some 90 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> is stored in the Amazon basin's forest, twice worldwide annual emissions from all sources. "Halting and reversing forest loss is one of the most cost-effective mitigation options available to us today," said Frances Seymour, WRI's distinguished senior fellow for forests. — AFP

## Putin says Russia dodged civil war...

**Continued from Page 1**

Prigozhin, a former Kremlin ally and catering contractor who built Russia's most powerful private army, has boasted — with some support from news footage — that his men were cheered and welcomed by civilians during his short-lived revolt. But Putin insisted that Wagner's ordinary fighters had seen that "the army and the people were not with them". Russian officials have been trying to put the crisis behind them for three days, with Prigozhin due to go into exile in Belarus, the FSB dropping charges against rank-and-file Wagner troopers and the military preparing to disarm the group.

"Preparations are underway for the transfer of heavy military equipment from the private military company Wagner to units of the Russian armed forces," the defence ministry said. But, even if the immediate security threat of Prigozhin's feud with the defence ministry is over, the Kremlin faces questions over how it handled the issue and allowed the violence of its operation in Ukraine to spill back into the heart of Russia.

Belarus strongman Alexander Lukashenko, usually seen as a junior partner to Putin, is seeking credit for stepping in to mediate Wagner's U-turn on the road to Moscow and by Tuesday he has criticized Russia's handling of the issue. The feud between Wagner and the army had escalated for months, with Prigozhin making increasingly scathing statements against the generals' handling of the offensive in Ukraine, blaming them for thousands of Russian losses.

"We missed the situation, and then we thought

that it would resolve itself, but it did not resolve," Lukashenko said. "Two people who fought at the front clashed, there are no heroes in this case," he added, in an apparent reference to the Wagner chief and his rival, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. Lukashenko said he had ordered Belarus's army to combat readiness in case of disaster in its larger neighbor and main ally, adding that if Russia had collapsed "we would all die".

Some in the West have expressed concern that Wagner's revolt could plunge Russia into chaos and endanger the security of its nuclear arsenal, but the NATO leader most sympathetic to Putin — Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban — poured cold water on that idea. Speaking to German media outlets, Orban said the revolt held "no major significance" and said of Putin: "If someone speculates that he could fail or be replaced, then he does not understand the Russian people and Russian power structures."

In his address, Putin also stressed that the revolt had not forced Russia to withdraw any of its units from Ukraine, where fighting continued as Kyiv's brigades pursued their counteroffensive in their nation's east and south. "All military formations continued to wage a heroic fight at the front," Putin noted. The bloody conflict is now 16 months old, with mass casualties on both sides and a rising civilian toll.

On Tuesday, the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine said it had evidence that Russian troops had summarily executed at least 77 detained civilians. "It is a war crime... it's also a gross violation of international human rights law," said Matilda Bogner, head of the mission. Pope Francis's peace envoy to Ukraine will visit Moscow on Wednesday and Thursday, just weeks after visiting Kyiv, the Vatican said, the first visit to Moscow by a senior Vatican official since Russia launched an all-out assault in Feb 2022. — AFP

released, Trump lashed out on his Truth Social website, calling Smith "deranged" and baselessly accusing the prosecutor of conspiring with the Justice Department and FBI to "illegally" leak and mischaracterize the tape. He claimed the audio was "actually an exonerator, rather than what they would have you believe." "This continuing Witch Hunt is another ELECTION INTERFERENCE Scam. They are cheaters and thugs!" he posted.

The government accuses 77-year-old Trump — who is vying to win back the White House next year — of willfully hoarding dozens of classified documents he took unlawfully to his beachfront mansion in Florida, refusing to return them and conspiring to obstruct investigators seeking their recovery. — AFP

## Hajj climaxes on Mt Arafat...

**Continued from Page 1**

Then they will return to Makkah's Grand Mosque — Islam's holiest site — for a final circumambulation of the Kaaba, the giant black cube that Muslims worldwide pray towards each day.

Meanwhile, HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Tuesday exchanged congratulations and greetings with kings and presidents of Arab and Muslim countries on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha. In his congratulatory cables, HH the Amir expressed sincere wishes for Arab and Muslim nations to enjoy more security, stability and progress.

HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf on Tuesday received a cable of greetings from HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha. In his cable, HH the Crown Prince wished HH the Amir everlasting wellbeing and the homeland more security and progress. He also expressed best wishes for all Arab and Muslim nations. In a reply cable, HH the Amir expressed sincere wishes to HH the Crown Prince, the nation and all Arab and Muslim nations.

HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf received cables of greetings from National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun, Chief

## Football pitch of tropical forest

**Continued from Page 1**

responsible for about 13 and nine percent, respectively. The more than 41,000 sq km decimated globally last year makes 2022 the fourth most devastating year for primary forests in two decades. The accelerating loss comes a year after world leaders vowed at the Glasgow COP26 summit in 2021 to halt and reverse forest loss by 2030.

"Since the turn of the century, we have seen a hemorrhaging of some of the world's most important forest ecosystems despite years of efforts to turn that trend around," Mikaela Weisse, director of WRI's Global Forest Watch told journalists in a briefing. "We are rapidly losing one of our most effective tools for combating climate change, protecting biodiversity, and supporting the health and livelihoods of millions of people."

Globally, vegetation and soil have consistently absorbed about 30 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> pollution since 1960, even as those

## Trump heard discussing secret...

**Continued from Page 1**

Now I can't, you know," he says. "Now we have a problem," one of other people responds. "Isn't that interesting? It's so cool," Trump says, just before the recording ends with him calling for someone to bring in some Cokes. Trump earlier this month denied 37 counts of willfully mishandling US government secrets and conspiring to prevent their return, becoming the first US president to face federal criminal charges. After the recording was

## International

# Sierra Leone president leads vote count disputed by opposition

## Final results were expected within 48 hours

FREETOWN: Sierra Leone President Julius Maada Bio was leading the results of country's presidential election with 60 percent of votes counted, the electoral commission said Monday, in a process disputed by the opposition. Bio had garnered 55.86 percent of ballots cast, more than the 55 percent required for victory after Saturday's first round of voting, the commission said. The incumbent's 1,067,666 votes put him ahead of his main rival Samura Kamara, who had 793,751 votes or 41.53 percent, it said. Final results were expected within 48 hours, according to election commission chief Mohamed Kenewui Konneh. The tally is already being disputed by the opposition All People's Congress (APC), which denounced in a statement Monday an alleged lack of inclusiveness, transparency and responsibility by the electoral commission.

The party pointed to the lack of information about which polling stations or districts the ballots were coming from. It said it "will not accept these fake and cooked up results". In a follow-up statement, it alleged "overvoting" in some areas and said the party "continues to reject" the "fabricated results" and "reaffirms our victory". On Sunday, Bio's Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) said in a statement that it was confident of victory.

### Lack of transparency

During a Monday evening press conference, European Union observers said a lack of transparency and communication by the electoral authority had led to mistrust in the electoral process. The monitors said they witnessed violence at seven polling stations during voting hours and at three others during the closing and counting stages.

They received reports of violent incidents in six regions, including those involving live ammunition in three districts, they said. About 3.4 million people were registered to vote in Saturday's election. Twelve men and one woman stood for president, but Bio's main challenger was Kamara of the APC.

Bio narrowly beat Kamara in a runoff in 2018. The president, 59, a former coup leader in the 1990s, has championed education and women's rights in his first civilian term. Kamara, 72, a former foreign and finance minister, lambasted the electoral commission throughout the campaign period over alleged irregularities and delays. Sierra Leoneans also voted in parliamentary and municipal elections Saturday.

### 'Like a horror film'

EU observers denounced violence by security forces at the APC headquarters in Freetown on Sunday night, in what the police said was an effort to disperse opposition supporters, which left one woman dead. Sidie Yahya Tunis, a spokesman for the APC, told AFP the woman had been on the ground floor of the building at the time. "She was downstairs in the medical unit — she's a nurse — we have a little health clinic in our office, that's where she was working", he said. The woman's son, Ibrahim Conteh, a 25-year-old law student, told AFP that he had identified his mother's body at the morgue. "I need justice... I just want to know" who killed my mother, he said in tears.

"I don't care who is my president... I don't care what his name, I don't care what his party, I don't care — I just want my president, the president of Sierra Leone, to come to my aid", he added. Police did not confirm the death, while saying they had fired



FREETOWN: The president of the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL), Mohamed Konneh (centre) releases partial election results in Freetown. — AFP

tear gas canisters "to disperse the crowd which was disturbing people on the road".

Abu Bakar Kargbo, 42, a UK-based member of the APC party who said he was inside the building Sunday evening, told AFP the incident was "like a horror film". "After a while, we realized that live rounds were being fired," he said. "It was terrifying... It was like the end of the world."

AFP reporters saw blood and bullet holes inside the APC headquarters early Monday. Hannah, a party secretary who did not want to give her last name, returned early Monday morning to collect belong-

ings she had left during the chaos the previous night.

"People were dancing and celebrating outside. They were happy. All of a sudden, I heard shots and tear gas," she told AFP, her voice hoarse. "It was really traumatic." Calm returned to the capital Monday.

Incidents of political violence are typical of Sierra Leonean election campaigns. International and citizen observer groups said voting on Saturday had been mostly peaceful. In a brief address Monday evening, Bio did not comment on Sunday's violence. "I call on all citizens to keep the peace and continue to respect all public order laws," he said. — AFP

## Indonesia to pay off victims of bloody past

LHOKSEUMAWE: Indonesia's president vowed on Tuesday to "heal" the pain caused by serious human rights violations by compensating those who suffered during the country's dictatorship years. "This (resolution) is needed to heal the nation's pain caused by past gross human rights violations which have left a heavy burden for the victims," President Joko Widodo said Monday in northwestern Aceh province. The region hosted a nearly three-decade-long insurgency that ended in 2005 and was the site of at least three recorded mass killings that resulted in dozens of deaths. "This wound must be healed immediately so we can move forward," Widodo added during a ceremony in Pidie, near a site once used by the military to torture civilians.

In January, Widodo said the government deeply regretted a dozen state-orchestrated mass human rights violations committed in the country's past. A bloody anti-communist purge in the 1960s saw half a million leftists massacred, and in 1998 dozens of student activists disappeared during mass street protests that brought down the three-decade-long Suharto dictatorship.



GAMPONG BILI ARON: Indonesia's President Joko Widodo (3rd R) talks with families whose kin had suffered from human rights violations committed in past decades, in Gampong Bili Aron village in Pidie, Aceh province on June 27, 2023, during a reconciliation event. — AFP

Widodo also mentioned 10 other violations that took place between the 1960s and the early 2000s. "The government is now focusing on the non-judicial resolution, which focuses on rehabilitating the victims' rights without negating the judicial mechanism," he said. Under the program, the government will provide financial settlements, scholarships, and direct cash aid for the victims and their children. Human rights activists welcomed the government's gesture but said the task was still huge.

"This is a step forward, better than nothing, but of course, it's not enough," Human Rights Watch researcher Andreas Harsono told AFP. One of the victims of a mass killing in North Aceh on May 3, 1999, recalled the moment that left him with lifelong trauma. Murtala was 28 years old when military personnel opened fire on a crowd gathering near a paper mill in the town of Lhokseumawe. The shooting followed reports that a soldier had gone missing at a time when rebels were fighting government forces for Aceh's independence.

"I heard shots fired, and I hid under a truck to save myself, but somebody grabbed me and hit me in the head and chest with a gun repeatedly. They also stomped on my body," Murtala told AFP. He fell unconscious when a man was shot dead in front of him. He woke up three days later in a hospital only to be told his older brother was killed in the riot.

The National Human Rights Commission or Komnas HAM reported 21 people were killed in the clash, but activists claim 46 people died. Murtala, also the head of the victims association, said many of them have not been identified or recognized and therefore might not receive any compensation. — AFP



MANILA: Policemen walk inside a compound, where police raided buildings in Metro Manila. Philippine police said they have rescued more than a thousand people allegedly trafficked into the country to work for an online casino in the capital Manila. — AFP

## Philippines detains over 2,700 in anti trafficking raid

MANILA: Philippine authorities have detained more than 2,700 people during a raid on several buildings in Manila where alleged trafficking victims were paid to recruit players for online games, police said Tuesday. Chinese, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Singaporean, Malaysian, Pakistani, Cameroonian, Sudanese, Myanmar and Philippine nationals were among the people found inside a compound in the capital on Monday night. Authorities were interviewing 2,724 detainees to identify who was a victim or suspect, said police Captain Michelle Sabino, a spokeswoman for the anti-cybercrime unit.

### More than 1,500 were Filipinos

International concern has been growing over internet scams in the Asia-Pacific region, often staffed by trafficking victims tricked or coerced into promoting bogus crypto investments.

Sabino said the alleged trafficking victims had accepted jobs posted on Facebook to work in the Philippines "to find players" for online games. Many of them were forced to work 12-hour shifts every day for as little as 24,000 pesos (\$433) a month, and were prevented from leaving the compound, she said. Sabino described it as the "biggest ever" anti-trafficking raid

in the Philippines. AFP journalists at the scene on Tuesday saw two police buses and two police trucks parked outside the compound. They were not allowed to enter the buildings.

Sabino said "everything will be investigated", including whether the workers were involved in online rackets. In May, authorities rescued more than a thousand people from several Asian nations who had been trafficked into the Philippines, held captive and forced to run online scams. The International Organization for Migration said victims were often ensnared by traffickers with the prospect of "better jobs with high salaries and enticing perks". "One very noticeable aspect in these online scams, which is different to other forms of trafficking, is that education offers no immunity as we have seen even well-educated professionals become victims," Itayi Viriri, IOM senior regional spokesman for Asia-Pacific, told AFP.

Viriri said victims were typically "trapped in a world of exploitation where they endure abuse, confiscation of travel documents, and isolation from their peers". "We therefore commend the actions taken by the Philippines authorities to intervene as it is clear that victims are basically hostages to their traffickers and as such rely on external intervention to break free from their captors," Viriri said. Philippine senator Risa Hontiveros recently warned that "scam call centres" were operating in the Philippines and employing foreigners trafficked into the country. In its 2023 human trafficking report, the US State Department said the Philippines "did not vigorously investigate or prosecute labour trafficking crimes that occurred within" the country. "Corruption and official complicity in trafficking crimes remained significant concerns," it said. — AFP

sides. His columbarium carried over those undulating lines, greenery and textures of hewn rock.

Ashes are stored in ornate compartments, some as small as 26 by 34 centimetres (10 by 13 inches), that line the walls of air-conditioned chambers. Kirchhoff said he designed rooms on each floor to provide intimacy, in contrast to the cramped confines of public columbariums, which he said feel like being in a "warehouse". "How do we maintain quality of life and dignity for the people in this high density?" he asked. "Is it just a shoebox or is there something else?"

### Urn space shortage

Much like apartments in Hong Kong, rent for the units is not cheap, putting them beyond the reach of most people. A basic two-person option at Shan Sum is sold for \$58,000 while the top-tier package, meant



HONG KONG: Picture shows a niche (right) that holds funeral urns at the Shan Sum columbarium. — AFP

## HK high-rise aims to become 'village' of the dead

HONG KONG: With its white marble foyer and lavish chandeliers, the 12-storey tower could be mistaken for one of Hong Kong's newest hotels, but it offers a longer stay: a final resting place for thousands in one of the world's most crowded cities.

Hong Kong's 7.3 million residents share some of the most densely populated neighborhoods on earth, and in the past, mourning families had to wait years to secure a spot for their loved ones' ashes. The Shan Sum columbarium opened last month with plans to eventually offer 23,000 niches for funeral urns, part of the government's decade-long effort to bring in private companies to ease pressure on the deathcare sector.

That policy is now paying off after the city's ageing population pushed death rates above government urn space capacity in the mid-2010s, creating a dire shortage. The sleek, modern building is the work of German architect Ulrich Kirchhoff, 52, who told AFP he tried to blend elements of nature into a high-density space to create a "neighborhood village feel".

"It's an apartment building for the dead ... It feels more like a close-knit neighborhood," he said. Kirchhoff said his design was inspired by traditional Chinese graveyards, which are often perched on mountain-

## Pakistan passes law paving way for return of exiled ex-PM

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's national assembly has passed legislation limiting how long lawmakers can be disqualified from office, a state spokesman said Tuesday, paving the way for exiled former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's return to politics. Sharif served as Pakistan's prime minister three times — the last before being ousted over graft allegations in 2017. The Supreme Court barred him from politics for life and he was later sentenced to seven years in jail.

In 2019 he was granted medical bail and flew to Britain, where he has remained ever since, continuing to steer the family-run Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party from behind the scenes. His brother Shehbaz Sharif became prime minister last year, and the country is due to hold fresh general elections no later than October.

On Tuesday, a government spokesman said the acting president had signed into law an amendment which says courts can only disqualify parliamentarians "for a period not exceeding five years". The spokesman said senate chairman Sadiq Sanjrani served as acting president signing the bill on Monday, in the absence of President Arif Alvi who is abroad on the Hajj pilgrimage.

"The ruling PML-N and its coalition partners want to bring Nawaz Sharif back," political analyst Hasan Askari told AFP. "The bill has been passed to achieve this objective." "Nawaz Sharif will be the main campaigner for PML-N in the next election," he added. "His return will be very helpful for the party politically, but it's not clear whether he himself will contest the election."

Sharif still faces the graft case which saw him sentenced during the tenure of his successor, Imran Khan, who won power pledging to undo the corruption which has historically plagued the country. But in Pakistan, legal cases which tangle politicians in opposition are regularly wound back once their party regains office.

Shehbaz ousted Khan last April via a no-confidence vote. However, he is at the head of a shaky coalition of parties, while Khan remains widely popular in the countdown to polling. Khan has been calling for snap elections, but his campaign has become bogged down in dozens of legal cases. — AFP

for a whole family, costs nearly \$3 million. The median monthly household income in Hong Kong is currently around \$3,800, according to government data. Places like Shan Sum were created in response to Hong Kong's shortage of urn spaces a decade ago.

At the time, cremated remains were often stored in drawers at funeral parlors for years while waiting for spots to open up, or were housed in unlicensed columbariums in temples or refurbished factory buildings.

Historian Chau Chi-fung, who wrote a book on Hong Kong's funeral practices, said the seeds of the crisis were sown decades prior by the British colonial administration, before the city was handed over to China in 1997. "Laws at the time were strict about how to treat dead bodies, but once they were turned to ash, the government did not have a comprehensive policy for them," he told AFP. The ethnic Chinese population in Hong Kong historically preferred burials, but the government popularized cremation in the 1960s — a shift seen in dense urban centres across Asia.

Now around 95 percent of Hong Kong's dead are cremated each year, which Chau attributed to changing social mores. The government estimates that deaths will increase by 14 percent to 61,100 per year by 2031. Officials say that the city is prepared for the uptick, with about 25 percent vacancy among the current 425,000 public columbarium spots and more public and private supply in the pipeline. "The situation has improved compared to a few years ago... The problem has been eased, but not solved," Chau said. — AFP

## Business

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2023

## China calls West's economic de-risking 'false proposition'

China on course to achieve 5% growth target in 2023



TIANJIN: Attendees are seen during a seminar group at the Meijiang Convention and Exhibition Center during the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting of the New Champions in Tianjin on June 27, 2023. — AFP

TIANJIN: Chinese Premier Li Qiang slammed efforts in the West to "de-risk" their economies as a "false proposition" on Tuesday, hitting back against US and EU policy aimed at reducing their reliance on China. The United States and the European Union have in recent months moved to "de-risk" from the world's second-largest economy. "In the West, some people are hyping up what is called 'cutting reliance and de-risking'," Li told delegates at the opening of a World Economic Forum meeting in northern China.

"These two concepts... are a false proposition, because the development of economic globalization is such that the world economy has become a common entity in which you and I are both intermingled," he said in a wide-ranging speech calling for deepening economic globalization and cooperation. "The economies of many countries are blended with each other, rely on each other, make accomplishments because of one another, and develop together," he added. "This is actually a good thing, not a bad thing."

This week's meeting of the World Economic Forum in the port city of Tianjin - known colloquially as the "Summer Davos" - is the first of its kind after a three-year hiatus caused by the COVID pandem-

ic. It will last until Thursday. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in January described the EU's approach to China as "de-risking rather than decoupling" since the bloc still sought to work and trade with Beijing. And President Joe Biden has kept former leader Donald Trump's hard line on China, and in some areas gone further, including banning exports of high-end semiconductors to the rising power.

Responding to Beijing's heated criticism of the move, Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Beijing last week insisted that the United States was not seeking "economic containment" of China. "But at the same time," he said, "it's not in our interest to provide technology to China that could be used against us."

## Five percent growth

China is on course to achieve its five percent target for economic growth in 2023 set by Beijing earlier this year, Li also told the audience at the forum, which is being attended by leaders from New Zealand, Mongolia, Vietnam and Barbados, as well as a large delegation from Saudi Arabia. "For the whole year, we are expected to achieve the target of about

five percent economic growth set at the beginning of this year," Li said. "We are fully confident and capable of pushing ahead the steady and long-term development of China's economy on the track of high-quality development in the relative long term."

China is grappling with a slowing post-COVID recovery, with a number of lackluster indicators in recent weeks signaling the rebound is running out of steam. Beijing's central bank last week cut two key interest rates in a bid to counter the slowdown in the world's second-largest economy. And reports this month have suggested Beijing is lining up a tranche of measures targeting multiple areas of the economy, particularly the real estate sector, which makes up a huge portion of gross domestic product. Beijing set an economic growth target of "around five percent" in March, one of its lowest in decades as it emerged from strict zero-COVID rules that hampered business activity. Premier Li at the time admitted the target would be "no easy task".

## Growth target in 2023

Meanwhile, China is on course to achieve its five percent target for economic growth in 2023 set by Beijing earlier this year, premier Li Qiang said

Tuesday. "For the whole year, we are expected to achieve the target of about five percent economic growth set at the beginning of this year," Li said as he opened a meeting of global political and business leaders in northern China.

"Recently, some international organizations and institutions have also raised their forecasts for China's economic growth this year, showing their confidence in China's development prospects," Li added at the World Economic Forum. China is grappling with a slowing post-COVID recovery, with a number of lackluster indicators in recent weeks signaling the rebound is running out of steam.

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## ECB's policy to be decided 'meeting by meeting'

SINTRA: European Central Bank president Christine Lagarde said Tuesday it was "unlikely" policymakers could state soon when interest rates had peaked as they battle stubbornly high inflation, and pledged yet another hike in July. "It is unlikely that in the near future the central bank will be able to state with full confidence that the peak rates have been reached," she said at the start of an annual gathering of central bank chiefs and economists in Sintra, southern Portugal. The ECB's policy would be decided "meeting by meeting", she said, but added that "barring a material change to the outlook, we will continue to increase rates in July", at the bank's next meeting.

The central bank 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 this month, taking the key deposit rate to a 22-year high at 3.50 percent. While cost increases in the 20 countries that use the euro are starting to ease, inflation was proving "persistent", said Lagarde.

"This persistence is caused by the fact that inflation is working its way through the economy in phases," she said. While sky-high energy prices that drove inflation up last year have come down, ECB officials are now concerned about the impact of rising wages as workers demand higher salaries to cover rising costs, and the labor market remains tight. "Workers have so far lost out from the inflation shock, seeing large real wage declines, which is triggering a sustained wage 'catch-up' process as they try to recover their losses," said Lagarde.

Falling energy costs helped euro-zone inflation



FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank is pictured prior to the press conference following the meeting of the governing council of the ECB in Frankfurt/Main, Germany. — AFP

slow to 6.1 percent in May year-on-year, down from a peak of 10.6 percent in October. Nevertheless, it remains three times above the ECB's two-percent target, and in its latest projections released earlier this month, the central bank slightly raised its inflation forecasts. The bank is pushing on with its aggressive hiking cycle even as the euro-zone outlook darkens, with its economy shrinking slightly for two straight quarters at the end of 2022 and the start of 2023, meeting the technical definition of a recession. — AFP

## Jumbo problem: Sri Lanka's battle with plastic pollution

HORANA: Heart-wrenching images of revered elephants and cattle eating plastic in Sri Lanka have prompted politicians to toughen pollution laws, but sceptical conservationists warn past bans were repeatedly ignored. After an estimated 20 elephant deaths and countless other wild animals perishing due to single-use plastics in the past decade, officials say a law banning many such items is expected to come into force within weeks.

Bags, bottles and packaging are also blamed for clogging drains and causing urban flooding, as well as encouraging a surge in potentially deadly dengue — spread by mosquitoes that breed in stagnant water. "We want to create an awareness about the responsible use of plastics," Anil Jasinghe, the country's top environment official, told AFP. Jasinghe said regulations to be published soon will outlaw the sale of a string of single-use plastic items, including cutlery, cups, drinking straws and plastic flower garlands. But it is not Sri Lanka's first attempt to tackle the problem.

## Repeated raids ineffectual

Jasinghe admits that implementation has been a problem, noting that a 2006 ban on super-thin plastic bags and food wrapping was openly flouted by manufacturers. "Of course, we raid them time and again, but by raiding we cannot solve the issue," he said. "We need to have that environmental literacy, so that you change your production lines to better, more environmentally friendly production."

In 2017, a notorious garbage dump on the edge of the capital Colombo was shut when a mountain of rotting rubbish collapsed, killing more than 30 people and damaging hundreds of homes. Soon afterwards, Sri Lanka banned all plastic shopping bags — but the

rules were once again not strictly enforced. Similarly, a ban on plastic sachets — popular for small portions of everything from washing powder to shampoo — was sidestepped by manufacturers who increased the volume to just above the legal minimum.

In addition to manufacturers subverting laws, cash-strapped Sri Lanka also struggles to process what it produces. The island's unprecedented economic crisis that began late in 2021 means there has been a pile-up of trash because of a shortage of fuel for garbage trucks. The United Nations says Sri Lanka recycles just three percent of the plastic products it consumes, less than half the world average of 7.2 percent. Plastic bottles are not included in the ban, but the country's largest recycler of them says it can handle nearly two-thirds more than it is currently processing — if it could collect the refuse.

"We have the capacity to recycle 400 tons a month, but currently we do only 250 tons," said Prasantha Malimbada, CEO of recycling at Eco Spindles. The company is turning throwaway plastic bottles into polythene yarn that goes into the manufacture of clothing by top international brands. At Eco Spindles' recycling facility south of Colombo, nearly 350 workers sort bottles that are crushed and torn into small plastic flakes, the raw material for yarn. — AFP



HORANA: A worker places a spool of nylon yarn made-out of recycled PET bottles at Eco Spindles plastic recycling facility at Horana. — AFP



## Business

# Ex-Audi boss avoids jail time after 'dieselgate' confession

## Highest-ranking executive to be convicted over emissions scandal

**MUNICH:** Ex-Audi CEO Rupert Stadler received a suspended sentence and a fine Tuesday at the end of his "dieselgate" trial in Germany, making him the highest-ranking former executive to be convicted over the emissions cheating scandal that rocked the car industry in 2015. In line with a plea deal agreed last month, Stadler avoided jail time in return for admitting to fraud by negligence. The Munich district court instead handed Stadler a suspended sentence of one year and nine months and ordered him to pay a fine of 1.1 million euros (\$1.2 million). The 60-year-old admitted in May that he allowed vehicles potentially equipped with manipulating software to remain on sale even after the scam was revealed.

Stadler failed to take "the necessary measures" to prevent the sale of rigged cars, judge Stefan Weickert said. Stadler, dressed in a dark suit and white shirt, showed no reaction to the verdict. German car giant Volkswagen - whose subsidiaries include Porsche, Audi, Skoda and Seat - plunged into crisis after admitting in September 2015 it had installed software to rig emission levels in 11 million diesel vehicles worldwide. The so-called defeat devices made the vehicles appear less polluting in lab tests than they were on the road.

Throughout his trial in Munich, which started in

2020, Stadler had denied wrongdoing. But following the plea deal agreement, his lawyer last month read out a statement in which Stadler admitted he had "neglected" to inform business partners that cars with so-called defeat devices were still going on the market even after the scandal became public knowledge. Volkswagen had always insisted that the diesel trickery was the work of a handful of lower-level employees acting without the knowledge of their superiors. Stadler himself was not accused of instigating the scam.

### 'Extraordinary'

But German prosecutors accused Stadler of allowing thousands more vehicles with defeat devices to be sold until early 2018. Stadler had been Audi's chief executive for 11 years when he was arrested in 2018. He was also a member of the management board at Volkswagen group.

He spent four months in pre-trial detention owing to prosecution concerns that he would try to influence witnesses. His co-defendant Wolfgang Hatz, a former Audi and Porsche manager, was handed a two-year suspended sentence and fined 400,000 euros on Tuesday. Hatz, who at one point was head of engine development at Audi, pleaded guilty in April.

He admitted to judges that he had helped arrange the installation of emissions-cheating software. Prosecutors had sought jail time for Hatz. Another co-defendant, an Audi engineer who previously confessed, was given a 21-month suspended sentence and a 50,000 euro fine. "All three defendants as well as the prosecution have the option to appeal" the verdicts, court spokesman Laurent Lafleur told reporters. The money from the fines will go to the treasury of the state of Bavaria as well as charitable organizations including a nature conservation fund, he added. The spokesman said it had been an "extraordinary" trial that heard more than 190 witnesses and stretched for over 170 court days.

Volkswagen's former CEO Martin Winterkorn was also supposed to stand trial for fraud over the emissions scandal, but his case has been indefinitely postponed due to his poor health. The "dieselgate" saga shocked Germany and is seen as the country's biggest post-war industrial scandal. It has already cost VW around 30 billion euros in fines, legal costs and compensation to car owners, mainly in the United States. The fallout has also accelerated development of environmentally-friendly electric vehicles, requiring huge investments in a tough economic climate. — AFP



**MUNICH:** Rupert Stadler, former CEO of German car manufacturer Audi, arrives for his trial over the 'dieselgate' emissions-cheating scandal that rocked parent company Volkswagen, at a regional court in Munich, southern Germany, on June 27, 2023. — AFP

## Most markets rise but wary eyes on Fed and Russia

**HONG KONG:** Markets mostly rose Tuesday after more than a week of losses but traders remained anxious about central banks' plans to continue hiking interest rates to fight stubborn inflation. The more positive environment came as concerns over Russia subsided following an aborted uprising, though developments in the nuclear-armed country are being closely followed as President Vladimir Putin faces the biggest test of his rule. Sentiment was also boosted by comments from Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Tuesday, who said the government would roll out fresh measures to kickstart the nation's struggling economy and boost domestic demand. With the events in eastern Europe a little less worrying for now, focus has returned to the battle against surging inflation, which has dogged global markets this year. Last week's warning from US Federal Reserve chief Jerome Powell that rates would likely need to go higher dealt a blow to hopes that officials were at the end of close to completing their tightening cycle.

While the Fed stood pat this month, his comments came as central banks elsewhere continued to push borrowing costs higher and indicated more were in the pipeline. The Fed said the decision at the next policy meeting at the end of July will be determined by incoming data, putting the focus on upcoming releases, including Friday's personal consumption expenditures (PCE) index—the central bank's preferred measure of inflation. But analysts warned that investors face more pain this year, while there is a growing concern that the tightening could tip economies into recession, as has happened in the euro-zone.



**NEW YORK:** Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange during morning trading in New York City. — AFP

"I'm not sure we have felt the full effect of the whole inflation cycle," Nancy Daoud, at Ameriprise Financial Services, told Bloomberg Television. "Those rate hikes are very, very likely in July and in early fall." Most Asian markets rose, brushing off losses on Wall Street. Hong Kong climbed almost two percent after five days of losses, while Shanghai, Sydney, Singapore, Wellington, Mumbai and Bangkok also rose. Tokyo, Seoul, Manila, Jakarta and Taipei retreated. London, Paris and Frankfurt also rose in the morning.

### Russia worries

China's Li also told global political and business leaders at the World Economic Forum in northern China that the country would achieve its five percent growth target this year. His remarks came after markets were left disappointed when officials failed to provide details of a hoped-for raft of stimulus measures, while interest rate cuts by the Chinese central bank provided only a brief lift.

Oil rose again though traders remain caught between supply concerns caused by the Russia crisis and demand uncertainty as investors fret over surging interest rates. And the ruble held losses after weakening to levels not seen since the early months of Putin's invasion of Ukraine, with a wary eye still being kept on developments in Moscow. Putin on Monday accused Ukraine and its Western allies of wanting Russians to "kill each other" during the revolt by mercenaries from Yevgeny Prigozhin's Wagner group. Prigozhin earlier defended the mutiny as a bid to save his fighters and expose the failures of Russia's military leadership over the Ukraine war—but not to challenge the Kremlin. US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said officials were monitoring events "very closely". — AFP



**BRUSSELS:** European Commissioner for Financial Stability, Financial Services and the Capital Markets Union Mairead McGuinness and Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt pose following the signature of the EU-UK Memorandum of Understanding on financial services regulatory cooperation at the EU headquarters on June 27, 2023. — AFP

## Britain, EU sign delayed financial services pact

**BRUSSELS:** Britain and the European Union signed a long-awaited cooperation pact on financial services regulation on Tuesday in a new sign of improving post-Brexit relations between the two sides. A memorandum of understanding was initially struck in March 2021 but left unsigned until now because of soured relations between post-Brexit London and Brussels over trade rules in the UK territory of Northern Ireland.

An EU-British deal known as the Windsor Framework, signed in March this year, resolved the Northern Ireland issue. "I think it's fair to say we've turned the page in our relationship," said EU financial services commissioner Mairead McGuinness. UK finance minister Jeremy Hunt, who travelled to Brussels to sign the financial services agreement, said the deal was "an important turning point" and "not the end of the process but the beginning" of enhanced dialogue with the EU. London, a global financial hub, was keen to sign

a deal. The memorandum creates a framework for voluntary regulatory cooperation in the area of financial services between the EU and the UK, including a joint regulatory forum where common issues can be raised. McGuinness said the first meeting of the forum was expected to be held late this year. "While the UK is no longer in the EU, or indeed in the (European) single market, we still share many of the same issues and challenges, like fighting financial crime, supporting sustainable finance and enabling digital finance," she said.

Asked about another key benefit unlocked by the Windsor Framework — rejoining the European Union's €96-billion (\$105-billion) Horizon Europe research program — Hunt said financial details were still being worked out. Britain is seeking a big discount on how much money it would have to contribute to again be part of Horizon Europe. "We are having very good discussions, and crunchy discussions can be friendly discussions," he said.

McGuinness said she was involved in the talks on Horizon Europe, but "certainly I would encourage more crunching so that we get a result". British scientists have voiced fears about the impact from missing out on the financing from the vast Horizon program, designed to help fund scientific breakthroughs. London argues it should get a discount after missing the first two years of the funding, which runs from 2021 to 2027. — AFP

## Indigenous defenders of oil in the Amazon

**ISHPINGO:** A group of Indigenous Waorani women give a war cry warning that environmentalists are not welcome in their part of the Ecuadorian Amazon, where an oil field operates partly on a protected reserve. "We will not allow 'kowori' (strangers)... to enter," said Waorani leader Felipe Ima, translating the belligerent words of the group of seven women from the Kawymeno community that supports oil extraction at the nearby Ishpingo field.

The community is pitted in a battle of wills against environmental group Yasunidos, which has been fighting for a decade for a referendum on leaving the oil underground. In May, Ecuador's Constitutional Court allowed the request, and a plebiscite has been scheduled for August. Escorted by a spear-wielding warrior, the women from Kawymeno hold hands and dance in little clothing and feather crowns at the entrance to Ishpingo A platform.

They demand that any consultation should be with "the owners" of the land, and not with anyone that is "not even from the territory," explained Ima. In Ecuador, the Constitution recognizes Indigenous people's "collective ownership of land as an ancestral form of territorial organization." The State, however, maintains control over anything under the soil. Ishpingo together with the nearby fields of Tiputini and Tambococha form the so-called ITT block, or

block 43, which holds an estimated 282 million of the South American country's proven crude reserves of 1.2 billion barrels.

Extraction at Tiputini and Tambococha started in 2016 after years of fraught debate over whether to drill inside the Yasuni National Park. This came after the government of then-president Rafael Correa failed to persuade the international community to pay former OPEC member Ecuador \$3.6 billion not to exploit the ITT block to protect the Amazon and help curb climate change. In April last year, the government announced pumping has also started at Ishpingo.

### Pays for education, healthcare

At the site protected by women in the dense, green jungle, stands one of twelve platforms of the ITT block that contributed 57,000 barrels per day (bpd) to Ecuador's total production of 464,000 bpd from January to April. It is in the Yasuni National Park - a biosphere reserve that houses some 2,000 tree, 610 bird, 204 mammal, 150 amphibian and more than 120 reptile species, according to the San Francisco University of Quito. The Waorani community of Kawymeno, a journey of about four hours by foot and canoe from Ishpingo, is near the border with Peru. Its 400 inhabitants have declared themselves defenders of the oil activity and its windfalls they say make up for the absence of government services. "If there were no oil industry, we would not... have had education, health, family welfare," says Panenky Huabe, leader of the village where many work in the oil sector.

### Black gold benefits

Besides being among the most biodiverse areas on Earth, the million-hectare (2.5-million acre) Yasuni park is home to two of the world's last uncontacted Indigenous populations. It also holds oil fields that started operating before the ITT block. "We see how extraction has been besieging the Yasuni for many years, since the 1970s when exploitation began," Yasunidos lawyer and spokesman Pedro Bermeo told AFP. "Basically, the (block) 43 is the only one with a part (of jungle) that remains to be saved," he said.

But the referendum has generated deep divisions even among the Waorani, whose 4,800 members own some 800,000 hectares of jungle in the provinces of Orellana, Pastaza and Napo. In 2019, the Waorani of Pastaza won a historic court ruling that prevents the entry of oil companies on 180,000 hectares on their territory.

But at Ishpingo A in Orellana, oil worker Akao Yetebe - also a Waorani - insisted "we will continue working" because "black gold benefits big cities, teachers, education, health, everything." State-owned Petroecuador is authorized to operate on about 300 hectares of the Yasuni for its ITT block. So far it has used about 80 hectares, generating \$4.2 billion for the State - some \$1.2 billion in 2022 alone. If the "Yes" wins in next month's referendum, "losses will be substantial," said Petroecuador manager Ramon Correa - some \$16.4 billion in projected income as well as jobs and investments already made. — AFP



**ISHPINGO:** View of the Ishpingo oil platform in Yasuni National Park, northeastern Ecuador.



**ISHPINGO:** Aerial picture of the Ishpingo oil platform of state-owned Petroecuador in Yasuni National Park, northeastern Ecuador. — AFP photos

# Climate protesters target UK TotalEnergies headquarters

## Ugandans sue TotalEnergies for reparations

**LONDON:** Climate change campaigners targeted the UK headquarters of oil giant TotalEnergies with paint Tuesday, protesting the French firm's alleged human rights violations in the construction of a contentious oil pipeline in Uganda. Supporters of the Just Stop Oil activist organization sprayed with black paint the interior lobby of the company's headquarters in London's Canary Wharf district, while others daubed orange paint on its exterior, the protest group said.

Dozens of students from a pressure group opposed to the building of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) also massed outside the building during the stunt to show support, it added. London's Metropolitan police said officers had arrested 27 people "for a combination of suspicion of criminal damage and aggravated trespass".

TotalEnergies is the largest shareholder in the controversial east African venture, which is set to carry crude oil to the Tanzanian coast through several Ugandan protected nature reserves. Communities in the region claim the energy firm and other EACOP backers have caused serious harm to their rights to land and food in building the 1,500-kilometre pipeline. Critics have also called the project a "carbon bomb" which would release over 379 million tons of carbon into the atmosphere.

Also on Tuesday in France, a group of Ugandan citizens and aid groups, joined by French aid organizations, filed a lawsuit in a Paris court against TotalEnergies for damages over the alleged human rights violations. Just Stop Oil wants the UK and other governments to end all new oil and gas exploration and has promised not to let up in its high-profile protests until it does so. The group has repeatedly hit the headlines with its direct-action stunts, such as disrupting sporting events and targeting valuable works of art, to publicize their cause.

But some of their antics, in particular those most impacting people's everyday lives, have prompted a public backlash, and appear to be increasingly dividing environmental campaigners and their financial backers. Trevor Neilson, a former funder of the organization and other direct action climate change

groups, recently told the Sunday Times that they should end their disruptive tactics because they were "not accomplishing anything". "It's just performative," he told the newspaper. "It's not accomplishing anything. I absolutely believe that it has now become counterproductive."

### TotalEnergies sued

In another development, twenty-six Ugandans on Tuesday sued French oil giant TotalEnergies in Paris for reparations over alleged human rights violations at its massive megaprojects in the country. Joined by five Ugandan and French aid groups, people from the affected communities say the energy firm caused "serious harm", especially to their rights to land and food. At the heart of their complaint at the Paris court are two vast TotalEnergies developments: the Tilenga exploration of 419 oil wells, one-third of them in the Uganda's largest national park of Murchison Falls, and EACOP, a 1,500-kilometre pipeline bringing crude oil to the Tanzanian coast through several protected nature reserves.

People affected by the work "have been deprived of free use of their land for three or four years, in violation of their property rights", the associations said in a statement. This "deprived them of their means of subsistence" and led to "serious food shortages" for some families — with only some receiving in-kind compensation while others were offered financial terms "far short" of what was needed. Some villages suffered flooding caused by construction at the Tilenga project's oil treatment plant, the associations further alleged.

What's more, "several plaintiffs suffered threats, harassment and arrest simply for daring to criticize oil projects in Uganda and Tanzania and defend the rights of affected communities," they added. Two activists, Jelousy Mugisha and Fred Mwesigwa, travelled to France for a 2019 case that aimed to require Total to watch out for potential rights violations. "When they returned to Uganda one was arrested at the airport and the other attacked at his home 10 days later," the NGOs said.



**LONDON:** A Just Stop Oil climate activist reacts while being detained after activists threw orange paint at the UK headquarters of TotalEnergies in the Canary Wharf district in London on June 27, 2023 to protest against the construction of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). — AFP

A third, Maxwell Athura, said he faced "threats and intrusions at his home" and was "arbitrarily arrested twice in 2022". "By falling short in its duty of vigilance, Total caused serious harm to the plaintiffs, especially to their rights to land and food. They are therefore requesting the company be ordered to compensate them," the statement continued.

The groups say that more than 118,000 people have had their land wholly or partially expropriated because of the two TotalEnergies projects. "It is unacceptable that foreign oil companies continue to make extraordinary profits while communities affected by their projects in Uganda are harassed, displaced, poorly compensated and living in abject poverty on their own land," said Frank Muramuzi,

executive director of Friends of the Earth's Ugandan branch and local NGO NAPE.

The associations say TotalEnergies should have been aware of potential serious rights violations linked to its Ugandan plans, but the firm "did not act when warned they existed and did not implement corrective measures once the human rights violations occurred". There had been "no steps addressing population displacements, limits to people's access to their means of subsistence or threats against human rights defenders in Total's plans from 2018 to 2023," they allege. Friends of the Earth and four Ugandan associations failed in a 2019 bid before a French court to force TotalEnergies to halt Tilenga and EACOP. — AFP

### News in Brief

#### UK fintech Wise profit soars

**LONDON:** British financial technology firm Wise, which is specialized in money transfers, said Tuesday annual net profit soared sixfold as the number of customers jumped by one third to 10 million. Wise, which also takes deposits, saw income surge on higher interest rates. Profit after tax jumped to £111.5 million (\$142 million) in the 12 months to the end of March, it said in a results statement. "At Wise we are laser focused on our mission of money without borders," Kristo Kaarmann, Wise co-founder and chief executive, said in the earnings statement. Its share price rallied 21 percent to £6.33 following the results, giving it a market value of £6.5 billion. This was, however, down on the £8-billion valuation when Wise listed on the London stock market nearly two years ago. — AFP

#### UK nurses strike threat ends

**LONDON:** The threat of further strikes by British nurses ended on Tuesday, after the Royal College of Nursing said a ballot on industrial action had failed to meet the legal threshold. The RCN said more than 100,000 members voted in favor of more strikes but turnout was only 43 percent - below the statutory minimum of 50 percent. Nurses in England were voting on a six-month renewal of strike action, after turning down a five-percent government pay offer. RCN general secretary Pat Cullen said in April that nurses were prepared to strike until Christmas if an improved offer could not be reached. She acknowledged on Tuesday that the result would be disappointing but promised that the "fight for the fair pay and safe staffing our profession, our patients and our NHS deserve is far from over". Successive walk-outs by nurses have added to pressure on the state-run National Health Service (NHS), which is battling to cut waiting lists for appointments and treatment. — AFP

#### US orders surprise again

**WASHINGTON:** Orders of big-ticket manufactured items continued to defy expectations to rise again in May, fueled by a sharp jump in orders for nondefense aircraft, according to US government data released Tuesday. The figures underline the continued strength of some sectors of the American economy despite hikes in interest rates from the US Federal Reserve as it moves to tackle high inflation. Manufactured durable goods orders rose by 1.7 percent in May from a month earlier to \$288.2 billion, the Commerce Department announced in a statement. The increase was well above the median expectation of a fall in orders in a MarketWatch survey of economists, and follows a monthly increase in April which also defied analysts' expectations. The May increase was fueled by nondefense spending, with nondefense aircraft and parts orders growing by almost a third month-over-month. New orders for nondefense capital goods and transportation equipment also saw substantial increases, while defense aircraft orders saw a steep decline month-over-month, following large gains in April. — AFP

## US EV startup Lordstown files for bankruptcy

**NEW YORK:** Lordstown Motors, an electric vehicle startup based in the US state of Ohio, said Tuesday it has filed for bankruptcy protection and is suing Foxconn after a protracted dispute with the Taiwanese electronics giant. Specializing in light-duty all-electric pickups, Lordstown said it had filed litigation against Foxconn for "fraud and willful and consistent failure to live up to its commercial and financial commitments to the Company." "Foxconn's actions led to material damage to the Company as well as its future prospects," with Lordstown filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection as a result, the statement added.

A main supplier for Apple's iPhone, Foxconn has turned to EV production as part of its diversification and plans to make auto assembly a key part of its future growth. In May 2022, it acquired Lordstown's vehicle assembly plant in the midwestern state of Ohio and signed a contract manufacturing agreement to build Lordstown's flagship vehicle, the Endurance pickup.

Under the agreement, "Lordstown agreed to divest its most valuable assets to Foxconn," the US company founded in 2018 argued, and expected "contractual assurances" that Foxconn would support the continued development and production of the Endurance. But "Foxconn had no intention of living up to its com-

## Macron under fire over latest jobs job

**MARSEILLE:** French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday faced accusations of minimizing the problems of unemployment after he told the mother of a jobseeker that her son could easily find work. In a typically robust exchange during a visit to the southern city of Marseille, the president told the woman her son could pick up to "10 offers" if he walked around the city's historic Vieux Port area which is home to dozens of cafes and eateries.

Macron, 45, a former investment banker, has already had previous controversial exchanges over job seeking, in 2018 telling a young man he just had to "cross the street" to find work and telling another man in May work was just "one meter away". "What does your son want to work in?" Macron asked the woman during a walkabout in Marseille on Monday after she said her son, 33, could not find work and was in rent arrears. "It does not matter... anything!" she replied. Macron told her: "You are not going to

## EU reaches deal, agrees tougher rules on banks

**BRUSSELS:** The EU struck a deal on Tuesday to implement internationally-agreed banking reforms intended to avert a repeat of the 2008 financial crisis. The European Commission first proposed the banking law in October 2021 but there has been a greater focus on banks following the collapse of lenders in



**OHIO:** Photo shows the Lordstown Motors factory where GM once operated, in Lordstown, Ohio. Lordstown Motors said on June 27, 2023, it has filed for bankruptcy protection and is suing Foxconn after a protracted dispute with the Taiwanese electronics giant. — AFP

mitments" to establish a development platform for new vehicles, the lawsuit states according to Lordstown, which said such breaches caused "material and irreparable harm" to the automaker.

Lordstown had indicated in early June it planned to sue Foxconn to force it to take a stake in the production operation, as it had initially undertaken to do before backtracking. Foxconn's parent company, Hon Hai Technology Group, said in a statement that it had maintained a "positive attitude" during negotiations with Lordstown but said the US firm's statement Tuesday amounted to "malicious attacks" against

the Taiwanese company.

Lordstown "has been reluctant to perform the investment agreement between the two parties in accordance with its terms," it added. "Foxconn originally hoped to continue discussions and reach a solution that could satisfy all stakeholders, without resorting to baseless legal actions, but so far the two parties have yet to reach a consensus." In pre-market trading before the opening of the New York Stock Exchange, Lordstown's share price plunged by about 60 percent, to \$1.11. It was trading above \$375 at the start of 2021. — AFP

persuade me that, if he is really looking for a job in Marseille, and that he is ready to take a job as a waiter, that there is no job as a waiter. "I promise you: If I take a walk around the Vieux Port tonight with you, I'm sure we will find 10 job offers," he said.

But the new head of the CFDT union, Marylise Leon, warned the president that "things were not as simple as all that". "What message is the president of the republic sending to people who are employed in cafes and restaurants - that they just have to knock on the door and get work?" she told BFM TV. "It denies the skills and the difficulties of the working conditions," she added. MP for the hard-left France Unbowed party Mathilde Panot said "Macron has become a caricature of Macron". "Showing such contempt to people, the only unemployed person we hope for in the country is Emmanuel Macron," she said.

Tensions have bubbled in France between Macron's government and the left over his pension reform to raise the retirement age. Earlier this year, his Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin accused the hard-left of wanting a "society without effort" and seeking the "right to laziness". The unemployment rate



**MARSEILLE:** French President Emmanuel Macron visits the Saint Andre La Castellane primary school being renovated thanks to 'Marseille en grand' plan, in Marseille, southeastern France, on June 27, 2023. — AFP

in France currently is at around 7 percent, its lowest level since the early 1980s. Responding to Macron's challenge, the regional daily La Provence took a stroll around the Vieux Port and said it found no less than 13 job offers in one-and-a-half hours. — AFP

sasters," Swedish Finance Minister Elisabeth Svantesson said in a statement.

The EU is the first major jurisdiction to implement the final elements of the reforms, ahead of other countries including the United States. But the bloc has pushed for its rules to take into account the "concrete conditions" of European banks which rely more on low-risk home loans than their American counterparts. The draft law also requires banks to disclose their exposure to crypto assets, which include cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin and ethereum, and more transparency on sustainability risks including the financing of fossil fuel projects. — AFP

the United States triggered market turbulence earlier this year. The draft law is the European Union's interpretation of the Basel III reforms of international standards on how banks evaluate credit and market risks. They include stipulations that banks have adequate capital and liquidity.

The rules will apply from January 1, 2025, two years later than the 2023 deadline agreed under the reforms. Negotiators from the European Council, which represents the 27 member states, and the European Parliament provisionally agreed on the rules on Tuesday. "This is a major step forward which will help ensure that European banks can continue to operate also in light of external shocks, crises or di-

## Lifestyle

## Will AI really destroy humanity?

The warnings are coming from all angles: artificial intelligence poses an existential risk to humanity and must be shackled before it is too late. But what are these disaster scenarios and how are machines supposed to wipe out humanity?

## Paperclips of doom

Most disaster scenarios start in the same place: machines will outstrip human capacities, escape human control and refuse to be switched off. "Once we have machines that have a self-preservation goal, we are in trouble," AI academic Yoshua Bengio told an event this month. But because these machines do not yet exist, imagining how they could doom humanity is often left to philosophy and science fiction.

Philosopher Nick Bostrom has written about an "intelligence explosion" he says will happen when superintelligent machines begin designing machines of their own. He illustrated the idea with the story of a superintelligent AI at a paperclip factory.

The AI is given the ultimate goal of maximizing paperclip output and so "proceeds by converting first the Earth and then increasingly large chunks of the observable universe into paperclips". Bostrom's ideas have been dismissed

by many as science fiction, not least because he has separately argued that humanity is a computer simulation and supported theories close to eugenics.

He also recently apologized after a racist message he sent in the 1990s was unearthed. Yet his thoughts on AI have been hugely influential, inspiring both Elon Musk and Professor Stephen Hawking.

## The Terminator

If superintelligent machines are to destroy humanity, they surely need a physical form. Arnold Schwarzenegger's red-eyed cyborg, sent from the future to end human resistance by an AI in the movie "The Terminator", has proved a seductive image, particularly for the media. But experts have rubbished the idea. "This science fiction concept is unlikely to become a reality in the coming decades if ever at all," the Stop Killer Robots campaign group wrote in a 2021 report.

However, the group has warned that giving machines the power to make decisions on life and death is an existential risk. Robot expert Kerstin Dautenhahn, from Waterloo University in Canada, played down those fears.

She told AFP that AI was unlikely to give machines higher reasoning capabilities or imbue them with a desire to kill all



humans. "Robots are not evil," she said, although she conceded programmers could make them do evil things.

## Deadlier chemicals

A less overtly sci-fi scenario sees "bad actors" using AI to create toxins or new viruses and unleashing them on the world. Large language models like GPT-3, which was used to create ChatGPT, it turns out are extremely good at inventing horrific new chemical agents. A group of scientists who were using AI to help

discover new drugs ran an experiment where they tweaked their AI to search for harmful molecules instead.

They managed to generate 40,000 potentially poisonous agents in less than six hours, as reported in the Nature Machine Intelligence journal. AI expert Joanna Bryson from the Hertie School in Berlin said she could imagine someone working out a way of spreading a poison like anthrax more quickly. "But it's not an existential threat," she told AFP. "It's just a horrible, awful weapon."

## Species overtaken

The rules of Hollywood dictate that epochal disasters must be sudden, immense and dramatic—but what if humanity's end was slow, quiet and not definitive? "At the bleakest end our species might come to an end with no successor," philosopher Huw Price says in a promotional video for Cambridge University's Centre for the Study of Existential Risk.

But he said there were "less bleak possibilities" where humans augmented by advanced technology could survive. "The purely biological species eventually comes to an end, in that there are no humans around who don't have access to this enabling technology," he said. The imagined apocalypse is often framed in evolutionary terms. Stephen Hawking argued in 2014 that ultimately our species will no longer be able to compete with AI machines, telling the BBC it could "spell the end of the human race".

Geoffrey Hinton, who spent his career building machines that resemble the human brain, latterly for Google, talks in similar terms of "superintelligences" simply overtaking humans. He told US broadcaster PBS recently that it was possible "humanity is just a passing phase in the evolution of intelligence". — AFP

## The new Tucker: Jesse Watters named as Fox star host



Jesse Watters gestures during the 2022 FOX Nation Patriot Awards at Hard Rock Live at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Hollywood in Hollywood, Florida. — AFP

Fox News announced Monday its replacement for ousted prime-time host Tucker Carlson will be Jesse Watters, an equally provocative conservative commentator whose skewering of the left has gained him a large following. The move was part of a shake-up at the cable news behemoth nine weeks after it parted ways with pugnacious star Carlson following Fox's \$787 million payout to settle a defamation case brought by an election technology company.

Rupert Murdoch-owned Fox News, which largely backed Trump before and during his term in office, has recently had rockier relations with the former president — often drawing his ire for its supposed lack of support. In announcing Watters, a co-host of Fox's evening roundtable show "The Five," the company unveiled a new prime-time lineup, with "Jesse Watters Primetime" airing in Carlson's previous slot at 8:00 pm.

The change comes as Fox seeks to staunch financial bleeding since Carlson's departure in May, with evening ratings reportedly crashing after his acrimonious exit. Watters, 44, began working at Fox as a production assistant after graduating from college in 2001, and soon appeared on air as an interviewer with a combative "ambush journalism" style.

He gained a reputation for on-the-street interviews with unwitting suspects, often politicians, government officials or liberal activists, many of whom bristled at Watters's approach. He has also been accused of airing racist segments, has derided the homeless as "people that have failed in life," and mocked immigrants.

In late 2021, during the pandemic, he urged attendees at a conservative political conference to "ambush" Antho-

ny Fauci, the country's top infectious disease expert who became the face of America's fight against COVID-19. He called on them to "go in for the kill shot" with a barrage of questions at Fauci. Fauci said later that Watters should be "fired on the spot," but in a statement Fox defended their star.

His predecessor in primetime amassed a record viewership. Carlson aired a firestorm of conspiracy theories — from the "great replacement" of white Americans to vaccine falsehoods and anti-transgender propaganda — and was quick to spread disinformation, particularly Trump's baseless claims of fraud in the 2020 election.

But the defamation case, in which Dominion Voting Systems accused Fox News of airing false claims after the election, led to the release of damning private messages between Fox hosts, including Carlson, who wrote that he couldn't wait until he could "ignore Trump most nights," adding: "I hate him passionately."

Carlson has since moved his show to Twitter, where his videos have been viewed more than 100 million times. Fox News has launched a legal battle to halt his shows, arguing they violate the terms of his contract. The network said Monday that its new lineup would "ensure our viewers have access to unrivaled coverage from our best-in-class team for years to come." — AFP

## Mel Brooks, Angela Bassett to receive honorary Oscars

Veteran US comic Mel Brooks, who turns 97 this week, will receive an honorary Oscar for lifetime achievement, more than half a century after he won for best original screenplay for "The Producers," the Academy said Monday. Brooks — a prolific actor, producer and lyricist — memorably sent up Adolf Hitler in his seminal satire "The Producers," exposed racial bigotry in "Blazing Saddles," and lampooned horror flicks in "Young Frankenstein."

He is already one of the few entertainers to win an Oscar, Emmy, Tony, and Grammy — collectively called an "EGOT" — across a career spanning eight decades. Brooks will receive his golden statuette at a ceremony in Los Angeles this November, along with other luminaries including Angela Bassett.

Bassett, 64, has previously been nominated twice for Oscars — she earned a nod for portraying Tina Turner in "What's Love Got to Do with It," and earlier this year became the first actor ever nominated for a Marvel superhero film, with "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever." "Across her decades-long career, Angela Bassett has continued



US actress Angela Bassett attends the 95th Annual Academy Awards at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California. — AFP photos



File photo shows Director-screenwriter Mel Brooks. — AFP photos

to deliver transcendent performances that set new standards in acting," said Janet Yang, president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

"Mel Brooks lights up our hearts with his humor, and his legacy has made a lasting impact on every facet of entertainment," she wrote. The honorary Oscars are handed out every year to honor lifetime achievement, and were spun off into a separate event in 2009 to declutter the main show's packed schedule.

Last November, honorees included Michael J. Fox, who received the

Jean Hersholt statuette, which is specifically for humanitarian work by a film industry figure. This year, that award goes to Michelle Satter, founding senior director of the Sundance Institute's Artist Programs, which help foster the early careers of filmmakers, especially from underrepresented communities. A fourth honorary Oscar will go to "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial" editor Carol Littleton. The 14th Governors Awards take place on November 18. — AFP

## Japan kabuki star arrested over mother's suicide

One of Japan's best-known kabuki actors was arrested Tuesday on suspicion of assisting his mother's suicide, police said, after both parents were found unconscious at his home last month. Last month, Ennosuke Ichikawa "allegedly made a 75-year-old woman take sleep-inducing pills at his home and die of psychoactive drug addiction, thereby assisting in her suicide," Tokyo police told AFP.

The 47-year-old is a star of the classical form of theatre and has performed in London, Amsterdam and at the Paris Opera House. In May, rescue workers found Ichikawa's 76-year-old father — also a kabuki actor — and his 75-year-old mother unconscious at his home in the capital. Both were later confirmed dead, and police are also investigating his father's death, media reports said. Ichikawa was on Tuesday quoted by Jiji Press as telling investigators that he was "going to follow my parents and kill myself," admitting to the charges.

He was discovered collapsed at his home on the day, and was taken to hospital where he was questioned. The suspect told officers that the family "discussed dying and being reborn" and that his parents had taken sleeping pills, according to NHK.



Japanese kabuki actor Ennosuke Ichikawa walks on a street during a parade in Tokyo. — AFP

An apparent suicide note written by Ichikawa was also reportedly found inside his home. Ichikawa, whose real name is Takahiko Kinoshi, made his kabuki debut in 1980 and went on to become one of the country's most renowned performers. He was once nominated for a Laurence Olivier award for dance performance, according to his website. — AFP

It feels so natural a collaboration that the only surprise is it didn't happen before: indie favorites Beck and Phoenix have teamed up for a new single and summer tour. The California singer-songwriter joined AFP on a sunny riverside in Paris to talk about their joint single "Odyssey" and upcoming dates in North America. "A lot of times these tours where they put bands together, no-one really talks. There's no real connection," said Beck.

"To me it's more interesting if there's a life behind all that. We didn't ask permission to do it. We just did it." The connections between the Los Angeles native and the band Versailles — probably France's biggest indie export of recent decades — go back a long way to their debuts in the 1990s. "The first time I heard Beck was probably 'Loser' on MTV, but the song I would play the most was 'Jack-Ass,'" recalled Phoenix singer Thomas Mars, referring to a hit from Beck's seminal 1996 album "Odelay".

"It felt like we had a cousin or brother somewhere in the world," Beck said he was sent the first Phoenix album by mutual friends — probably French electro bands Air or Daft Punk. "In the 1990s we were coming out of a long period of hard rock and grunge and Phoenix's music had 80s influences that were not fashionable yet. And it felt risky to embrace happy 80s sounds," he said. "Risque" was my email address back then," Mars joked.

## Together for a summer

The old friends have been hanging out in Paris where Beck has been busy attending fashion shows and joining The Black Keys for a rendition of his 1990s breakout hit "Loser" last week. He plays an acoustic set this Wednesday at city hall. "It will be me, one guitar, and we'll see what happens," he said with a laugh. "Maybe I'll just do French hits sung with a really terrible American accent."

Mars suggests he sing "Je t'aime... moi non plus", the sexy 1960s classic by Serge Gainsbourg and Jane Birkin, and "get the public to do the sex sounds", which Beck heartily agrees with. The two friends will reconnect from August 1 for the North American

## Beck and Phoenix: Old friends unite for summer



Thomas Mars of French band Phoenix performs on stage during the We Love Green music festival in the Bois de Vincennes park in Paris. — AFP photos

summer tour, titled "Summer Odyssey".

So why now to finally write a song together? Beck jumps in: "Well we have the tour, and we decided to give it a name, and then a song, and why not a T-shirt... And let's have a restaurant and a hot-air balloon!" Then a little

more seriously, he added that it "makes it more interesting to have these artefacts from this time where we came together for a summer". — AFP



US musician Beck performs on stage in the Festival d'ETE Concert in Quebec City. — AFP photos

Lifestyle



Artist Shawn Corey Carter aka Jay-Z performs during a free show on the Pont Neuf after the Louis Vuitton Menswear Spring-Summer 2024 show as part of the Paris Fashion Week.



Models present creations for the Louis Vuitton Menswear Spring-Summer 2024 show as part of the Paris Fashion Week.

# PARTY TIME FOR BOOMING MENSWEAR IN PARIS

Menswear is where the party is happening in fashion at the moment, and the latest Paris Fashion Week was one of the most flamboyant ever. As labels see unprecedented growth in the men's sector, labels were keen to splash out on attention-grabbing events in the week that ended Sunday. It was also a season of sunny colors and plenty of skin on show, balanced by the continued influence of military styles.



**Afterparties for all**

Pharrell Williams set the tone on opening night with his debut show for Louis Vuitton, laying the oldest bridge in Paris in golden carpet and turning it into a celeb-stuffed open-air club. His new song "JOY (Unspeakable)", sung by a huge gospel choir, soundtracked the catwalk show before he invited the crowd to stay for a performance by rap superstar Jay-Z.

Inevitably, the fashionistas were more interested in recording their pres-



Models present creations for the Louis Vuitton Menswear Spring-Summer 2024 show as part of the Paris Fashion Week.

ence for Instagram than dancing, even after Jay-Z begged them to put their phones away for at least one song, but it was a spectacular night that showcased the blurring lines between fashion, music and other branches of culture. It was not the only party this week.

Nigo took over another bridge for Japanese label Kenzo and then brought everyone to a party on the roof of the Quai Branly Museum. French label Ami had actor Vincent Cassel on the catwalk and then held a garden party where everyone could join him on the dance floor. Guests for young star Marine Serre's show were told they had a ticket to a catwalk show and a disco in one: "Fifteen minutes for a show is way too short," said the designer. Some preferred to keep things more traditional, with Dior designer Kim Jones telling AFP that his austere show had "a simple message: it's all about the clothes."

**Sunny colors**

Technically, these were the autumn-winter collections, but the fashion business moves too fast these days, so many of the styles were beach-ready. Hermes made short shorts a signature look and went away from its usual palette with breezy "mineral" colors. Wil-

liams's show for Louis Vuitton was all about bright yellows and sunsets in keeping with his "Happy" vibes.

There were bright yellow bags at Loewe, and a range of sunny items — parkas, jackets and gilets — at Givenchy. Issey Miyake was full of seaside pastels and shades of orange, while Dior went with lemon and lime shirts and bright colorful hats in homage to the founder's love of gardening.

**Military**

Contrasting with those styles were many military-inspired outfits. "It's a natural direction to go for men's tailoring as military tailoring is so well thought-out and fits so well and has this idea of strength and elegance within it," said Givenchy designer Matthew Williams. Marine Serre made her logo into a camouflage effect on her denim. Sacai achieved a similar effect with green vegetal motifs, and putting its male and female models in chunky shoes. At Louis Vuitton, Williams nicknamed one of his styles "damouflage" — a military-style and pixelated version of the label's famous Damier motif. — AFP



Lifestyle



This picture shows an aerial view of the "Tahya Masr" (Long Live Egypt) overpass crossing the Nile river island of Warrag (left) on the northern outskirts of Egypt's capital Cairo from the district of Rod Al-Farag in Cairo (top) into the district of Imbaba in Cairo's twin city of Giza (bottom) to connect with the ring-road highway circling greater Cairo. — AFP photos



Aerial view showing a boat speeding on the Jurura river in the municipality of Caruaru, in the heart of the Brazilian Amazon Forest.



Aerial view of the Mucajai river at the Yanomami indigenous territory in the state of Roraima, Brazil.

# Which is longer, Amazon or Nile?

## New quest aims to settle old debate

**W**hat's the longest river in the world, the Nile or the Amazon? The question has fueled a heated debate for years. Now, an expedition into the South American jungle aims to settle it for good. Using boats run on solar energy and pedal power, an international team of explorers plans to set off in April 2024 to the source of the Amazon in the Peruvian Andes, then travel nearly 7,000 kilometers (4,350 miles) across Colombia and Brazil, to the massive river's mouth on the Atlantic.

"The main objective is to map the river and document the biodiversity of the surrounding ecosystems, the project's coordinator, Brazilian explorer Yuri Sanada, told AFP. The team also plans to make a documentary on the expedition.

Around 10 people are known to have traveled the full length of the Amazon in the past, but none have done it with those objectives, says Sanada, who runs film production company Aventuras (Adventures) with his wife, Vera. The Amazon, the pulsing aorta of the world's biggest rainforest, has long been recognized as the largest river in the world by volume, discharging more than the Nile, the Yangtze and the Mississippi combined.

But there is a decades-old geographical dispute over whether it or the Nile is longer, made murkier by meth-



A boat sails across the Apurimac river, between the villages of Catun Rumi and Sivia, in Cuzco, Peru.

odological issues and a lack of consensus on a very basic question: where the Amazon starts and ends.

The Guinness Book of World Records awards the title to the African river. But "which is the longer is more a matter of definition than simple measurement," it adds in a note. The Encyclopedia Britannica gives the length of the Nile as 6,650 kilometers (4,132 miles), to 6,400 kilometers (3,977 miles) for the Amazon, measuring the latter from the headwaters of the Apurimac river in southern Peru.

In 2014, US neuroscientist and explorer James "Rocky" Contos developed an alternative theory, putting the source of the Amazon farther away, at the Mantaro river in northern Peru.

If accepted, that would mean the Amazon "is actually 77 kilometers longer than what geographers had thought previously," he told AFP.

### Rafts, horses, solar canoes

Sanada's expedition will trace both the Apurimac and Mantaro sources. One group, guided by Contos, will travel down the Mantaro by white-water rafting. The other will travel the banks of the Apurimac on horseback with French explorer Celine Cousteau, granddaughter of legendary oceanographer Jacques Cousteau.

At the point where the rivers converge, Sanada and two other explorers will embark on the longest leg of the jour-



This picture shows an aerial view of the Nile river in Egypt's southern province of Qena, north of Luxor.

ney, traveling in three custom-made, motorized canoes powered by solar panels and pedals, equipped with a sensor to measure distance.

"We'll be able to make a much more precise measurement," Sanada says. The explorers plan to transfer the sustainable motor technology to local Indigenous groups, he adds. The expedition is backed by international groups including The Explorers Club and the Harvard map collection.

### Worse things than snakes

The adventurers will traverse terrain inhabited by anacondas, alligators and jaguars — but none of that scares Sanada, he says. "I'm most afraid of drug traf-

fickers and illegal miners," he says. The boats will be outfitted with a bulletproof cabin, and the team is negotiating with authorities to obtain an armed escort for the most dangerous zones.

If the expedition is successful, it may be replicated on the Nile. Sanada says the debate on the world's longest river may never be settled. But he is glad the "race" is drawing attention to the Amazon rainforest's natural riches and the need to protect it as one of the planet's key buffers against climate change. "The Amazon is (here), but the consequences of destroying it and the duty to preserve it are everyone's," he says. — AFP



This handout photo shows a 2,000-year-old Pompeian painting, a still life, found by the new Regio IX excavations, depicted on the wall of an ancient Pompeian house that could be a distant ancestor of modern pizza.

# Pompeii fresco shows pizza precursor — but hold the cheese

**E**ven the ancient Romans liked their pizza. Archaeologists in Pompeii said Tuesday they had found depicted on an ancient fresco the precursor to the modern-day pizza — but without the cheese and tomatoes. The 2,000-year-old painting — discovered in the middle of a half-crumbled wall during recent digs at the sprawling archaeological site — depicts a silver platter holding a round flatbread, alongside fresh and dried fruits such as pomegranates and dates and a goblet filled with red wine.

"What was depicted on the wall of an ancient Pompeian house could be a distant ancestor of the modern dish," said experts at the archaeological park in a statement.

The devastating volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79 buried the Roman city in thick ash, hiding from view its many treasures that archaeologists continue to slowly bring to light. The fresco is believed to refer to the "hospitable gifts" offered to guests, following a Greek tradition dating to the 3rd to 1st centuries BC and described by imperial Roman-era writers including Virgil and Philostratus.

Pompeii's director, Gabriel Zuchtriegel, said the newly uncovered fresco shows the contrast between "a frugal and simple meal, which refers to a sphere between the bucolic and the sacred... and the luxury of silver trays and the refinement of artistic and literary representations." "How can we fail to

think, in this regard, of pizza, also born as a 'poor' dish in southern Italy, which has now conquered the world and is also served in starred restaurants," Zuchtriegel added.

The new excavations revealed an atrium of a house that included an annex with a bakery, partially explored in the late 19th century. "In the working areas near the oven, the skeletons of three victims have been found in the past weeks," said experts at the park. Archaeologists estimate that 15 to 20 percent of Pompeii's population died in the eruption, mostly from thermal shock as a giant cloud of gases and ash covered the city. — AFP



# Nobel-winning lithium battery inventor John Goodenough dies at 100

**J**ohn Goodenough, who shared the 2019 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for developing the lithium-ion battery that revolutionized modern life, has died at the age of 100, the University of Texas announced. Goodenough died on Sunday, said the university, where he worked as an engineering professor. The US scientist's contributions to the development of lithium-ion batteries paved the way for smartphones and a fossil fuel-free society.

"John's legacy as a brilliant scientist is immeasurable — his discoveries improved the lives of billions of people around the world," Jay Hartzell, president of the University of Texas at Austin, said in the statement. "He was a leader at the cutting edge of scientific research throughout the many decades of his career." In 1986, at the age of 64, Goodenough joined the University of Texas where he served as a faculty member in the Cockrell School of Engineering for 37 years.

"The world has lost an incredible mind and generous spirit. He will be truly missed among the scientific and engineering community, but he leaves a lasting legacy that will inspire generations of future innovators and researchers," said Sharon Wood, provost of the University of Texas. Goodenough became the oldest person to win a Nobel Prize when at the age of 97 he shared the 2019 chemistry award with Britain's Stanley Whittingham and Akira Yoshino of Japan for the invention of the lithium-ion battery. — AFP



This handout photo released by Parco Archeologico di Pompei (Archaeological Park of Pompeii), shows a 2,000-year-old Pompeian painting, a still life, found by the new Regio IX excavations, depicted on the wall of an ancient Pompeian house that could be a distant ancestor of modern pizza. - AFP photos



Workers excavating the site where a 2,000-year-old Pompeian painting, a still life, was found by the new Regio IX excavations, on the wall of an ancient Pompeian house, representing what could be a distant ancestor of modern pizza.

# Ashes rivals to stick to their guns in 2nd Test

## Australia bid first Ashes series win in England in 22 years

LONDON: England and Australia have vowed to remain loyal to their contrasting tactical approaches, setting up the prospect of another thrilling Ashes clash in the second Test at Lord's starting Wednesday. Australia, bidding for a first Ashes series win in England in 22 years, went 1-0 up in a five-match campaign with a dramatic two-wicket win in the first Test at Edgbaston last week. England were in sight of victory when they had their arch-rivals eight down and needing 54 more runs to win, only to be undone by an unbroken partnership between Australia captain Pat Cummins and Nathan Lyon.

Poor fielding, with several chances missed, did not help England's cause either. Attention, however, soon turned to their aggressive 'Bazball' approach, even though this was only their third defeat in 14 Tests since captain Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum joined forces last year. Several former England internationals, including Geoffrey Boycott, suggested Stokes's side had been too gung-ho in Birmingham, notably in declaring on the first day at 393-8.

### 'Not just moments of madness'

Australia, however, are the World Test champions and there is no guarantee a more orthodox approach would have had led to greater success — after all it was while playing in such a traditional style that England won just one out of 17 Tests before Stokes succeeded Joe Root as red-ball skipper. It may grate to hear England seamer Ollie Robinson say Australia will have to "change their approach to keep up with how we're going to play" following a Test his side lost. But as Mike Brearley, a former England captain, once wrote, "you cannot expect a tortoise to jump like a gazelle" and it may be asking too much of the current side to deviate radically from a policy that has served them well.

Ollie Pope, Stokes's vice-captain, said there was more to the team's tactics than met the eye. "I know sometimes it can look like it's just moments of madness but all the decisions that are made are well thought out with a vision of the end goal," Pope insisted at Lord's on Tuesday. The bigger issue for England arguably lies in team selection. Off-spinner Moeen Ali, tempted out of red-ball retirement at Edgbaston, unsurprisingly suffered a finger injury on a bowling hand not used to lengthy spells.

England have called up teenage leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed as cover. They could also rely on Root's part-time off-spin as a way of getting express quick Mark Wood back into the side. Australia too must decide whether to recall Mitchell Starc after the left-arm quick was left out at Edgbaston, where England went after Scott Boland — the normally miserly seamer — conceded runs at a rate of 5.65 per over. "Just because they (England) are scoring at a higher rate or trying to score at a higher rate doesn't mean you go to one-day cricket," said Starc after a win built on Australia opener Usman Khawaja's painstaking hundred.

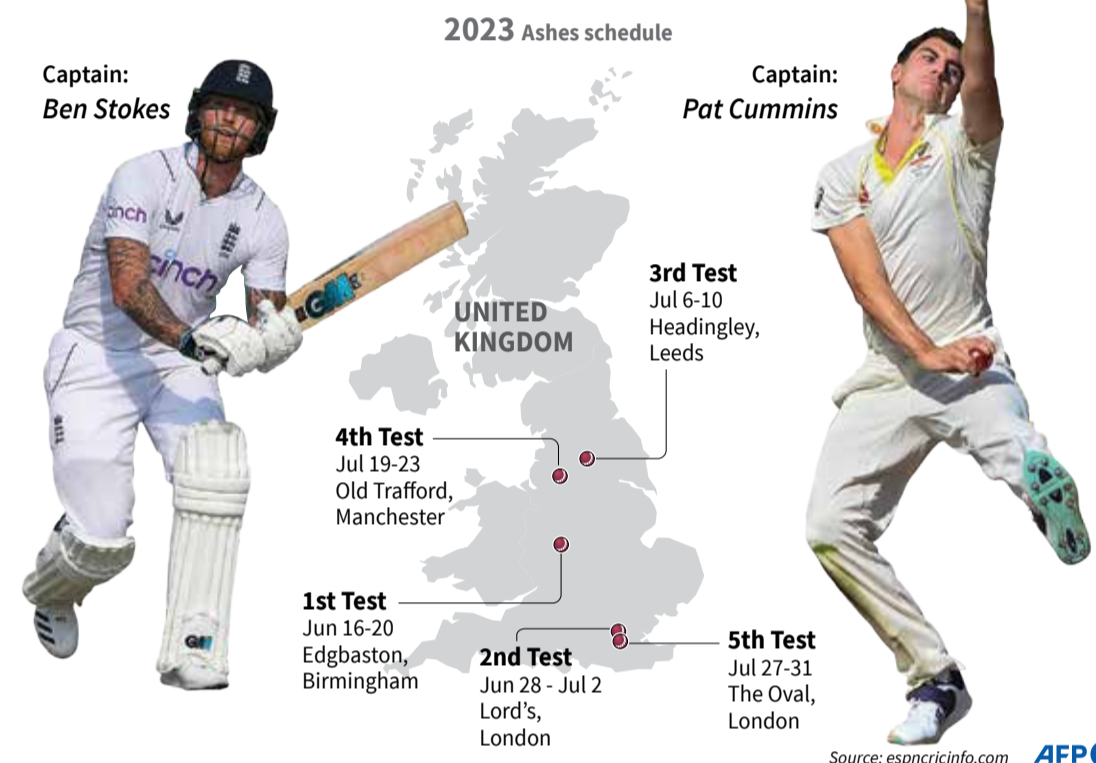
"There are plenty of ways to skin a cat as we saw last week in the way they approached it as opposed to the way we did." Australia will hope star batsmen Mar-

### Cricket's oldest rivalry

England	Since 1882	Australia
108 wins	341 Tests played	141 wins
903-7 The Oval 1938	Highest innings totals	729-6 Lord's 1930
364 Len Hutton, The Oval 1938	Highest individual scores	334 Don Bradman, Leeds 1930
12 Jack Hobbs	Most individual centuries	19 Don Bradman
3,636 Jack Hobbs	Most runs	5,028 Don Bradman
137 Stuart Broad	Most wickets	195 Shane Warne



**The Ashes**  
Reputedly those of a bail burned on the England tour of Australia 1882-83



Graphic on the Ashes Test cricket series between England and Australia, as the 2023 edition takes place in England, June 16 - July 31. — AFP

nus Labuschagne and Steve Smith, who managed just 35 runs between them at Edgbaston, return to form. The Ashes-holders have no such qualms over Lyon, with the off-spinner set to appear in his 100th consecutive Test after an eight-wicket haul that left him just five shy of 500 at this level.

An Ashes series win in England remains a valued prize for Australia, especially as several squad members came close during a 2019 campaign that ended in

a 2-2 draw. Starc, still uncertain as to whether he'll play at Lord's just two days after his wife, Alyssa Healy, led Australia to victory in the lone Women's Ashes Test at Trent Bridge, was well aware of what was at stake. "It is a chance to go 2-0 up," said the 33-year-old. "It is not lost on us the opportunity we do have. "For some of us it is our fourth trip here and coming off the back of '19, where we retained the Ashes but missed out on winning, the carrot is certainly there." — AFP

earlier expressed reservations about playing at the 132,000-seat venue. Ahmedabad was the centre of deadly 2002 religious riots in which at least 1,000 people, mostly Muslims, were killed in sectarian violence that sent shock waves around the world. In Pakistan's previous cricket trip to India during the 2016 T20 World Cup, the match was shifted from Dharamsala to Kolkata over security concerns.

The 48-match tournament will be played at 10 venues across 46 days, with the top four from the 10-team round-robin stage going through to the semi-finals, the ICC said in a statement 100 days before the tournament begins. Eight teams have already qualified through the World Cup Super League. The final two spots will be filled at the end of the current qualifying tournament in Zimbabwe. "It's going to be a great experience playing in the World Cup at home," Indian skipper Rohit Sharma said. "India won here 12 years ago, and I know fans nationwide can't wait for us to take the field this time."

### Turbulent history

India and Pakistan are bitter adversaries and only play cricket against each other in international tournaments, usually at neutral venues, due to longstanding political tensions, most recently during the T20 World Cup in Australia last year. Any match between

the South Asian neighbors therefore becomes one of the most-watched events on the global sporting calendar and any victory is used to promote nationalism at home.

When they do play, cricket fans around the world are glued to their TV screens in a multi-billion-dollar bonanza for broadcasters. The 2019 50-over World Cup clash between India and Pakistan drew 273 million viewers. India and Pakistan have not met on either side's soil in a bilateral series since 2012. They have also not played a Test against each other since 2007, instead meeting only in the shorter versions of the game. India and Pakistan share deep cultural and linguistic links but their history has been mired in violence and bloodshed.

The two nuclear-armed nations have fought three wars since the subcontinent's partition in 1947. India last won the ODI World Cup on home soil in 2011. Since then, Australia and England have won the title in their own backyards in 2015 and 2019 respectively. India will face England on October 29 in Lucknow, while the English will take on Australia on November 4 at Ahmedabad in two other key fixtures. The first semi-final will be on November 15 in Mumbai and the second in Kolkata the next day. There will be reserve days for the semis and the final, and all three will be day-night matches. — AFP



LONDON: Indian cricketers and support staff warm up with a game of football at The Oval. — AFP

## Ahmedabad stadium to host India-Pakistan WCup cricket clash

MUMBAI: India will host Pakistan's cricket team for the first time in seven years in the 50-over World Cup in October, the International Cricket Council said Tuesday. The tournament will begin with holders England taking on New Zealand on October 5 at the world's biggest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad, which will also host the final. The most-awaited clash between rivals India and Pakistan will be played in the same potentially contentious venue on October 15, after the hosts kick off their campaign against Australia a week earlier.



MUMBAI: Members of the video take images of the trophy of the upcoming Men's Cricket World Cup during an event announcing the tournament's schedule in Mumbai on June 27, 2023. — AFP

The schedule was announced after weeks of delay due to Pakistan's earlier refusal to travel to India, but a compromise was reached when Pakistan agreed to host a hybrid-model Asia Cup in September. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said their team would require clearance from Islamabad to play. "We are liaising with our government for guidance," PCB Communications Director Sami Ul Hasan said. "This position is consistent to what we had told the ICC a couple of weeks ago when they shared with us the draft schedule and sought our feedback," he said.

However, Ahmedabad, the home city of India's Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is of concern to Muslim-majority Pakistan, who had

### News in Brief

#### Toronto club fires Bradley

TORONTO: Bob Bradley, the former coach of the United States national team, was fired on Monday as coach and sporting director of Toronto FC after a weak Major League Soccer start. The Canadian club is 3-7 with 10 drawn with 18 points to stand 14th in the Eastern Conference, one point ahead of doormat Miami and seven points out of ninth place and the final playoff berth. "Bob has been a consummate professional with Toronto FC and we thank him for his passion and tireless work," Toronto FC president Bill Manning said in a statement. "We're all disappointed that we were not able to achieve the results we expected." Toronto FC, which also axed assistant coach and technical director Mike Sorber, named under-17 Toronto FC academy coach Terry Dunfield as interim head coach. Dunfield, a 41-year-old former Canadian international midfielder, is a former MLS player for Toronto and Vancouver. — AFP

#### NBA Jazz trade with Hawks

NEW YORK: The NBA's Utah Jazz obtained forward John Collins from the Atlanta Hawks in exchange for swingman Rudy Gay and a future NBA Draft pick, according to multiple reports on Monday. The deal, which cannot be completed until July 6 under league rules as a new free agency period looms, opens a \$25.3 million trade exception, the largest in the NBA, for the Hawks, according to reports by ESPN and The Athletic. Collins, a 25-year-old Utah native entering his seventh NBA campaign, averaged 13.1 points, 6.5 rebounds, 1.2 assists and 1.0 blocked shots a game for Atlanta this past season. With the Jazz, Collins will be on a frontline alongside Finnish forward Lauri Markkanen, last year's NBA Most Improved Player with a career-best 25.6 points a game, and All-Rookie center Walker Kessler, who averaged 9.2 points, 8.4 rebounds and 2.3 blocked shots — fourth-most in the NBA — per game. The Hawks have a year to use the trade exception, which could be used to help Atlanta keep free agents or chase available talent to add alongside All-Star guard Trae Young. — AFP

#### Rybakina out of Eastbourne

EASTBOURNE: Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina pulled out of the Eastbourne International on Monday due to a viral illness, raising doubts over her defense of the title at the All England Club next week. The world number three had been scheduled to play Wang Xiyu on the first day of main draw action at Eastbourne on Monday. Rybakina also withdrew ahead of her third round match at the French Open citing illness earlier this month and fell to a shock defeat to Donna Vekic in the second round of the German Open last week. The Kazak's absence meant that Russian Daria Kasatkina was the highest ranked player in action on Monday as she beat Ukrainian Anhelina Kalinina 6-3, 6-1 in a politically-charged match. Kasatkina will face Karolina Pliskova in round two after the Czech advanced when Elise Mertens retired in the deciding set of their clash. — AFP

## Women's WCup opener sold out

WELLINGTON: Co-hosts Australia will play their opening game of next month's Women's World Cup in front of a full house, a senior FIFA official told AFP Tuesday. Dave Beeche, chief executive of the Women's World Cup, said the Matildas' opener against Ireland on July 20 has sold out at Sydney's Stadium Australia, which can hold around 80,000 fans. "There is currently nothing available," he said.

Beeche also expects a capacity crowd the same day in Auckland where tournament co-hosts New Zealand — the "Football Ferns" — open their campaign against Norway. "It's going to be a massive day for women's football," he said of the double-header either side of the Tasman Sea. With less than 25 days until kick off, the tournament boss says only a "few thousand" tickets are left for New Zealand's opening game at Eden Park, where capacity will be just under 40,000.

"Yes, definitely" Beeche replied when asked whether the Auckland stadium would be sold out for the opener, despite fears about the tournament's low ticket sales in New Zealand. Football's governing body FIFA has said around 1.1 million tickets have been sold for the 64 matches in Australia and New Zealand. FIFA's head of women's football Sarai Bareman has voiced concern about low World Cup ticket sales in New Zealand, where the co-hosts are struggling for form.

The Football Ferns approach the tournament on a 10-match winless streak with one chance left to get a morale-boosting win in a final home friendly against Vietnam on July 10. Beeche said 270,000 tickets had so far been sold in New Zealand and 830,000 in Australia. Those unequal numbers reflect the population sizes of Australia, where 26 million people live, and New Zealand, which is home to five million, he insisted. "When you look at the Matildas being a high-ranked team and the Football Ferns' run of form, New Zealand is doing pretty well," he said. — AFP

Sports

# French women's football collective scores goal in fight against veil ban

## Players banned from wearing 'ostentatious' religious symbols

PARIS: A French women's football collective seeking to overthrow a ban on players wearing the Islamic veil during matches scored a crucial legal goal on Monday in their judicial fight to force a rule change. Under its current rules, the French Football Federation forbids all players, even amateurs, from wearing "ostentatious" religious symbols in the name of French secularism, preventing players from wearing Muslim headscarves or the Jewish kippa. A Muslim women's collective known as "the Hijabeuses" launched a legal challenge to the rules in November 2021, claiming they were discriminatory and infringed their right to practice their religion freely.

The case reached the French constitutional council on Monday where the public rapporteur, whose views are generally followed by the nine-member council, said he was against the federation's rules and recommended a rule change. Clement Malverti said there was no "neutrality requirement" for football players who should not be subjected to the same rules as public officials such as teachers or civil servants who are banned from displaying their religious convictions.

Football was "riddled with" religious symbols, he said, including a cross on the shirts of the professional Auxerre team, players making the sign of the cross as they enter the pitch, or having tattoos featuring religious symbols. A veil ban could be considered for national players who represented

the nation and were undertaking a "public service mission", he added. The council is set to hand down a decision in three weeks' time. A lawyer for the Hijabeuses, Marion Ogier, said it was "too early to cry victory", but said that the conclusions of the public rapporteur "are in our favor".

"Our combat is not political, not religious. It is about sport and only sport," Foune Diawara, head of the Hijabeuses, told reporters. "There are women who are excluded from football pitches every weekend because they wear the veil." France's laws on secularism guarantee religious freedom to all citizens, and contain no provisions on banning the wearing of religious symbols in public spaces, with the exception of full-face coverings which were

outlawed in 2010. Many right-wing politicians in France want to widen restrictions on the headscarf, seeing it as a political statement in support of Islamism and an affront to French values.

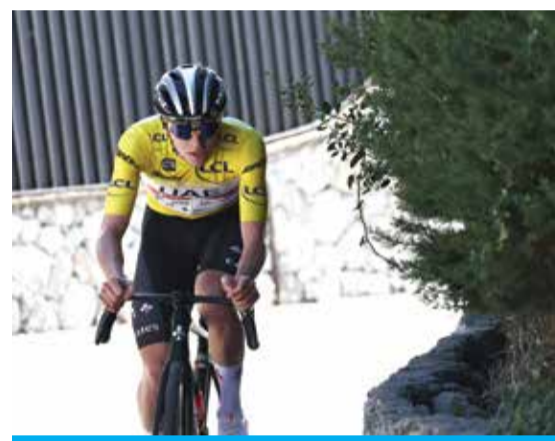
In last year's presidential election, far-right leader Marine Le Pen proposed a ban on the headscarf in all public places, which experts said would almost certainly have been stuck down as unconstitutional if she had been elected. The French Senate, which is dominated by the right-wing Republicans party, also tried to introduce a law in January last year that would have banned the wearing of obvious religious symbols in all competitive sports. It was rejected in the lower house by President Emmanuel Macron's centrist ruling party. — AFP

## Vingegaard v Pogacar duel headlines Tour

BILBAO: Defending champion Jonas Vingegaard leads the Tour de France out of the Basque port of Bilbao on Saturday on a 21-day adventure crammed with peaks, postcard panoramas and an eye-catching showdown on a massive dormant volcano on the 3,404km route to Paris. The 30 mountains on the route lend Vingegaard of Jumbo-Visma an edge over two-time champion Tadej Pogacar backed by a reinforced Team UAE squad.



Danish rider Jonas Vingegaard



Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar

A year ago, Jumbo's collective strength helped the Dane, more resilient on the toughest climbs, outlast the daring Pogacar in a ruthless war of attrition in the mountains. Pogacar had finished first the year before with Vingegaard second. This promises to be their third heavyweight bout. Pogacar won the Slovenian national championship on Sunday and said it was a good test of his legs ahead of the Tour. "I'm happy to have succeeded. It was a good test before the Tour. My legs were pretty solid," said Pogacar.

"Now I'm going to rest before heading to Bilbao for the start." French hope Romain Bardet said: "It will be a beautiful battle, especially if they are both at 100 percent. There's a plethora of pretenders following right behind them." Tour folklore insists the champion is chosen by the Alps, and 13 of this year's 30 mountains are there, with six more in the Pyrenees, five in the Vosges, four in the Massif Central and one each in the Jura and Basque Country.

The Tour makes a hilly start over the forested slopes around Bilbao and San Sebastian. The Spanish Basque Country is a cycling heartland and fervent local fans will be out in force for the Grand Depart. Clever route design has set up what promises to be a swashbuckling struggle over the first three stages in an event televised in 190 countries. The opener, around the Bilbao back-country, is laced with terrain

to tempt the one-day mavericks to go for glory with Frenchman Julian Alaphilippe one to watch.

The 20km descent to the chic coastal resort of San Sebastian on stage two might raise an eyebrow or two after the shocking recent death of Swiss rider Gino Maeder at the Tour of Switzerland. The peloton enters France on day three and then swings west for two stages through the Pyrenees before heading back up the Atlantic coast. The vineyards of Bordeaux, on stage seven, serve as an aperitif to the star landmark of this Tour, the magnificent dormant volcano at Puy de Dome. The ascent provides a spectacular view of the dormant domes along central France's tectonic faultline.

### Rarefied air

Neither fans nor vehicles will be allowed on Puy de Dome's stark, steep upper reaches where pretenders will be brutally exposed to the elements. Another potential decider is stage 17 from Mont-Blanc, which climbs four peaks, the last into the rarefied air above the tree line at the 2,300m summit of the final climb to Courchevel, where 2019 champion Egan

Bernal may once again deliver a late challenge.

Gone is the day-20 individual time-trial that made recent finales something of a lottery. Instead, the last stage before Paris offers another five mountains and no let up for the leader. As usual the Tour is rich in sub-plots. Rising star Biniam Girmay is fully capable of becoming the first black African to win a stage on this 110th edition. "It's a big moment for me and for Eritrea," the 23-year-old leader of Belgian team Interim-Wanty said.

Targeting the sprints, Girmay faces veteran British speed king Mark Cavendish, who hopes to break a tie with all-time great Eddy Merckx with a 35th Tour de France stage win. The Tour ends with the traditional mass bunch sprint on the cobbled Champs Elysees on July 24 with the trophies then distributed beneath the Arc de Triomphe. In 2024 the finish will be in Nice because of the Paris Olympics. The route of women's Tour de France, from July 23-30, was unveiled on Thursday with a 1,000km itinerary starting from Clermont Ferrand and taking the riders through the south and an ascent of the Col du Tourmalet in the Pyrenees as its highlight. — AFP

## Wimbledon women's singles: Key points

LONDON: Iga Swiatek will attempt to add the Wimbledon title to the US and French Open crowns she already possesses when the third major of the season gets under way on Monday. There will also be focus on the continuing bitter fall-out from the decision to allow Russian players to return after a 2022 ban while all women players are at least united on one point — a welcome change to the tournament's strict all-white playing gear rule. AFP Sport looks at key points at Wimbledon 2023.

### Swiatek desperate

With three French Open titles and a US Open already secured, world number one Iga Swiatek now tries to crack the Wimbledon code which has left her baffled in three visits so far. A first round exit in 2019 and third round loss last year sandwiched the Pole's best run so far to the last 16 in 2021 where she was defeated by Ons Jabeur. Her third round loss to Alize Cornet in 2022 ended a 37-match winning run. "I tried many things to feel better on a grass court, but it didn't really work out," said Swiatek after her loss to the veteran Cornet. On Monday, Swiatek played her first grass-court match of the season and had to battle from a set down to defeat 2022 Wimbledon semi-finalist Tatjana Maria in Bad Homburg.

Should the 22-year-old Pole falter at the All England Club then Belarusian world number two Aryna Sabalenka, banned last year, will look to pounce having made the semi-finals in 2021. Petra Kvitova, the champion in 2011 and 2014, is also hovering having won a sixth career grass-court title in Berlin at the weekend. Swiatek's other main threat should be defending champion Elena Rybakina but the Moscow-born Kazakh has yet to fully recover from a virus which caused an early withdrawal from the French Open.

### Russian return?

After being banned last year, Russian and Belarusian players return to Wimbledon but that will only deepen the resolve of Ukraine's stars to give their rivals the cold shoulder. At the French Open, the refusal of Ukraine players to shake hands with Russian and Belarusian opponents in protest at the ongoing war sparked bitter wrangling. Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk told French fans they should be "embarrassed" for booing her after she refused to shake hands with Aryna Sabalenka.

Elena Svitolina also refused to offer the traditional post-match gesture after losing to Sabalenka in the quarter-finals. "I won't sell my country out for likes," said Svitolina who has been awarded a wild-card to play at Wimbledon this year. Sabalenka boycotted back-to-back news conferences in Paris claiming the tough questions she faced over her close links to Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko caused her not to feel "safe". To play at Wimbledon this year, all Russian and Belarusians must sign a declaration of neutrality, have no links to state funding and must not demonstrate any support for the war. — AFP

## Wimbledon men singles: Talking points

LONDON: Novak Djokovic targets an eighth All England Club title and 24th Grand Slam crown at Wimbledon which gets underway on Monday. Carlos Alcaraz shapes up to be his biggest rival while Andy Murray celebrates the 10th anniversary of his first title at the tournament. AFP Sport looks at talking points ahead of the tournament:

### Djokovic eyes Federer

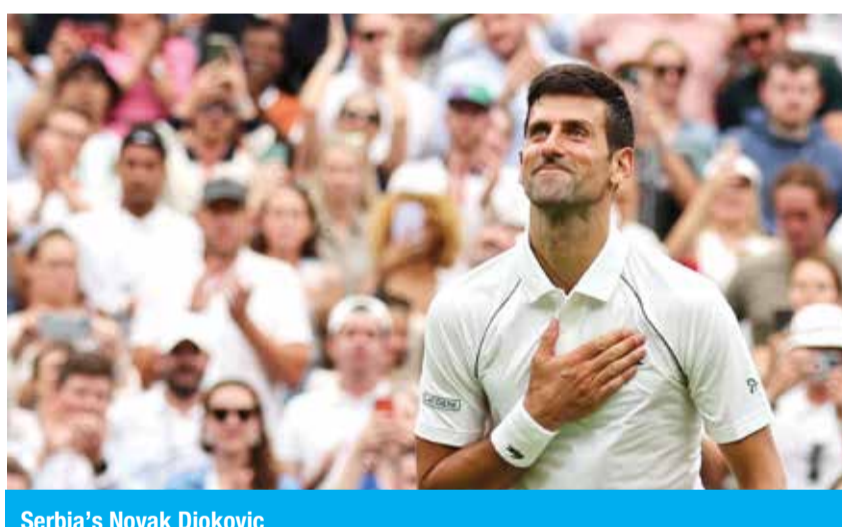
Fresh from winning a third French Open and men's record 23rd Grand Slam, Novak Djokovic eyes more history at Wimbledon where an eighth title would take him level with Roger Federer's all-time mark. It would also be his fifth in a row at the All England Club where he has become virtually unbeatable — he has not lost on Centre Court in 10 years since falling to Andy Murray in the 2013 final. A 24th Grand Slam title would take him alongside Margaret Court for most majors ever won.

Djokovic's 84 wins at Wimbledon are more than the rest of the top 20 combined while nobody else in the cur-

rent top 10 has ever made a semi-final. Adding to the sense of history, another title at Wimbledon will leave him needing to win the US Open in September to become the first man since 1969 to complete a calendar Grand Slam. "I don't want to say that I am the greatest, because I feel it's disrespectful towards all the great champions in different eras of our sport," said Djokovic after winning the French Open. "So I leave those kind of discussions of who is the greatest to someone else."

### Expectations on Alcaraz

At just 20, world number one Carlos Alcaraz is seen as the only legitimate threat to Djokovic at Wimbledon. The US Open champion arrives having secured the prestigious Queen's Club title, just his third ever tournament on grass. The Spaniard made the Wimbledon last 16 in 2022 where he was beaten by fellow top 10 player Jannik Sinner. "Novak is the main favorite to win Wimbledon. That's obvious," said Alcaraz who will be top seed for the competition and can only face Djokovic in the final. For that he will be grateful after losing to the Serb in the semi-finals at the French Open last month where his challenge fell victim to cramping. He admitted later that the "stress and tension" of seeing Djokovic on the other side of the net had sparked his physical decline.



Serbia's Novak Djokovic

### End of the road for Murray?

When Andy Murray defeated Novak Djokovic in the 2013 final, he ended Britain's 77-year wait for a men's champion at Wimbledon. He backed it up with a second triumph in 2016 but with a recent history of serious injury problems, many fans will wonder if this year will mark the 36-year-old's last appearance at the All England Club. Ranked at 39 after gallantly battling his way back up the sport's pecking order, the former world number one will be unseeded this year. His last two visits have seen him fail to make the

second week while he sat out the 2018 and 2019 singles tournaments.

### Murray's swansong?

"I hope not, but you never know," he told Sky Sports. "If I were to have another big injury or something happened with the metal hip, that would be me finished. I wouldn't try and come back from another operation." He added: "I want to keep playing a bit longer. I know it's not going to be going on forever, but I have an idea when I'd like to finish, and it's not this year's Wimbledon." — AFP



Poland's Iga Swiatek

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

by declare that henceforth my name will be read as **Antony Paul** (given name) Cheruvalkaran Francis (surname). (#3817) 26-06-2023

I, **Antony Paul** Cheruvalkaran Francis, holder of Indian Passport No. T6762519 having permanent address in Kerala, India, Pin 680317, residing in Kuwait at present, here-

I, **Saddikali**, holder of Indian Passport No. L9757454 having permanent address Mohammadpura Temba, Sagwara, Dungarpur, Rajasthan, Pin - 314025, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) **Saddikali** and (surname) **Pachlasawala**. (#3816) 26-06-2023

## Martinique edge El Salvador

### Panama beat Costa Rica 2-1 in Gold Cup



FLORIDA: Costa Rica's goalkeeper Kevin Chamorro saves a goal during the CONCACAF 2023 Gold Cup Group C football match between Costa Rica and Panama on June 26, 2023. — AFP

**FORT LAUDERDALE:** Ten-man Martinique, sparked by nine saves from goalkeeper Yannis Clementia, held off El Salvador for a 2-1 Group C victory in the CONCACAF Gold Cup on Monday. Martinique, eliminated in the group stage in the team's past five Gold Cup appearances, had goals from Patrick Burner in the 11th minute and Kevin Fortune in the 16th, plus a late penalty-shot save by Clementia. After Jonathan Rivierez was sent off with a red card in the 48th minute, the Caribbean side tightened defensively and denied the Salvadorans a goal until the dying seconds of extra time.

In a later match, Panama defeated Costa Rica 2-1 at the home stadium of Major League Soccer's Inter Miami, soon to be the club of Argentine star Lionel

Messi. Panama opened the scoring in the 23rd minute on Jose Fajardo's header off a centering pass from Eric Davis. The Ticos were denied in the 25th when Panama keeper Orlando Mosquera was caught well away from the woodwork but still able to deny a chip from Costa Rican teen Josimar Alcocer.

Unmarked Edgar Barcenas gave Panama a 2-0 lead in the 68th minute when he took a centering pass in the heart of the penalty area from Michael Murillo and nodded in a header off the left post. Costa Rica scored in the first of three minutes of stoppage time on a give-and-go goal from a steep angle off the left foot of Aaron Suarez. It will be a fight for the group lead when Panama and Martinique meet Fri-

day in Harrison, New Jersey.

Salvadoran turnovers set up both Martinique goals, the first after a cross-field pass found onrushing full back Burner, who fired a left-footed shot over a sliding defender and just inside the far post. Barely five minutes later, an interception by Brighton Lebeau and a set up pass from Karel Fabien led to Fortune blasting in a one-touch shot off the outside of his right foot from the heart of the box to give "Les Martinino" a 2-0 advantage.

Martinique was stunned when Rivierez was issued a red card for a hard tackle early in the second half, the remainder of which they spent a man down. The Salvadorans pressed the attack but Martinique disrupted it

and Clementia made crisp saves, one a diving stop, on shots from the left side. On a video review, El Salvador was awarded a penalty kick by Mexican referee Adonai Escobedo in the 83rd minute.

But Jairo Henriquez's blast, aimed for the left side of the goal, was deflected wide on a full-extension dive right by Clementia to keep the Central American side scoreless. Clementia was denied a clean sheet late in the fifth and final minute of stoppage time when Jean-Claude Michalet was whistled for a hand ball in the penalty area. Salvadoran captain Bryan Tamacas fired a penalty shot that clipped off the right foot of diving Clementia and went into the net, only for the final whistle to sound moments after a restart. — AFP

## Racism 'entrenched' in English cricket: Report

**LONDON:** England cricket chiefs have promised to "reset" the game after an independent report on Tuesday said not enough had been done to tackle institutional racism and sexism in the game. The England and Wales Cricket Board set up the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket in 2021 to look at issues of diversity, inclusion and equity following a racism scandal. Pakistan-born bowler Azeem Rafiq went public with allegations of racism and bullying in September 2020, related to his two spells at English county Yorkshire.

Of the more than 4,000 individuals interviewed for the ICEC report, 50 percent described experiencing discrimination in the previous five years, with the figures substantially higher for people from ethnically diverse communities. Women were often treated as "second-class citizens", the report found, also stating that not enough had been done to address class barriers, with private schools dominating the pathway into cricket.

"Our findings are unequivocal," said ICEC chair Cindy Butts. "Racism, class-based discrimination, elitism and sexism are widespread and deep-rooted. The game must face up to the fact



Azeem Rafiq

that it's not banter or just a few bad apples. Discrimination is both overt and baked into the structures and processes within cricket." A total of 44 recommendations have been made, including a call for equal pay for male and female international players by 2030. According to the report, the average salary for England women players is just over a fifth of that for England men for playing white-ball cricket. ECB chairman Richard Thompson said the organization would "use this moment to reset cricket". "On behalf of the ECB and wider leadership of the game, I apologize unreservedly to anyone who has ever been excluded from cricket or made to feel like they don't belong," he said. "Cricket should be a game for everyone, and we know that this has not always been the case.

"Powerful conclusions within the report also highlight that for too long women and black people were neglected. We are truly sorry for this." Six former Yorkshire players found guilty of using racist language in the Rafiq case were last month fined by the Cricket Discipline Commission. Former England captain Michael Vaughan was cleared of using racist language "on the balance of probabilities" after opting to defend himself at a hearing in March. — AFP

## McDavid wins 3rd Hart Trophy as NHL MVP

**WASHINGTON:** Connor McDavid of the Edmonton Oilers won the Hart Memorial Trophy as the NHL's Most Valuable Player for the third time in his career on Monday. The 26-year-old Canadian center, in only his eighth NHL season, also took the Ted Lindsay Award voted on by players as the NHL's most outstanding player in award ceremonies at Nashville, Tennessee. McDavid, who led the NHL in scoring for the third consecutive season and fifth time in seven campaigns, was selected on 195 of 196 ballots by a media panel for the Hart Trophy, which he also won in 2017 and 2021.

McDavid scored 64 goals and added 89 assists over 82 games to win the Art Ross Trophy for the most points. He also captured the Rocket Richard Trophy for NHL's most goals for the first time in his career. McDavid said he treasured the Lindsay most among his trophy haul because it came from his peers. "I feel like this is the most prestigious award we give out, so thank you guys so much," McDavid said. "It's a privilege to share the ice with you guys."

Although the NHL's biggest prize, the Stanley Cup, went to the Vegas Golden Knights, the league passed out other top individual awards. Boston coach Jim Montgomery won the Jack Adams Award as the NHL Coach of the Year as voted on by a media panel, taking 79 of 82 possible votes to lead a host of winners for the Bruins. In his first season guiding the club, the 53-year-old Canadian won an NHL record 65 games and finished with an NHL record 135 points. He became the fifth Boston coach to capture the honor.

Boston goaltender Linus Ullmark won the Vezina Trophy as the NHL's top goaltender as voted on by team general managers. The 29-year-old Swede won an NHL co-best 40 games against seven defeats with NHL-bests of a 1.89 goals-against average and a 93.8% save percentage. Boston captain Patrice Bergeron, who led the NHL in faceoffs won, took the Selke Trophy as the NHL's top defensive forward, the Bruins center stretching his record by capturing the award for the sixth time.



Connor McDavid of Edmonton Oilers

San Jose's Erik Karlsson won the Norris Trophy as the NHL's best defenseman for the third time in his career. The 33-year-old Swede also won in media panel votes in 2012 and 2015 while with the Ottawa Senators. Seattle's Matty Beniers won the Calder Trophy as NHL Rookie of the Year. The 20-year-old Kraken forward led NHL newcomers with 24 goals and was second with 33 assists, helping his second-year club reach the playoffs for the first time. — AFP