

Polestar 2
Why wait
to go electric

\$10,000 trade-in support



3 Art exhibition seeks to help Turkey quake victims 'rise from the ashes'



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Top producers warn against divestment from oil and gas

'Worst yet to come' for Europe • Doubts over IATA net zero target • Fair energy transition urged



Saad Al-Kaabi



Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman

DOHA/DUBAI: Qatar's energy minister warned on Tuesday the "worst is yet to come" for Europe's oil and gas shortages, saying a warm winter had prevented greater difficulties in recent months. Saad Al-Kaabi and his Saudi counterpart Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said a lack of investment in oil and gas, as the world tries to transition to cleaner fuels to prevent global warming, risked causing an energy crunch.

"The only thing that saved humanity and Europe this year was a warm winter, and the slowdown in the economy," Qatari Energy Minister Saad Al-Kaabi told the Qatar Economic Forum. "If the economy starts churning back up in (2024) and you have just a regular winter, I think the worst is yet to come." After Russia's invasion of Ukraine sparked an energy supply crisis, Europe dodged serious problems this past winter largely because of milder-than-expected temperatures.

But Kaabi and Prince Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, both told the conference further problems were looming. "If (European leaders have) a proper plan and sit down with produc-

ers, and oil and gas companies are not demonized, reality will kick in and we'll have a sensible solution," Kaabi said.

Qatar has announced a series of major gas supply deals and is engaged in developing North Field, which contains the world's biggest natural gas deposits, raising its production to 126 million tons per year by 2027. Demand is so great that all the expanded production for the North Field East and North Field South could be tied up in long-term deals by the end of the year, Kaabi said. "There is a potential that we will run out of all the gas from the NFE and NFS by the end of the year, as far as long-term contracts," he said. "That's obviously a very big demand."

Prince Abdulaziz also said Europe was "rescued by a gift of God" last winter, and said global energy security was at risk from "kicking the can policies." "Energy security is being shackled. We're running out of capacity, because countries are not investing both in oil and gas," he said, mocking the push for cleaner fuels including green hydrogen, which is produced using renewable energy.

"People go around talking about blue,

green, purple, pink hydrogen, but in the final analysis, who is going to be the off-taker?" he said, referring to the proposed buyer. "What would be the price of hydrogen? We're not talking oil, we're not talking gas. We're talking about the so-called cleanest, greenest fuel of the future. And yet, you don't have the off-takers."

Qatar Airways' chief executive also doused hopes that the aviation industry can become carbon neutral by 2050, saying he was "very skeptical" about the target. Not enough sustainable aviation fuel is being produced, and technological hurdles remain to using hydrogen as a replacement, Akbar Al-Baker told the Qatar Economic Forum.

In 2021, the International Air Transport Association's member airlines committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions in their operations by 2050. But Baker said: "I don't think that we will be able to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. Everybody's talking about it but let us be realistic." Baker's comments come just a few weeks after Emirates airline's president Tim Clark also cast doubt on global aviation's ability to

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Climber reclaims Everest record

KATHMANDU: Nepali guide Kami Rita Sherpa reached the top of Mount Everest on Tuesday for a record 28th time, just a day after his competitor tied with his previous record. "Kami Rita Sherpa made a second summit of Everest this morning. It is his 28th time," Thaneshwor Guragain of his expedition organizer Seven Summit Treks told AFP. Only a day before, Pasang Dawa Sherpa, 46, had equaled the record set by Kami Rita Sherpa last week with his 27th summit of the 8,849-m mountain. — AFP

Curbs on overseas students in UK

LONDON: The UK government on Tuesday announced a package of measures aimed at international students, including a ban on some family members, as ministers come under growing pressure to cut immigration. Under the new proposals, only students on postgraduate courses designated as research programs will be able to bring dependents to the UK while they study. Overseas students will be prevented from switching "out of the student route into work routes" before their studies have been completed. — AFP

Fake Pentagon image goes viral

WASHINGTON: A fake image of an explosion at the Pentagon briefly went viral and caused a ten-minute long dip on the markets on Monday, stoking further talk that generative AI could cause problems to society. "We can confirm this was a false report and the Pentagon was not attacked today," a spokesman said. The Arlington, Virginia fire department also reacted, posting on social media that there was no explosion or incident taking place at or near the Pentagon. — AFP

ISS welcomes its first Saudi astronauts

WASHINGTON: A SpaceX capsule carrying two Saudi astronauts docked with the International Space Station on Monday, as part of a private mission chartered by Axiom Space. Rayyanah Barnawi, a scientist who became the first Saudi woman to go into space, and Ali Al-Qarni, a trained fighter pilot, are the first two people from their country to fly to the orbital outpost.

"Greetings from outer space, I'm

here not only representing myself, but representing the hopes and dreams of everyone back home, everyone in the region," said Barnawi. "We really are excited to be here," added mission commander Peggy Whitson, a former NASA astronaut who made the voyage three times in the past. "It was a great launch, a great ride, we had a lot of fun on the way up and we're really excited to get a lot of work done up here." The fourth crewmember is American businessman John Shoffner.

About two hours after docking, the quartet entered the ISS, where they joined the seven astronauts — three Russians, three Americans and an Emirati — already on board.

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In this handout image released by NASA on May 22, 2023, the four Axiom Mission 2 astronauts, Peggy Whitson, John Shoffner, Ali Al-Qarni and Rayyanah Barnawi gather for a crew greeting ceremony aboard the ISS. — AFP

Australia fetes India's Modi as 'the boss'

SYDNEY: Australia offered Narendra Modi a rockstar welcome Tuesday, during a visit by the Indian leader that was heavy on praise and light on his domestic controversies. Modi hosted a 12,000-strong campaign-style in a Sydney arena Tuesday, with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese playing warm-up act and emcee. Lured by the world's most populous market and a counterweight to China's growing military, diplomatic and economic clout, Australia's prime minister turned on the charm.

To chants of "Modi! Modi! Modi!" Albanese intro-

duced his "dear friend" to a jazzed-up crowd of Indian-Australians, who he praised for making Australia "stronger and more inclusive." "The last time I saw someone on the stage here was Bruce Springsteen and he didn't get the welcome that Prime Minister Modi has got," Albanese said. "Prime Minister Modi is the boss!" he said, breaking into a broad smile and boasting the pair had met six times in the past year.

It was an unusually personal show of support for Modi — a nationalist leader who faces re-election next year and has been criticized for sustained democratic backsliding and discrimination against India's hundreds of millions of non-Hindus. Modi reciprocated his host's lavish welcome, offering a long list of interests that bind the two countries: from cricket to curry, yoga to Masterchef. —

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SYDNEY: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese wave as they leave an event with members of the local Indian community at Qudos Arena on May 23, 2023. — AFP

Merapi volcano erupts, spewing lava 'avalanche'

JAKARTA: Indonesia's Mount Merapi, one of the world's most active volcanoes, erupted on Tuesday, spewing lava more than two kilometers from the crater. Dramatic images of lava pouring from the volcano's smoking crater were published by the government-run Merapi Volcano Observatory. Dozens

of small tremors related to Merapi's eruption were recorded on Tuesday, according to the Centre for Research and Development of Geological Disaster Technology (BPPTKG), a government agency that monitors the volcano.

"Merapi's activity slightly increased over the last few days... but these kinds of increases often occur in Merapi," said BPPTKG head Agus Budi Santoso. Clear weather meant people could easily see the eruption pouring from the volcano, he said. Merapi, which sits just 28 km north of the provincial capital Yogyakarta, is closely monitored by the agency. Authorities implemented a restriction zone of

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MAGELANG, Indonesia: Mount Merapi, one of the world's most active volcanoes, spews lava during an eruption as seen from Dadap Ngori hamlet on May 23, 2023. — AFP



Feynman Technique: Promising approach to simplify studying

Method helps students, teachers cement new concepts

By Ghadeer Ghloum

KUWAIT: Students and teachers alike are often looking for effective strategies to enhance their learning and teaching methods. There are various techniques proposed by experts and researchers in the field of education. One such technique that has gained popularity in recent years is the Feynman Technique. This technique is named after Richard Feynman, a physicist who was known for his ability to explain complex topics in a simple and understandable manner.

The Feynman Technique is a learning strategy that involves breaking down complex concepts and ideas into simpler, more digestible ones. To help students and teachers find easier ways to navigate through their academic experiences, Kuwait Times discussed this technique with Kasia Kayat, a home-room teacher at a private American school in Kuwait, Mohammad Al-Ansari, an English teacher at a public high school in Kuwait, and AlKawther, a student at a public high school in Kuwait.

The Feynman Technique consists of four steps: The first step is to understand the concept or subject matter thoroughly. This involves gathering information from various sources and breaking it down into smaller parts. The second step is to simplify the information. This involves breaking down the complex concept into simpler terms and relating it to other concepts that are already familiar to the learner.

The third step is to explain the concept in simple terms. This involves using analogies, diagrams and examples to explain the concept to someone else. This step is important because it reveals gaps



Kasia Kayat



Mohammad Al-Ansari

in understanding and allows for clarification of any misconceptions. The final step is to review and refine the understanding. This involves going through the material again and identifying areas that still need improvement. It is important to continuously review and refine the understanding until it becomes deeply ingrained.

Ansari told Kuwait Times the Feynman Technique is a compelling approach that entails following a series of steps to simplify the process of studying and potentially solidify the acquired knowledge. The steps themselves embody simplicity. Initially, you select a concept that you wish to comprehend. Subsequently, you assume the role of an educator, effectively conveying the idea to a young child. Following this, you engage in reflection, refinement and simplification. Ultimately, you proceed to organize and review the resulting material.

Ansari also shared his opinion on the Feynman Technique's steps, saying the third step is the most crucial because it tests your true understanding of the subject. If you cannot explain a concept in terms that a clever six-year-old can understand, it means there is a gap in your understanding. "I must admit that I subconsciously used this technique during my academic years. I would often adopt the perspective of a teacher, trying to engage my students who seemed uninterested in X subject. It helped me identify gaps in my understanding and prompted me to ask myself questions to fill them, essentially enhancing my critical thinking," he said.

Ansari added that even after completing his education and becoming a teacher himself, he still highly values this method, as it proves to be extremely helpful when dealing with difficult topics, easing unnecessary anxieties and the fear of being unprepared. "It allows me to focus on presenting subjects clearly, creating a more engaging and effective learning experience. So, yes, I would definitely recommend this method for both teachers and students. It's simple and effective, requiring nothing more than putting it into practice," he said.

Kayat commented on using this technique as a teaching strategy. She said that writing, talking and explaining a story are the main factors of this technique, which she used to use as a student and currently uses as a teacher. "I would not recommend it for my younger students because they are too young for it, but for older ones, I would recommend them to use it as a studying method. For teachers, I would recommend using this technique with their students during their free time, because I do not think it will

The Feynman Technique



be productive for a classroom that has 17 to 25 students. I think they will be distracted and not take it seriously," she pointed out.

Additionally, AlKawther said: "In my opinion, the most important and challenging step is the third step, where I have to explain the material I have been learning to someone else. While reading the material, I feel I have a good understanding of it and am ready to be tested on it, but when I come to explain it, I find myself unsure about some points. This gives me a chance to know what topics I need to focus more on before going for a graded exam and lose marks."

Cheating scandal looms over final exam season

KUWAIT: Students in grades 10 and 11 took their first end-of-year tests Tuesday in strictly-controlled exam halls. While schools received their students with reassuring smiles to calm down any exam jitters, the heavy focus on supervision was unsurprisingly clear, especially following the cheating controversy that rocked the country last January where as many as 40,000 students were caught cheating or trying to cheat while sitting for their midterm exams.

Kuwait has been grappling with the aftereffects of the scandal, which left many questioning the quality of education in the country. The leak happened despite strict procedures adopted by the education ministry. MP Hamad Al-Matar described the cheating as an "ongoing process of destroying the people of Kuwait", adding that cheating in exams has become a "culture" in the country and must be fought.

Prior to this exam season, the education ministry launched an awareness campaign on all its social media platforms aimed at preventing any negative practices common among students, the most important of which is electronic cheating.

The first day of exams, where grade 10 students were tested in physics, grade 11 literary students were tested in geography and science students were tested in mathematics, went smoothly, according to reports following Education Minister Hamad Al-Adwani's visit to some of the testing centers. The number of students taking their final exams is 160,835



KUWAIT: Minister Hamad Al-Adwani checks on students during his tour of the testing centers Tuesday. — KUNA

students in middle school, 44,384 students from the tenth grade and 40,614 students from the eleventh grade in its scientific and literary departments.

School administrations received exams in closed boxes from the central control office amid tight security measures to prevent anyone from leaking the papers, another huge issue the ministry is attempting to control.

On Monday, the criminal court refused to release the main defendants, a school principal and an employee, in the January case of the leaked high school midterm exams. The defendants were charged with leaking the tests and selling them to students at a

value of up to KD 100 per test copy. At the time, three citizens (two men and a woman) and a Syrian expatriate were referred to the Public Prosecution where they were interrogated and detained.

In the prosecution's report, the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Cybercrime Department was able to identify about 500 students, whose names and phone numbers were found in the phones of the arrested defendants. The Syrian expatriate had alerted the authorities of three defendants, one of whom is a physical education teacher in Farwaniya, who were sending bank links through which students paid money in exchange for the leaked exams.

Nazaha urges standing against electoral corruption

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti National Integrity Society (Nazaha) announced its support for the Ministry of Interior's campaign against election crimes, which was launched by the ministry recently.

The secretary of the association, Khaled Hayat, said: "The association supports the campaign of the Ministry of Interior, which was launched recently to combat election crimes, such as organizing by-elections or buying votes or political money," stressing that these crimes affect the integrity of the elections and harm the reputation of the state of law and institutions.

"We in Nazaha call on everyone to support this campaign as well as stand against electoral corruption in order to protect our country from such bad examples that distort the beautiful democracy that the State of Kuwait is known for," he added.

In other news, the Ministry of Interior denied issuing any reports or tables that include the order of the names of candidates for the 2023 National Assembly elections.

"The ministry calls on everyone to be accurate in evaluating the news they receive and not to circulate such rumors to avoid legal accountability," they announced.

The Ministry affirms its determination to stand firmly in the face of all those who carry out actions that would undermine the integrity of the election process, which will be held on Tuesday, June 6.



KUWAIT: Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub and Ambassador Ahmad Al-Baker take a tour of the exhibition held to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Nakba. - Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait renews commitment to Palestinian cause

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Embassy of Palestine, in cooperation with the Kuwait Cartoon Association, held on Monday the "75th Anniversary of the Palestine Nakba" exhibition at the headquarters of the association. Ambassador Ahmad Al-Baker, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Arab World, affirmed the historical position of Kuwait in supporting the Palestinian cause and rejecting the actions of Zionist forces.

He said Kuwait has been the first supporter of Palestine since the beginning of the struggle, defending the just cause regionally and internationally. "Kuwait opened its doors to receive Palestinian brothers and provided them with means of a decent life, supporting all efforts aimed at reaching a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian cause to guaran-



Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub (left) and Ambassador Ahmad Al-Baker during the opening of the exhibition.

tee the end of the occupation, the return of refugees and the establishment of an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital on the borders of June 4, 1967," he said.

Baker renewed Kuwait's continued support and principled commitment to support the Palestinian right to confront the Zionist occupation, saying the international community must shoulder its responsibilities to end this occupation and provide protec-



Palestinian women dressed in traditional embroidered thoubhs are seen in front of some of the photos at the exhibit.



Some of the photos displayed at the exhibition.

people without a land came to it. The recognition by the United Nations and the international community stresses the Palestinian cause is just, acknowledging the massacres committed against the Palestinian people," he said.

The ambassador said the Nakba is a continuous crime, which means the Palestinian people, since 1948, have been suffering from occupation, displacement and killings. Tahboub praised Kuwait's position since the twenties of the last century, as it provided all support to the Palestinian people and was by Palestine's side in all international forums, adding Kuwait is considered one of the most important pillars of political support for the Palestinian cause financially and morally.

"The exhibition talks about all stages of the Nakba from 1948 to the present day. Today's attendance proves some countries and peoples see the Palestinian cause as a just cause, and we hope that we will celebrate the liberation of Palestine very soon," Tahboub concluded. Head of Kuwait Cartoon Society Muhammad Thalab said the society will support the Palestinian cause by holding similar events, affirming their responsibility as cartoonists, where art is the most powerful weapon to support just causes.

tion to the brotherly Palestinian people.

Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub said what distinguishes this year's anniversary is the United Nations' decision to consider May 15 annually as the memory of the Nakba of Palestine, which revealed the international community's recognition of the Palestinian Nakba. "The recognition indicates the (Zionist) narrative is not true, as according to them Palestine was a land without a people, and a

Local

Art exhibition seeks to help Turkey quake victims 'rise from the ashes'

Proceeds to go towards rebuilding destroyed homes



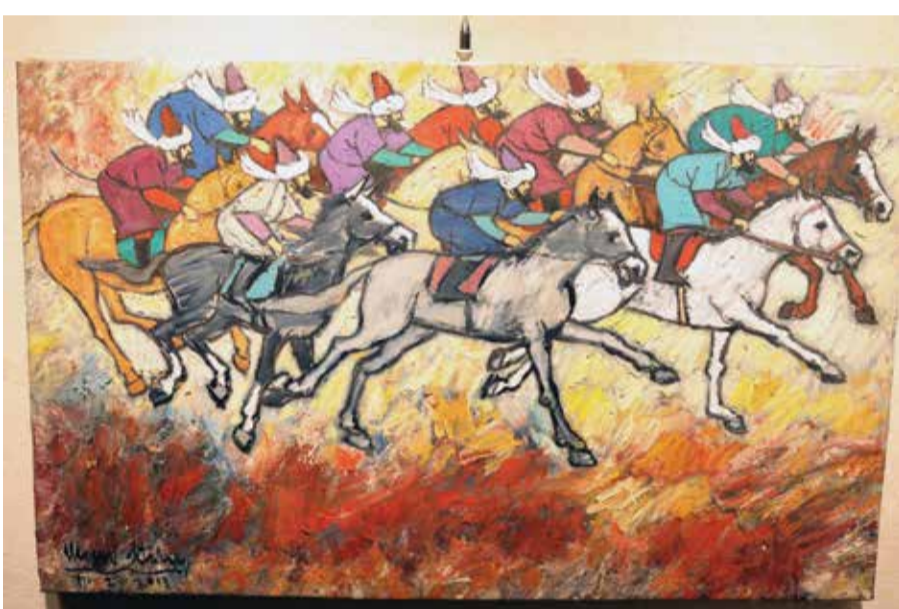
KUWAIT: Attendees tour the exhibition. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez is seen with some Turkish artists at the exhibition.



Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez cuts the ribbon during the launch of the exhibition.



By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Under the title "Rising from the Ashes", and in cooperation with the Turkish Embassy in Kuwait, the Boushahri Art Gallery launched on Monday a charity art exhibition by a number of Turkish artists who displayed their artworks and images for sale. The profits will go towards rebuilding the homes for the victims of the severe earthquake that struck Turkey recently.

The exhibition included Turkish Am-

bassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez, Boushahri Art Gallery Manager Yahya Al-Suwailem and a large number of ambassadors in Kuwait including those of the UAE, Japan, Indonesia and others, in addition to artists who came from all over Turkey to participate in the event, namely, coordinator of the event, artist Tuba Ahsan, and artists Cemal Toy, Ruveyda Gormezoglu, Ilhami Atalay, Humeyra Yorganci, Banu Cihan and Zeynep Bakir.

Ambassador Sonmez told Kuwait

Times this exhibition is very meaningful. "On Feb 6, Turkey witnessed two of the most terrible disasters of our history and also human history, which caused many cities to be destroyed. After the earthquake, we are trying to heal our wounds," she said. "We are thankful to the Kuwaiti people and government for their urgent assistance and solidarity. They sent firefighters for search and rescue operations on the second day of the disaster, in addition to 22 airplanes full of humanitarian

assistance to stand by us," she added.

The ambassador pointed out that despite the unique relationship between Kuwait and Turkey, they are interested in further developing the relationship in all fields, whether trade, culture, education and tourism, as Turkey is one of the preferred destinations for Kuwaiti tourists.

Artist and exhibition coordinator Ahsan told Kuwait Times: "This exhibition is a part of the main art exhibition happening outside Turkey, as we also held it in

the US and Qatar. The sales proceeds will go towards rebuilding houses in affected areas. We have already rebuilt 20 houses." She said after witnessing the generosity and support of the Kuwaiti people and government.

"We decided to make Kuwait one of the main stops. Our expectations are huge, because we are Muslim countries that love and respect each other. We hope to sell these paintings so we can support our people."



KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah (right) with Consultant of the British Defense Ministry for the Middle East, Senior Advisor Lt Gen Martin Sampson.



Head of the National Center for Cyber Security Major General Eng Mohammad Boarki (right) and Lt Gen Sampson shake hands during their meeting. —KUNA photos

Kuwait, UK officials discuss avenues for cooperation

KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah discussed this week with the Consultant of the British Defense Ministry for the Middle East, Senior Advisor Lt Gen Martin Sampson, aspects of cooperation and joint coordination between the two countries. In a statement, Kuwait's Defense Ministry said that discussion took place when Sheikh Dr. Abdullah received the visiting British official and his accompanying delegation. The statement noted that the meeting witnessed honoring a number of Kuwaiti army officers, National Guard,

and graduates of the British Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, for their tremendous efforts during their scholarship and study period. The meeting was attended by UK Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis, Head of the Military Education Authority Major General P.S.C. Fahad Al-Turaiji, Director of Military Cooperation Brigadier General Fahad Al-Otaibi, and a number of senior military officers.

Cybersecurity talks

Head of the National Center for Cyber Security Major General Eng Mohammad Boarki and Lt Gen Sampson discussed Cyber Security Tuesday. During the meeting with the visiting delegation, Boarki assured that UK-Kuwaiti relations are deep-rooted encompassing many fields. The meeting covered ways of strengthening cooperation in the fields of cyber security, in order to better secure online safety. — KUNA

Kuwait world's second happiest country: Index

KUWAIT: Kuwait is the second happiest country in the world after Switzerland, according to the Annual Misery Index which judges nations on mainly economic conditions. The list, compiled by Steve Hanke, professor of Applied Economics at John Hopkins University, is calculated by taking the rate of unemployment (multiplied by two), inflation, and bank-lending rates, minus the annual percentage change in real GDP per capita. Based only on these criteria, Kuwait is considered the happiest country in the Arab World and the second happiest globally, according to the index.

"Kuwait, even with squabbling amongst politicians, put in a solid performance across the board in 2022," the report reads. Unemployment, inflation, and bank-lending rates were minimized, while real GDP per capita growth was good at 4.5 percent per year real GDP growth, according to the report.

Zimbabwe is the most miserable country in the world



according to the list, which includes 157. The east African country beat war-torn Ukraine, Venezuela and Syria to the top spot amid soaring inflation.

"In the economic sphere, misery tends to flow from high inflation, steep borrowing costs, and unemployment," Hanke wrote. "The surefire way to mitigate that misery is through economic growth. Comparing countries' metrics can tell us a lot about where in the world people are sad or happy."

According to the index, the top 10 happiest countries are Switzerland, Kuwait, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, Niger, Thailand, Togo, and Malta. Meanwhile, the top 10 most miserable countries are Zimbabwe, Venezuela, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, Argentina, Yemen, Ukraine, Cuba and Turkey.

Great losses incurred without Arabization of scientific research

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Arabization committee at the Arab Medical Union (AMU) Dr Khalid Ahmad Al-Saleh said Arabization is the future of research and medicine in the Arab world, with many studies revealing that speaking in a language other than one's mother tongue in the field of science is the reason for countries falling behind.

Saleh who is also the Assistant Secretary General of the AMU for Cancer Control made the remarks during the opening of the Scientific Symposium themed "the effect of the mother tongue in enriching knowledge and scientific research and the need of doctors and patients to communicate in it".

He said that scientific research in Arab countries is very sparse compared with the countries that use their language in the medical field. He said it is necessary to believe in Arabization and understand the losses and gains made in the scientific, cultural and social fields due to the deprivation of speaking in Arabic. He added that work should be done to convince decision makers of the importance of Arabization, provide budgets and manpower, establish translation centers and expand scientific studies supporting these claims.

He said foreign languages have taken over the scientific field and has gone further to include literature specialties that were exclusive to our mother tongue. This reflects the extent of our loss and that Arabizing science and restoring the Arabic language to status



Dr Khalid Ahmad Al-Saleh

is not an easy task.

Saleh hoped this symposium would be the start of moving in a clear path towards fulfilling the dream of reviving Arabic so that our Arab nation remains a leader in scientific fields.

The symposium included an elite group of scientists and professors who are members of the Arabization committee selected by the AMU to work on continuing efforts of Arabizing medical

and health sciences to propel forward scientific research in the Arab world.

Advisor to the Secretary General of AMU for Media and International Cooperation Dr Essam Al-Sayyed said the two-day symposium will discuss many issues, including the importance of speaking in one's mother tongue, especially in the field of science and its effect on the development of nations.

He said it will also discuss the social, cultural and political obstacles that face teaching in Arabic and the role of the intellectual and cultural establishments in teaching in the language.

He announced that a decision has been made to activate the Arabization committee issued by AMU's Secretary General Dr Usama Raslan. He asked Dr Khalid Al-Saleh to chair the committee and former head of the translation department at the World Health Organization Dr Qasem Sarah as rapporteur.

The committee is set to have 15 specialized members entrusted in preparing its vision, mission, goals and working plan during the coming days.



KUWAIT: Arab Medical Union (AMU) held a symposium on the importance of Arabization in scientific research and communication.

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Swiss traveler on roaming around the world with baby

Friendly people ease challenge of discovering Kuwait with a stroller



Andrea and Raphael are pictured during their many travels around the world.



Andrea and Raphael pose for a photo in front of Kuwait Towers during their visit to Kuwait.



Andrea's stroller packed with all the essentials she may need on her trip.



By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Traveling with children adds a whole new dimension to any trip, but being a fulltime traveler and mother can be a challenging and eye-opening experience. Swiss traveler Andrea spoke with Kuwait Times during her stop in Kuwait about her adventure of roaming the world with her 20-month-old son Raphael, who notched his 18th flight last week.

Kuwait Times: When did you start traveling?

Andrea: I started traveling at the age of 16 with school trips, but my first solo trip was at 18, when I visited my pen pal in Latvia with no credit card or phone, forget maps. With my child, the first time I traveled was when he was about six months old. My first trips with him were in Europe, mostly by train or car. He took his first flight when he was 10 months, followed by other 17 flights in 10 months.

KT: How many countries have you been to?

Andrea: I have traveled to 80 countries in different continents. Raphael, my son, has been to Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Poland, Czech Republic, Austria, Spain, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Morocco, Tunisia, France, Cyprus/Northern Cyprus and the UK.

KT: Is traveling with a child hard?

Andrea: It depends — I have traveled mostly alone with him to many countries, and I must say, I am addicted to travel. It is my passion, so the will to make an effort and face challenges is high too. Even when I am overtired and more exhausted than ever before, after or during a trip, my strength is still there. You have to think all the time about organization, where a baby is allowed to be taken with you, or how you will do it with a baby seat. Your mind is always fully awake and your brain is used as never before. It is your daily life and sorrows you take with you as a mother in case of danger or accidents. My whole life

I have mostly traveled alone or took care of groups, so I can also handle a toddler. I am experienced and know a lot of tricks to make it easier for us.

KT: How do you manage to control a child while traveling?

Andrea: I think you cannot control a child's emotions like frustration or hunger. Also, take into consideration to give him enough sleep, and to yourself as well. Do not be ashamed if the baby cries in public; ask for help if needed. Most people with kids know how kids are at home and can imagine that they are the same when traveling. A lot of parents try to help if they see a mother traveling alone.

KT: How did you find Kuwait?

Andrea: I have visited all the Gulf countries before, apart from Saudi Arabia, and for me, all these countries have a lot in common. But Kuwait, I must admit, I needed longer to find it attractive. Kuwait has some very special places. I somehow missed the nice beaches and because I walk with a stroller, I missed the pathways for non-car users. All in all, I met nice people who guided and helped me discover Kuwait by car. The good thing is, it is not that big, so I could see a lot. I also loved the markets. They also have screens for football games, which is awesome.

KT: What attracted you the most in Kuwait?

Andrea: I liked that women were very friendly to my child, and therefore Raphael was not afraid at all to go and hug them. I also walked back to the hotel in Kuwait City a lot. It is a busy city, but at night it is quieter. I was never scared or harassed by any men on the street. I felt safe all the time.

KT: What do you think of traditional Kuwaiti cuisine?

Andrea: The food is quite similar to that in other Gulf countries. Hummus, Arabic bread, beef stew and sauce or rice are traditional Mid-

dle Eastern dishes. I love it! I tried mumawwash, machboos and other dishes.

KT: What is the strangest situation you faced in Kuwait?

Andrea: When I was in Kuwait and posted a picture of us, I got a message from a schoolmate that his sister lives there and I should meet her family. So the next day they picked me up, showed me around and invited me for dinner. That was funny and showed me how connected we all are through social media in our lives — the world is small.

KT: Your advice for mothers who want to explore the world with their children.

Andrea: Just do it. Travel once or twice with your child, and you will become an expert. Travel easy countries first, similar to your country. For me, this was Germany and the rest of Europe, because when he was small and with his cleft palate, I was assured that if something happened, I could return to my home more easily. Give yourself time to adapt with your baby. He or she will then become your soulmate, your best buddy. Respect the fight against fear, or take a friend, partner, or a local with you. Travel slowly and be more spontaneous; do not plan all, just in case you need a longer stop somewhere. Remember, you gave birth and already you are more powerful than you ever might think you are.



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KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi (fourth left) meets with healthcare professionals at Al-Farwaniya Specialty Dental Center. — KUNA

Dental clinic gets accredited for treating autistic children

KUWAIT: Al-Farwaniya Specialty Dental Center has become the first in Kuwait to receive accreditation from the International Council for Accreditation Standards and Continuing Education in the US, KUNA reported Tuesday.

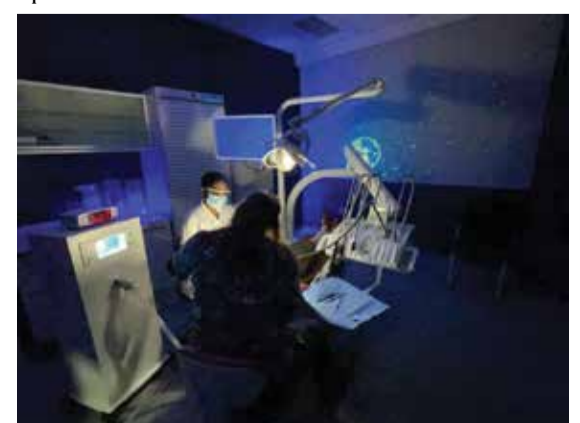
The center was recognized as an accredited center in dental treatment for children with autism and sensory disorders. Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi praised the efforts of the healthcare professionals, both faculty members and student dentists, from the Kuwait Board in Dentistry Program who work at the clinic during a reception he held to congratulate them on the achievement.

Awadhi lauded their contribution to the develop-

ment of the health system through dental services provided to children with sensory disorders, including children with autism, according to a statement from the Ministry of Health on Tuesday.

The recognition came after the program met the conditions set by the accreditation body during the previous two academic years. The requirements included the completion of intensive training courses for student dentists and faculty members. The dentists passed exams that test their knowledge in the field and about 80 percent of them received certificates recognizing them as certified autism specialists.

Through the concerted efforts of the team, Al-Farwaniya Specialty Dental Center provides high-quality services and is equipped with the highest modern standards for the treatment of children with sensory disorders, including children with autism. The team continues carrying out scientific research and updating their knowledge of the latest research developments in the field. — KUNA





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Shelling dents Sudan ceasefire

Civilians hope for calm following a US and Saudi-brokered truce



KHARTOUM: People board a bus as they evacuate southern Khartoum on May 23, 2023 after a one-week ceasefire between Sudan's army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces officially went into force. — AFP

KHARTOUM: Sporadic artillery fire still echoed through Sudan's capital Tuesday but residents said fighting had calmed following a US and Saudi-brokered ceasefire, raising faint hopes in the embattled city.

Witnesses in Khartoum reported a welcome respite after a rocky start to the one-week humanitarian truce which took effect the previous evening only to be quickly marred by more gunshots and blasts. By around noon on Tuesday, witnesses reported a relative calm had taken hold, both in greater Khartoum and in the Darfur region's cities of Nyala and El Geneina, which have been among the other main battlegrounds.

"We have not heard shelling in our neighborhood since last night," said a witness in southern Khartoum, who told AFP the last airstrike was five minutes before the truce formally started at 9:45 pm (1945 GMT) on Monday.

"If the ceasefire is violated, we'll know," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a video message. "And we will hold violators accountable through our sanctions and other tools at our disposal." More than five weeks of war have pitted the army, led by Su-

dan's de facto leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, against the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces of his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

The battles since April 15 have killed an estimated 1,000 people, forced more than a million to flee their homes and sparked mass evacuations of foreigners and major refugee flows into neighboring counties.

People have run low on water, food and basic supplies, and more than half the population, 25 million people, are in need of humanitarian aid, according to the UN. As the uneasy silence held in Khartoum, residents desperately hoped for a pause in combat to allow in life-saving humanitarian aid, and to enable more people to flee the strife-torn city of five million.

'Broken promises'

A series of previous ceasefires were quickly shattered, and a foreign aid group Monday voiced frustration about the crisis which has piled new misery on the already poverty-stricken northeast African nation.

"Beyond official announcements, Sudan is still pounded and bombarded, with millions of civilian

a Telegram channel claiming to represent the anti-Kremlin group, a camouflaged spokesman, surrounded by armed men in fatigues, said: "Russia will be free!" — a slogan frequently used by Russian opposition activists. "We want our children to grow up in peace and be free," the spokesman added, with the channel claiming that two settlements including Graivoron had been attacked.

Too soon to return

Security operations were ongoing Tuesday in the border areas, said governor Vyacheslav Gladkov, who previously reported eight people had been injured. Several drones struck houses and a government building overnight but no one was killed or wounded, said Belgorod's governor as Ukraine's leader visited the eastern front line.

Gladkov added on Tuesday that it was too soon for residents who fled to return to their homes and said that authorities would give the all-clear when it was safe. On Monday, Russia said its troops were battling a "sabotage" group that entered from Ukraine and introduced an "anti-terror regime" in Belgorod, a first since the start of Moscow's campaign in Ukraine in February 2022.

Britain's Ministry of Defence noted that "Russia is facing an increasingly serious multi-domain security threat in its border regions, with losses of combat air-

issued to the dependents of international students last year — up eight-fold from the 16,000 in 2019, Home Secretary Suella Braverman said in a written statement to parliament. The minister — a Brexit hardliner whose rhetoric on immigration has caused controversy — said overseas students played an important part in supporting the UK economy. But she added that it should not come at the cost of the government's "commitment to the public to lower overall migration and ensure that migration to the UK is highly skilled and therefore provides the most benefit".

Braverman said the proposals struck the "right balance" and would likely see net migration "fall to pre-pandemic levels in the medium term". Uncontrolled immigration from the European Union was one of the main battlegrounds of the Brexit referendum in 2016 which saw the UK leave the bloc.

Since 2018, the country has seen thousands of people successfully cross the English Channel in small boats to claim asylum. More than 45,000 arrived last year, heaping political pressure on the government which promised to "take back control" of Britain's borders.

One of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative predecessors, Boris Johnson, agreed a deal with Rwanda last year to relocate failed asylum seekers to the central African country. But the scheme has been mired in legal

lives at risk," Karl Schembri of the Norwegian Refugee Council wrote on Twitter. "We've had over a month of broken promises and empty words while humanitarian colleagues were killed, together with children and others and hospitals destroyed."

Volker Perthes, the United Nations envoy to Sudan, told the UN Security Council on Monday that "fighting and troop movements have continued even today, despite a commitment by both sides not to pursue military advantage before the ceasefire takes effect".

While no previous truce has held, the United States and Saudi Arabia said this agreement was different because it was "signed by the parties" and would be supported by a "ceasefire monitoring mechanism". Neither side has yet blamed the other for violating the truce, as they did within minutes after the previous ceasefires unravelled.

'Victory or martyrdom'

Hours before the truce was scheduled to start, Daglo released a voice message on social media in which he told his fighters: "It is either victory or mar-

tyrdom, and victory will be ours."

Addressing reported violations by his forces — including rampant looting, targeting of civilians and attacks on churches — he blamed "coup plotters" in the army. Major fighting has rocked the western Darfur region near Chad, where the UN has reported hundreds of civilians killed in the West Darfur capital El Geneina.

Perthes in his Security Council address warned that "the conflict risks to expand and prolong ... with implications for the region." "In parts of the country, fighting between the two armies or the two armed formations has sharpened into communal tensions, or triggered conflict between communities," he said, after reports of civilians being armed in Darfur.

Sudan has a long history of military coups and the army in 2019 overthrew the veteran Islamist autocrat Omar al-Bashir after mass protests against his rule. Sudanese were promised a gradual transition toward civilian rule, but Burhan and Daglo staged another coup in October 2021 before simmering tensions between the two men flared into the current round of bloody fighting. — AFP

Kremlin 'concerned' after border clashes

MOSCOW: Moscow on Tuesday voiced deep concern on the second day of the most serious armed incursion to date over its border with Ukraine, after explosive strikes forced civilians to flee. Russia said the Belgorod border region had come under sustained artillery and mortar fire during fighting with a group that it claimed had crossed from Ukraine.

Belgorod's governor said civilians have been evacuated from nine border villages in the region, which has previously faced shelling attacks that have killed dozens of people since Moscow launched its offensive last year.

"What happened yesterday is a cause for deep concern and once again confirms that Ukrainian militants continue their activities against our country," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Tuesday.

Members of the anti-Kremlin Freedom of Russia Legion have claimed responsibility for the incursion into Belgorod, while Ukraine's deputy defence minister Ganna Malyar said "we are not waging war on foreign territories." In a video released by

UK announces overseas student curbs to slash immigration

LONDON: The UK government on Tuesday announced a package of measures aimed at international students, including a ban on some family members, as ministers come under growing pressure to cut immigration. After a drop during the pandemic, net migration has been steadily on the rise and is reportedly expected to hit a record high this year. Official figures published last November estimated net migration to June 2022 at just over 500,000.

Under the new proposals, only students on post-graduate courses designated as research programmes will be able to bring dependents to the UK while they study. Overseas students will be prevented from switching "out of the student route into work routes" before their studies have been completed.

There will also be "improved and more enforcement activity" and a clamp down on "unscrupulous agents" using education as a cover for immigration, according to a government statement. Some 136,000 visas were

Germany arrests three more over far-right plot

FRANKFURT: German prosecutors on Tuesday announced three more arrests over a far-right coup plot uncovered in December that aimed to overthrow the state and install a new government. The plan was foiled when 25 alleged plotters, including a self-styled prince, an ex-MP and former soldiers, were arrested in nationwide raids.

The latest three suspects were detained Monday in Baden-Wuerttemberg and Lower Saxony states and are accused of membership in a terrorist organization, the federal prosecutor's office said. The first, identified only as Johanna E.J., was active in the group since May last year and had participated in several meetings with the association's leaders.

She also made contact with a Russian consul general and held talks with him in a bid to gain support for the plot, prosecutors said. Another suspect, Hans-Joachim H., is accused of providing more than 140,000 euros (\$151,000) to support the organization and of participating in events to recruit new members.

The third, Steffen W., is suspected of having played a leading role in a so-called "homeland security company", and was tasked with recruiting personnel and giving them military training. The plotters had reportedly been making preparations to form a network of such "companies" across the country as part of their plans to topple the state and had amassed an arsenal of weapons.

Steffen W. allegedly planned the takeover of former barracks where the companies would be based, and prepared lists of weapons, ammunition and other equipment, prosecutors said. A leading member of the plot — self-styled prince Heinrich XIII Reuss, the descendant of a noble family — was supposed to have been installed as Germany's new leader if the plan had succeeded.

Officials say the alleged plotters belong to a movement known as the Reichsbuerger, which encompasses far-right extremists, conspiracy theorists and gun enthusiasts. The Reichsbuerger generally believe in the continued existence of the pre-World War I German Reich, or empire, under a monarchy, and several groups have declared their own states. — AFP



DONETSK: Handout photograph shows the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky (center right) talking with officers during his visit to the forward positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the Vugledar-Maryinka defense zone, Donetsk region, on the occasion of the Marine Day, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. — AFP

craft, improvised explosive device attacks on rail lines and now direct partisan action."

Ukrainian presidential advisor Mikheylo Podolyak suggested that Russian "guerrilla groups" could be responsible. "The only driving political force in a totalitarian country of tightened screws is always an armed guerrilla movement," he said on Monday. — AFP



LONDON: Britain's Minister of State for Veterans' Affairs Johnny Mercer (L) and Britain's Minister of State for Immigration Robert Jenrick arrive for a cabinet meeting at 10 Downing Street in central London on May 23, 2023. — AFP

battles and is yet to get underway.

The end of freedom of movement for workers within the EU due to Brexit and tighter immigration rules have also proved controversial for business. Many sectors that previously relied heavily on EU workers, particularly agriculture and health and social care, have experienced deep skills shortages. — AFP

International

Zionist army demolishes West Bank home of Tel Aviv shooter

Troops clashed with 'rioters' during the operation

NILIN: Zionist troops on Tuesday demolished the West Bank home of a Palestinian militant who was killed after carrying out a deadly shooting in the heart of Tel Aviv in March. "Forces of the army and the border police destroyed the home in the village of Nilin of the terrorist Mutaz Khawaja, who carried out a shooting attack on March 9, 2023 in Dizengoff Street, Tel Aviv," an army statement said.

Khawaja, 23, was a member of the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist group which rules Gaza.

He was shot dead by Zionist police after the attack, which killed one Jew and wounded two more.

His home village lies close to the Green Line which separates Zionist entity from the occupied West Bank, and barely 20 kilometres (12 miles) from Tel Aviv.

Nilin mayor Yusef Khawaja said Zionist troops made all residents of the four-storey apartment block leave their homes before demolishing the shooter's first floor flat at dawn.

The army released video of troops setting explosive charges before blowing up the apartment. Large portraits of Khawaja had been draped over the side of the building, commemorating him as a "martyr", an AFP photographer reported. Troops clashed with "rioters" during the operation, the army said. The mayor said three people were injured. Zionist entity, which has occupied the West Bank since 1967, routinely demolishes the homes of individuals it blames for deadly attacks on Zionists.

Human rights activists say the policy amounts to collective punishment, as it can render non-combatants, including children, homeless. But Zionist entity says the practice is effective in deterring some Palestinians from carrying out attacks.

Khawaja's father Salah was defiant after the Zionist operation. "This hateful act will only strengthen our love for the homeland... Jerusalem and the faith (Islam), and, with God's help, our roots will remain anchored here," he told AFP. — AFP



NILIN: A man inspects the house of Palestinian militant Mutaz Khawaja who carried out a deadly shooting attack in Tel Aviv, after it was razed by Zionist security forces in the West Bank village of Nilin. — AFP

Tunisia protest as police questions two journalists

TUNIS: Dozens of journalists protested Monday in front of a Tunis police station after two of their colleagues had been taken for questioning over comments on Tunisia's security forces, AFP correspondents said.

Columnist Haythem El Mekki and presenter Elyes Gharbi were interrogated for several hours, after which their case has been transferred to the Tunis prosecutor's office, their lawyer Ayoub Ghdamsi told AFP. The pair on May 15 discussed shortcomings in police recruitment on Gharbi's programme on the private Mosaïque FM radio, in the wake of a deadly mass shooting near a synagogue on Djerba island less than a week prior.

The segment was subject to a complaint by Tunisia's police union, arguing the discussion had harmed law enforcement officers. "All the questioning focused on my intervention during the broadcast," Mekki told AFP via telephone after his release on Monday.

Some 20 Tunisian journalists currently face prosecution for their work, according to the SNJT journalists' union. Nouredine Boutar, owner of Mosaïque FM — Tunisia's most listened to radio station — is one of about two dozen prominent critics of President Kais Saied, including former ministers and businessmen, to have been arrested since February.

The president won a landslide victory in a 2019 general election but assumed wide-reaching powers in a July 2021 power grab. Journalists and human rights groups in the North African country often protest government policies they say are aimed at intimidating the media and silencing critics. — AFP

American found guilty of torture in Iraq

WASHINGTON: For only the second time ever an American has been convicted of torture in US court — for brutal treatment of an employee at a weapons factory in Iraqi Kurdistan, the Justice Department announced Monday.

Ross Roggio, 54, faces possible life in prison after he was found guilty of torture and other crimes in federal court in Pennsylvania on Friday. In 2015, Roggio was developing a factory to produce M-4 automatic assault rifles in the Kurdistan region of Iraq using parts illegally exported from the United States, the department said in a statement.

At the time one of his employees, an Estonian

man, raised questions about the project. To prevent the man from interfering, the indictment said, Roggio arranged for Kurdish soldiers to kidnap him. The man was detained at a Kurdish military camp for 39 days during which Roggio allegedly led multiple interrogation and torture sessions, ordering the soldiers to beat him with hoses, use a bag to suffocate him, and threaten to cut off his fingers using a cutting tool.

"On at least one occasion, Roggio wrapped his belt around the victim's neck, yanked the victim off the ground, and suspended him in the air, causing the victim to lose consciousness," the department said. Roggio and his company were charged in 2018 with 37 counts of illegally exporting firearms parts and tools for the project.

Last year the Justice Department added the torture charges to the case, based on a 1994 law on torture. On Friday Roggio was convicted of torture,

Turkish strike kills 3 Yazidi in north Iraq

ARBIL: A Turkish drone strike in northern Iraq on Tuesday killed three Yazidi fighters affiliated with the rebel Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), security officials in the autonomous Kurdish region said. Three more fighters were wounded, said the counter-terrorism service of the Kurdish region where fighting has often flared between the Turkish army and the PKK.

Around 5:00 am (0200 GMT) "a Turkish army drone targeted a headquarters of the Sinjar Resistance Units," the service said, referring to an armed group operating in the mainly Yazidi Sinjar district which has ties to the PKK.

"Three fighters were killed," the statement add-

ed. The PKK has been waging a deadly insurgency against the Turkish state for four decades and the conflict has repeatedly spilled across the border into northern Iraq. A bombing raid in Sinjar district a week ago killed three fighters.

The Turkish army rarely comments on its strikes in Iraq but routinely conducts land and air military operations against PKK rear-bases in autonomous Kurdistan as well as Sinjar district. Strikes attributed to Turkey in late February and early March also killed fighters from the Sinjar Resistance Units, a movement that took up arms against the Islamic State group in 2014 following the jihadists' massacre of thousands of Yazidi men and their abduction of thousands of women for use as sex slaves.

The Yazidis follow a pre-Islamic faith, that is anathema to the Sunni Muslim extremists of IS. Illustrating the complexity of the security situation in

northern Iraq, the Sinjar Resistance Units are also affiliated with Iraq's Hashed al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization) force, a pro-Iranian former paramilitary group now integrated into the regular armed forces.

Ankara has set up dozens of military bases in Iraqi Kurdistan over the past 25 years to fight against the PKK, which it and its Western allies consider a terrorist group. Both the federal authorities and the Kurdistan regional government have been accused of tolerating Turkey's military activities to preserve their close economic ties.

Tensions erupted on Saturday around northern Iraq's Makhmur camp, which shelters Kurdish refugees from Turkey. Officials said the Iraqi army planned to build a perimeter fence to control all movements in and out of the camp, which Ankara considers a recruitment ground for PKK militants. — AFP

"Torture is among the most heinous crimes the FBI investigates, and together with our partners at the Human Rights Violators and War Crimes Center, we will relentlessly pursue justice," Quesada said. — AFP

Researcher believe IAT tests reveal attitudes that people would be unwilling to state publicly, or might not even be aware of on a conscious level. Across all the experiments, 61 percent of white participants associated white people more with "human" and black people more with "animal". An even greater number — 69 percent of white participants — associated white participants more with humans and Asians more with animals, and the same result occurred for white people taking a white-Hispanic test.

These effects held true across age, religion and education of participants, but did vary by political affiliation and gender. Self-identified conservatives and men expressed slightly stronger implicit "human = white" associations. Non-white people did not show an implicit bias in favor of their own racial groups compared to white people. But they did show a bias towards whites as more human when the test was between white people and another minority group, for example Asians asked to take a test that assessed their attitudes towards white people versus black people. — AFP

400 km above the Earth, lasted about 16 hours. This mission, named Ax-2, is the second fully private mission to visit the space station, following a first in April 2022. The members of Ax-2 will stay about 10 days and carry out some 20 experiments.

NASA is trying to seed a commercial space economy in the region of space known as "Low Earth Orbit", allowing it to focus its own energies on missions deeper into the solar system and beyond. The Axiom Mission 1 launched last April, with the seats for three private astronauts accompanying an Axiom-employed astronaut reported to cost \$55 million each. The cost of seats for Ax-2 has not been disclosed. — AFP

Top producers warn against...

Continued from Page 1

quickly move away from traditional jet fuel. Baker said: "There is not enough production of sustainable aviation fuel. The hydrogen project is in its infancy. The hydrogen technology will mature in the second half of the century, which means after 2050, which means we will not achieve what everybody's been promised will happen. I'm very skeptical about this (goal)."

However, Boeing CEO Dave Calhoun said sustainable aviation fuel remained the best hope for achieving net zero by 2050. "Really the only significant contributor by the way of changing technology is sustainable aviation fuel. That's the only thing that moves the needle between now and then," he told the forum in Doha. "Every new airplane that we or our competitors sell today, if it displaces an older aeroplane in their fleet, is usually 20 to 30 percent better on emissions... but the only thing that achieves net zero is sustainable aviation fuel," Calhoun added. The aviation industry produced more than two percent of global carbon dioxide emissions in 2021, according to the International Energy Agency.

Meanwhile, OPEC Secretary General Haitham Al-Ghais emphasized that "despite the urgent need for investment, we have heard disheartening calls

from some quarters to divest from hydrocarbons". He added OPEC has been clear in highlighting the very real and dangerous consequences of divestment or underinvestment in the oil industry. "The reality is that oil and gas will continue to be an integral part of the energy mix for the foreseeable future," he pointed out.

Ghais also said technological innovation would play a critical role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in a speech he delivered during the 30th Annual Middle East Petroleum and Gas conference (MPGC) held in Dubai. "This is why our member countries invest heavily in hydrogen projects, carbon capture utilization and storage facilities, and the circular carbon economy," he said.

Ghais also said on Monday that energy transition must be fair and inclusive, where no one would be left behind. The secretary general made these remarks in his address to OPEC's 23rd Coordination Meeting on Climate Change held via videoconference in preparation for the upcoming COP28 meeting.

Ghais stressed, in a pre-recorded video message, that "we are particularly proud to have an OPEC member country at the helm of the highly important COP meeting. Just recently, COP28 President-Designate Dr Sultan Al-Jaber, UAE's Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and Special Envoy for Climate Change, presented his larger ambitions for the COP." Ghais noted the importance of the meeting, adding climate change is a great global challenge that affects all countries and peoples. — Agencies

at Brisbane's Griffith University. "What we saw with this joint appearance in Sydney is an intermingling of Australian and Indian domestic and foreign policy," he told AFP. "Both leaders are looking for funds and support, with the Indian diaspora center-stage, and using the bilateral partnership almost as leverage."

Indian-Australians make up the country's fastest-growing and second-largest diaspora, with 673,000 Indian-born citizens in a population of 26 million. Almost 90,000 Indian students are enrolled at Australian universities, the largest overseas contingent after China. But Albanese's warm embrace of Modi has raised questions, too. Under Modi "the world's largest democracy" has become much less free and more dangerous for his critics, according to Human Rights Watch's Elaine Pearson.

"Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government has been tightening its grip on civil society, using draconian laws to arrest and intimidate activists, journalists, opposition leaders, academics, peaceful protesters, and critics of government policies," she said. Rights groups say India's 200 million Muslims have also faced increased discrimination and violence since Modi and his Hindu nationalist BJP swept to power in 2014. — AFP

Study finds implicit racial bias highest among white people

WASHINGTON: If there's one thing we should all be able to agree on, it's that all human beings belong to the same species, Homo sapiens. But a new study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) on Monday has found a yawning gap between what people claim to believe and what they actually hold true. A team from Harvard and Tufts gathered data from more than 60,000 subjects who took part in 13 experiments that tested their implicit biases.

An overwhelming majority — over 90 percent — explicitly stated that white people and non-white people are equally human. But on an implicit measure, white US participants, as well as white participants from other countries, consistently associated the attribute "human" (as opposed to "animal") with their own group more than other racial groups.

Conversely, black, Asian and Hispanic participants showed no such bias, equally associating their own group and white people with "human." "The biggest takeaway for me is that we're still grappling in a new form with sentiments that have been around for centuries," first author Kirsten Morehouse, a PhD student at Harvard University, told AFP. Throughout history, the dehumanization of other

ISS welcomes its first Saudi...

Continued from Page 1

A video showed the first moments of UAE astronaut Sultan Al-Neyadi welcoming Qarni and Barnawi after they reached the International Space Station with dates and water, making sure to uphold the Arab hospitality tradition in space.

The SpaceX rocket blasted off from Florida on Sunday, and the trip to the ISS, which orbits around

Merapi volcano erupts, spewing...

Continued from Page 1

seven kilometers in 2022 following a risk assessment for the surrounding villages. Lava from Merapi's

eruption on Tuesday fell well within that zone, Santoso said. Merapi's alert level, which has been kept at the second-highest mark since 2020 following increased volcanic activity, has remained unchanged, Santoso said. The volcano's last major eruption in 2010 killed more than 300 people and forced the evacuation of some 280,000 residents. It was Merapi's most powerful eruption since 1930, when about 1,300 people were killed. — AFP

Australia fetes India's Modi...

Continued from Page 1

"The most important foundation of our ties is mutual trust and mutual respect," he said, promising trade between the two countries would double in the next five years. Behind the flattery and mutual backslapping lie some hardheaded strategy and politics for both men. As Australia struggles with a more assertive China, it is looking for economic and political partners in an increasingly rough-and-tumble neighborhood. India's economic performance has been mixed in the past decade, with missteps curbing growth. But hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out of poverty. India is now the second-fastest growing economy in the G20 and a multi-trillion-dollar market.

And for both Modi and Albanese, the Indian diaspora offers a rich font of votes and campaign donations, according to Ian Hall, an international relations professor

International

Pakistan foreign minister says India abusing G20 with Kashmir meet

India is attempting to portray 'normalcy and peace' in the violence-wracked region

MUZAFFARABAD: India is "abusing" its presidency of the G20 by holding a tourism conference in the portion of disputed Kashmir it controls, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari told AFP. It is the first diplomatic event in the territory since Pakistan suspended trade and diplomatic ties with India in 2019, when New Delhi imposed direct rule on the part of Muslim-majority Kashmir it controls and enforced a heavy security lockdown.

"I wish I could say I was surprised, but I think that this is a continuation of what is becoming a norm now, of India's arrogance on the international stage," he told AFP in a Monday interview in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

"They're abusing their presidency of the G20 to push their colonial agenda, but if they think that by holding one event in occupied Kashmir they can silence the voice of the Kashmiri people, then I believe that they are truly mistaken." The Indian-controlled portion has been roiled for decades by an insurgency seeking independence or a merger with Pakistan, with tens of thousands of civilians, soldiers and Kashmiri rebels killed in the conflict.

Non-G20 member Pakistan controls a smaller part, and says holding the tourism meeting from Monday to Wednesday in the territory violates in-

ternational law, UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements.

The G20 participants—made up of the European Union and the world's 19 top economies—have been "put in a pretty awkward spot", said the 34-year-old Bhutto Zardari. "Those countries who make it a point to remind us and protest how outrageous it is that international law has been violated in Europe: I believe that they should be just as outraged when international law is violated in Kashmir," he said, in a reference to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

China, which also claims the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh in full as part of Tibet, has stood by Pakistan in condemning the meeting to promote tourism in the area—renowned for its lakes, meadows and snow-capped mountains. Muslim nations Saudi Arabia and Turkey are not sending government representation, while some Western countries have scaled back their presence, according to reports.

'Patient people'

India is attempting to portray what officials have called "normalcy and peace" in the violence-wracked region by inviting the international community to a sprawling, well-guarded venue on the shores of Dal Lake in Srinagar.



MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari speaks during an interview with AFP in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir. — AFP

Over the past week, residents have chafed under stepped-up security measures. Hundreds have been detained in police stations and thousands including shopkeepers have received calls from officials warning them against any "signs of protest or trouble".

"One of the most militarised zones in the world can never be seen as normal," said Bhutto Zardari. The South Asian neighbours have fought three wars

since they were created at the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. Since India's 2019 constitutional changes, rebels in Kashmir have largely been crushed—although young men continue to join the insurgency.

Dissent has been criminalised, media freedoms curbed and public protests limited, in what critics say is a drastic curtailment of civil liberties by India. The Pakistani foreign minister ruled out any chance of a warming of ties between the two countries unless New Delhi revoked the change in status of Indian-controlled Kashmir.

"Until this topic is addressed, it really stands in the way of peace in all of South Asia," said Bhutto Zardari—the son of assassinated former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and the grandson of deposed and executed former premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Without it, no "meaningful dialogue" could begin on shared threats including militancy and worsening climate change. The crackdown in Indian-administered Kashmir was ordered by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who since coming to power in 2014 has increasingly used religious polarisation to mobilise the Hindu majority. Next year, he will seek a third term in power at elections. "We are patient people," said Bhutto Zardari. — AFP

6 killed in attack on Hungarian energy firm in Pakistan

PESHAWAR: Six Pakistan security personnel were killed in an overnight siege by dozens of militants on a Hungarian-owned oil and gas exploration site, police said Tuesday. Pakistan has seen an increase in militancy since the Taliban returned to power in neighbouring Afghanistan in 2021, with attacks mostly targeting security forces and foreign interests accused of exploitation.

About 50 fighters attacked a site owned by the Budapest-headquartered MOL Group around midnight in the Hangu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, district police chief Asif Bahadur told AFP. "They were armed with light and heavy weapons and fired mortar shells, killing six security personnel at the main entrance" to the remote site near the Afghan border, said Bahadur.

He said the dead included four members of paramilitary police assistance force the Frontier Constabulary and two Pakistani private security guards for the firm. "The exchange of fire continued for more than an hour. Police forced the militants to flee," Bahadur added. He blamed the attack on Pakistan's domestic chapter of the Taliban movement—the most active militant group in the region—although there has been no claim of responsibility. Noor Wali Khan, a second district police official, confirmed the attack and the death toll.

The MOL Group has operated a Pakistan subsidiary since 1999 and employs 400 people in the country, according to their website. "We are assessing the information," a spokesman for the Hungarian embassy in Islamabad said, adding that no diplomatic action was planned.

The MOL Group did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Bahadur said the attackers came from the nearby North Waziristan district, which borders Afghanistan and has historically been a hive of militancy.

During America's post-9/11 invasion of Afghanistan the area was heavily targeted by drone strikes and an Islamabad military offensive to rout Islamist fighters. The Pakistan Taliban—known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) -- was formed in 2007 by militants who splintered off from the Afghan Taliban to focus their fight on Islamabad for supporting America's invasion.

On Monday, officials said two empty girls' schools in the province were attacked overnight by militants, leaving nine classrooms destroyed but no casualties. The attack has not been claimed by any group. — AFP



KYAUKTAW: Picture shows a street in Kyauktaw in Myanmar's Rakhine state as Cyclone Mocha's crashes ashore. — AFP

UN appeals for \$333m for Cyclone Mocha relief in Myanmar

YANGON: The United Nations launched on Tuesday an appeal for \$333 million in emergency funding for 1.6 million people it said were affected after deadly Cyclone Mocha tore through Myanmar. Mocha brought lashing rain and winds of 195 kilometres per hour (120 miles per hour) to Myanmar and neighbouring Bangladesh on May 14, collapsing buildings and turning streets into rivers.

Myanmar's junta has given a death toll of 148 people, mostly from the persecuted Rohingya minority in western Rakhine state. The UN's humanitarian affairs office said it was seeking \$333 million to help provide shelter, medical facilities, food and clean water ahead of the rainy season.

"We are now in a race against time to provide people with safe shelter in all affected communities and prevent the spread of water-borne disease," Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Ramathan Balakrishnan said in a statement.

election. Fretilin fought for an end to Indonesia's occupation of East Timor, and Gusmao led its military wing.

He spent the final years of the occupation behind bars and was elected East Timor's first president in 2002 after the country gained independence. He split from Fretilin in 2007 to found CNRT. He became prime minister that year, serving until 2015.

The US State Department congratulated East Timor, which is also known as Timor-Leste, on "a free, fair, and transparent election". "This election reflects the commitment of the people of Timor-Leste to democracy and peaceful political processes and serves as an inspiration for democracy globally," spokesman Matthew Miller said in a statement.

Questions have nevertheless been raised in East Timor about the slow process of vote counting and the delayed publication of the results, which took more than 35 hours after polls closed—longer than in previous elections.

"It's not true the calculation took a long time, because according to the law it has to be (up to) 48 hours," Acilino Manuel Branco, General Director of the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE) told journalists. Gusmao also said his own party's vote count was higher than the electoral administration's and he would be seeking clarification.

"If there is a difference in the calculations, we will discuss with them why the results are different from the results we got," he told journalists. More than two decades after independence, East Timor is still struggling with poverty, the aftermath of the COVID pandemic and devastating natural disasters, including a 2021 cyclone that killed at least 40 people.

The former Portuguese colony's budget is heavily dependent on oil revenues but earnings from existing

Seven dead as roof collapses in Thai storm

BANGKOK: Seven people, including four children, were killed when a roof over a school sports field collapsed in a storm in Thailand, officials said Tuesday. The children, aged between six and 13, were playing in the open-sided building at a school in Pichit province on Monday, watched by a number of spectators.

At about 6:30pm (1130 GMT) the storm struck, according to local media, and heavy rain and high winds caused the roof to collapse suddenly. The fatally injured adults were two parents and a janitor, the provincial office of public relations told AFP, while 18 people were injured.

A video shared on the Facebook page of the local public relations office showed a twisted mess of metal, with poles and corrugated iron lying crumpled on the ground. The storm also damaged several houses in Sam Ngam district, police told AFP.

"All the houses have been damaged by the storm but this arena just completely collapsed," local mayor Kannika Intarakul told the ThaiPBS broadcaster. Schools in Thailand commonly have a sports pitch with an open-sided roof to protect children from the fierce tropical sun while they play.

The six-year-old boy was rushed to hospital but died of his injuries. Those injured remained in two hospitals, where they were receiving treatment. None were reported to be in a serious condition.

The incident comes as Thailand enters monsoon season, with heavy rain forecast for much of the country in the coming days. "In a blink of an eye, I heard a sound just like in a war zone and in a span of five seconds, the storm reached me," another witness told ThaiPBS.

Neighbouring Myanmar was recently battered by Cyclone Mocha, which swept across Rakhine state, killing 145 people. Safety and maintenance standards in Thailand are sometimes lax, and building collapses are not unknown. — AFP

East Timor independence hero wins election

DILI: East Timor independence hero Xanana Gusmao's party won a parliamentary election but is short of an outright majority, official results showed Tuesday. The opposition National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT) led by 41.6 percent of the votes, while its main rival and incumbent coalition leader Fretilin got 25.7 percent, according to the electoral commission's tally of all voting stations.

The result of Sunday's election paves the way for a return to power for the 76-year-old Gusmao, East Timor's first president, if he can form a coalition. If there is no outright winner, the constitution gives the party with the most votes the opportunity to form a coalition.

"I am happy because the CNRT won the 2023 election and I really appreciate the awareness of the community, especially young people who have contributed to peace and stability," Gusmao told journalists.

Voters cast their ballots for 65 seats in parliament, hoping to end years of deadlock in Asia's youngest country. The CNRT secured 31 of those seats and will have to work with one or more other parties.

It won the presidential election last year, with Gusmao's ally and Nobel Peace laureate Jose Ramos Horta taking the post. But Fretilin, formally the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor, led the incumbent coalition government going into the



DILI: East Timor independence hero Xanana Gusmao briefs journalists during press conference in Dili on May 23, 2023. — AFP

fossil fuel projects are expected to run dry soon. The next government will need to decide on whether to allow the development of the Greater Sunrise project, which aims to tap trillions of cubic feet of natural gas.

Gusmao and former prime minister Mari Alkatiri, Fretilin's leader and also an independence movement

hero, have been locked in a bitter feud for decades. Younger voters make up a large part of the electorate in a country where 65 percent of the population is below 30. Many had expressed hope on Sunday that the next government would focus on fighting poverty and improving infrastructure. — AFP

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2023

ZainTech acquires Adfolks

Acquisition aligns with ZainTech's strategic plan to expand its digital services

DUBAI: ZainTech, the one-stop digital solutions powerhouse of Zain Group, announces the acquisition of Adfolks, a UAE-based cloud-native engineering firm that provides a comprehensive range of cloud transformation services. This acquisition aligns with ZainTech's strategic plan to expand its technology services and offer holistic solutions to its growing customer base and represents another step in Zain Group's '4Sight' strategy, transforming from a mobile operator to a multi-core digital ICT entity.

Adfolks was founded, by serial entrepreneur Arun Mohan, in 2016 with a vision to help clients leverage cloud and cloud-native technologies to solve business challenges. The company provides exclusive services that automate technological processes, accelerating time to value and returns on investment.

Adfolks has a proven track record for creating growth through transformative technology and agile delivery methods and is recognized for its expertise in Modern Infrastructure, Application Modernization, Security, Data & ML, and Automation. As a Microsoft Azure Cloud Gold Managed Partner (runner-up for partner of the year in 2021 and 2022), AWS Select Partner, and GCP Consulting Partner, Adfolks brings its team of expert engineers, customer success managers, and agile project delivery specialists to the ZainTech family.

This acquisition will further expand ZainTech's technology services portfolio, including innovative, scalable, and secure cloud-native applications and other technology solutions for its clients across the region. Andrew Hanna, CEO of ZainTech commented, "Combining Adfolks' expertise and talent with ZainTech's and Zain's B2B teams' resources and capabilities will enable us to drive even more value for our clients in the dynamic and constantly evolving technology landscape by streamlining their digital transformation journey, making it simpler and more seamless than ever before."

Arun Mohan, CEO of Adfolks, said, "I am excited about this next chapter for Adfolks with ZainTech. The combined strength will be a value not only to our respective business objectives but most importantly to our clients who will benefit from the combined expertise and innovation of Adfolks and ZainTech."

The acquisition of Adfolks follows ZainTech's recent acquisition of BIOS Middle East, a leading provider of Managed Private Cloud Services in the



- The acquisition enables ZainTech and Zain B2B teams to drive even more value for clients by streamlining their digital transformation journey, making it simpler and more seamless than ever before
- UAE-based cloud-native engineering firm brings a wealth of expertise in developing bespoke, agile technology solutions for digitally forward-thinking enterprises
- Another step in Zain Group's '4Sight' strategy in becoming a multi-core digital ICT entity

region, both entities strengthening ZainTech's portfolio of hybrid, cloud-native and multi-cloud managed services. Since its establishment in October 2021, ZainTech's progressive momentum in servicing governments and enterprises across the region,

has seen it enter multiple strategic partnerships with Microsoft, AWS, ATOS and Oracle to name a few, fulfilling its mission of offering a comprehensive suite of digital solutions and transformation services under one roof.

Economic growth slows in eurozone

BRUSSELS: Economic growth in the eurozone edged down in May to a three-month low because of a drop in industrial production, according to a closely watched survey published on Tuesday.

For the fifth month in a row, growth in the 20-country single currency zone remained in positive territory, but growth is now at its lowest level since February. Meanwhile, inflation remains stubbornly high, maintaining pressure on the ECB to raise rates.

Data from the flash Eurozone purchasing managers' index (PMI) survey published by S&P Global fell to 53.3 in May from 54.1 in April. A figure above 50 indicates growth. Cyrus de la Rubia, chief economist at Hamburg Commercial Bank (HCOB), said the eurozone's gross domestic product seems to have grown in the second quarter of 2023 "thanks to the healthy state of the services sector".

"However, the manufacturing sector is a powerful drag on the momentum of the economy as a whole," the economist added. HCOB partners with S&P Global to put out the PMI survey. Services' strong showing came even as inflation in the eurozone bumbles far above the European Central Bank's two-percent target. Official EU data earlier this month showed annual inflation in the eurozone rising to seven percent in April, the first increase after five consecutive months of falls.

The services sector in eurozone heavyweight Germany led the region's growth in May. Private sector activity there posted its strongest expansion for 13 months while manufacturing suffered a sharp fall.

"German companies from the sector are particularly hard on the brakes," said de la Rubia. France, the eurozone's second-largest economy, saw growth in overall activity slow to its lowest level in four months, weakening in both services and manufacturing.

Andrew Kenningham, analyst for Capital Economics, said that for the overall eurozone, "growth is being supported almost exclusively by the services sector, where the expansion may have lost a little momentum but remains very strong by historical standards. —AFP

IMF forecasts UK economic rebound in major U-turn

LONDON: The IMF on Tuesday delivered a major U-turn on its forecast for the UK economy, saying it expected growth this year, just one month after predicting a contraction. Britain's economy is now expected to expand by 0.4 percent in 2023, the International Monetary Fund said in its latest outlook document which partly cited weaker energy prices.

The institution ripped up its previous forecast in April for a 0.3-percent contraction.

Addressing a London press conference, IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva defended the U-turn. She said it had been sparked by falling energy prices, easing concerns over Brexit and improving financial stability following recent UK political turmoil and US banking-sector woes. She praised Britain for taking "decisive and responsible steps" in recent months, including overseeing a rescue deal by British bank HSBC for the British arm of collapsed US lender SVB.

"We have gone through a very turbulent time over the last few years. We have experienced shock upon shock upon shock, and that has created exceptional uncertainty," the IMF head told reporters, addressed also by UK finance minister Jeremy Hunt. "Our staff deserve credit for being agile in how we look at changing conditions... so we can give as clear



LONDON: A handout photograph released by the UK Parliament shows Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak making a statement in the House of Commons in London on May 22, 2023, on the G7 Summit. —AFP

a picture as we can, at a time when it is the foggiest we have seen in many decades," she said.

Georgieva warned that the "global economy remains highly uncertain". But she expressed hope that US politicians would soon conclude a deal to raise the nation's debt ceiling and avoid a default. "I look forward to a solution being found... Hopefully we won't have to wait that long."

The IMF noted there had still been a "significant" UK slowdown from 2022, when the economy grew 4.1 percent despite sky-high inflation and energy bills owing to the Ukraine war. "Buoyed by resilient demand in the context of declining energy prices, the UK economy is expected to avoid a recession and maintain positive growth in 2023," read the IMF statement. —AFP

Stocks fall despite 'productive' US debt talks

LONDON: Stocks markets slid on Tuesday after fresh talks between President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy on raising the US debt ceiling ended without an agreement as a crucial deadline approaches. With just weeks to go before the United States runs out of cash, the standoff has become the key topic on trading floors on fears that a failure by Washington to pay its bills will send shockwaves through markets and the global economy.

Wall Street opened lower while most European markets were down in afternoon deals and major Asian indices finished in the red. "There is a cautious tone to trade with debt ceiling talks continuing," said Finalto chief market analyst Neil Wilson.

Months of negotiations have failed to break the deadlock and lift the borrowing limit from the current \$31.8 trillion, though Biden and McCarthy ended their latest meeting on Monday on a positive note.

Both Biden and McCarthy described the talks as "productive", but the US president said there were still "areas of disagreement". The House speaker said negotiators would "work through the night" to move the sides closer and that he and Biden would "talk every day to try to find a way to get this done".

In Europe, eurozone stock markets dropped as data showed eurozone economic growth slowed in May. In Paris, shares in French digital entertainment group Vivendi sank after a holding company linked to its main shareholder, French billionaire Vincent Bollore, sold off shares, thus dampening expectations he will make an offer.

In London, BT Group stock reversed earlier losses after French billionaire Patrick Drahi lifted his stake to almost one quarter, days after the UK telecoms group unveiled plans to axe up to 55,000 jobs. Drahi, who was already BT's biggest shareholder, repeated that he does not intend to make a takeover bid.

Back in the United States, the Fed was also in focus ahead of next month's policy meeting, as investors track whether it will lift rates again or leave them unchanged for the first time since starting its hiking campaign more than a year ago. "The debt ceiling drama has been a permanent distraction of late, but other components in the fray include the specter of the Fed continuing to raise rates, because inflation remains too high," O'Hare said. —AFP

Indonesia, Iran ink trade pact during Raisi visit

JAKARTA: Indonesia and Iran signed a trade agreement on Tuesday in Jakarta, where President Joko Widodo hosted his Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi. Tehran is aiming to boost its international trade ties to try and offset the economic impact of heavy Western and international sanctions.

Raisi's two-day visit to Indonesia, Southeast Asia's biggest economy, comes in the shadow of fresh European Union sanctions this week on Iran's Revolutionary Guard. "We believe that sanctions and threats cannot stop us in any way," the Iranian president said Tuesday after a signing ceremony at the Bogor Palace for a total of 10 agreements, including trade.

"Cooperation and relations with neighboring countries, Muslim countries, and countries that are aligned with us in various fields is our priority." Under the pact, Iran will provide easier access for Indo-



BOGOR, Indonesia: This handout picture taken and released on May 23, 2023 by the Presidential Palace shows Indonesian President Joko Widodo (second right) and his Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi (third left) during a meeting at the Presidential Palace in Bogor. — AFP

nesian exports including vegetable oil, cocoa, coffee and tobacco, according to the Indonesian trade ministry. In return, Jakarta would lower tariffs on Iranian exports to Indonesia, including oil and its derivative products, minerals, chemicals and iron.

"I hope (the agreement) will expand the trade between Indonesia and Iran," Indonesian President

Joko Widodo said at the signing ceremony. Raisi said the goal was to raise the value of two-way trade between Indonesia and Iran to \$20 billion. In 2022, the total trade value between the two was just over \$250 million. Raisi's trip—his first official visit to Indonesia—comes in the shadow of fresh Western penalties on Tehran. —AFP

Business

Almowazi publishes 'Year of Combating Economic Challenges, OTC Market 2022'

Annual report details performance of unlisted market, highlights trends and developments

- Value of trading in unlisted shares increased by 32% to KD 224.6 million.
- The report indicates a promising outlook for 2023
- Transparency and online real-time prices gained the attention of a wider range of investors and reflected in investor confidence.

KUWAIT: Kuwait's leading data vendor for unlisted shares' over-the-counter (OTC) platform by Boursa, Almowazi, has released its Annual Report 2022 entitled "The Year of Combating Economic Challenges, OTC Market 2022". The report details the performance of the unlisted market for the previous calendar year and highlights the trends and developments shaping the industry.

The year 2022 presented significant economic difficulties worldwide, with many companies struggling to recover from the pandemic's aftermath. Disrupted supply chains, mounting debts, rising inflation, increased food prices, depreciating currencies, and interest rate hikes have all taken a toll on markets globally as well as the Kuwaiti economy. Despite these challenges, the Kuwait OTC Market had a fruitful year full of significant trading events.

The report highlights the increased investors' confidence and ease of trading on the platform, resulting in an increase in OTC Platform participants to 121 companies, 43 of which are Sharia law compliant



Almowazi CEO
Muhannad Al-Sane



Source: Almowazi Annual Report 2022 - OTC Market

in 2022. Since its establishment in November 2018, the OTC Platform has seen a 38 percent growth in the number of hybrid companies.

Compared to 2021, the OTC Market's performance had positive growth in terms of value traded, reaching KD 224.6 million, representing a 32 percent increase from the previous year. In 2022, 4.53 billion shares in 347 unlisted companies were traded in 5,518 deals, with the Holding and Ser-



vices sectors leading the OTC market trading.

The report indicates a promising outlook for 2023, with increased awareness of the platform and more convenient, transparent trading for investors seeking investment opportunities, funding sources, and exit strategies across multiple sectors. Additionally, the volume of stock trading in unlisted companies is expected to follow the main market's sentiment in terms of pace and trends.



As Kuwaiti businesses continue to confront critical economic challenges, Almowazi's Annual Report serves as an important indication of the OTC Market's robust performance and its critical role in supporting the economy's growth.

Biden, McCarthy call talks 'productive,' but no deal yet

WASHINGTON: A top US Republican and President Joe Biden on Monday said their first one-on-one talks in months to avert a calamitous debt default were "productive," but that disagreements were still blocking any potential deal.

The White House meeting came after Biden returned from a trip to Asia early to hammer out an agreement ahead of the US Treasury's June 1 cutoff date for Congress to authorize more borrowing.

"I felt we had a productive discussion. We don't have an agreement yet, but I did feel the discussion was productive in areas (where) we have differences of opinion," House Speaker Kevin McCarthy said after the talks.

McCarthy told reporters that negotiators were going to "work through the night" to move the sides closer and that he and Biden would "talk every day to try to find a way to get this done."

Debt limits are raised periodically to cover repayments on loans that have already been approved and spent, but House Republicans are insisting this time that averting a default must be paired with deep cuts to bring down the country's \$31.8 trillion debt. As they sat down for the meeting, Biden said "I am optimistic we are going to make some progress," adding both sides understood they have "a significant responsibility" to solve the impasse.

Afterwards the president used similar language as McCarthy in a statement, calling the meeting "productive," while adding that "areas of disagreement" remain.

'Red line'

The on-again, off-again discussions sputtered through the weekend, with McCarthy's team and White House negotiators meeting for more than two hours on Sunday night and another three on Monday.

Biden and McCarthy also spoke by phone Sunday as the president flew home from a G7 summit in Japan. After Monday's Oval Office meeting and McCarthy's description of the talks as productive, his team hardened its tone, with Republican congressman and negotiator Patrick McHenry telling reporters: "What I sense from the White House is a lack of urgency."

Republicans insist on spending less money in fiscal year 2024 than 2023, calling it a "red line."



WASHINGTON: US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy speaks to the media as he leaves a meeting on the debt ceiling with US President Joe Biden outside the West Wing of the White House in Washington, DC, on May 22, 2023. — AFP

The White House has offered a freeze for 2024 in exchange for Republicans supporting tax increases for corporations and wealthy Americans but McCarthy has rejected the idea. The Biden administration has proposed limiting spending on some domestic programs but wants the Pentagon to share in the cuts. Republicans have pushed for boosted military and border security spending, with major rollbacks to non-defense programs.

Disputes also remain over what a White House official characterized as increasingly hard-line Republican demands for beefed-up work requirements for social welfare programs.

Biden points out that Republicans raised the borrowing cap three times under his predecessor Donald Trump without threatening to default on the country's debt obligations.

If lawmakers fail to raise the borrowing cap, the government will careen into default for the first time in history, with potentially catastrophic results. Many experts say that in a worst-case scenario global stock markets would melt down as the US economy lurches into a downward spiral, killing millions of jobs.

June 1 deadline

The president is being pressured by progressives in his party to rely on the US Constitution's 14th Amendment—which states that the validity of public debt "shall not be questioned"—to bypass Congress and increase the limit on his own. But he and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen cautioned that the courts would not be able to resolve any legal disputes quickly enough to meet the deadline.

Yellen sent a letter to Congress on Monday warning again that the United States could find itself unable to pay its bills as soon as June 1. Even if McCarthy and Biden can hammer out a broad deal, anything they agree to will need to be shepherded through the House of Representatives, where they face pressure from hardliners on both sides not to make too many concessions.

Further complicating the timeline, the Democratic-controlled Senate is out this week, while the House is slated to be in recess Friday ahead of Memorial Day weekend. McHenry, the GOP negotiator, described a "very challenging situation" to reach a deal that clears a divided Congress and gets signed into law in the next 10 days. "I don't want brinkmanship. It is not in America's interest," he said. — AFP

Scholz calls for EU debt reduction at trade union meet

BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Tuesday backed calls for greater fiscal prudence, amid concerns that new European Union spending rules will choke investment in key areas. The response to recent crises meant that "public debt has risen significantly". Scholz said in a speech to the European Trade Union Confederation Congress in Berlin. "We now need an agreement on how we can reduce the high levels of debt again," Scholz said.

The European Commission put forward proposals in April to overhaul its fiscal rules, which were suspended following the COVID pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The EU's current spending rules say states' public deficits should not go above three percent of gross domestic product, and debt should stay below 60 percent of GDP.

Those targets will stay under the new proposals, but there will be more flexibility through individual plans for debt reduction that are country-specific. Germany is among the EU countries who want the rules to remain stricter, while southern states like Italy say they constrain their ability to invest.

"We need a realistic and binding agreement that at the same time does not overwhelm member states," Scholz said. The new rules need to allow for investment but Germany also stood for "fiscal stability", he said. "Unlimited increases in debt would not be a good answer."

The proposals have also raised concerns that tighter fiscal rules will lead to new spending cuts that will harm worker protections. There could be "no return" to overly strict fiscal rules, European trade union chief Esther Lynch told AFP.

"We need a different set of rules" that allow "investment for the just transition", Lynch said. "The burden needs to shift from working people towards those who are doing very well," she said, taking aim at the "windfall profits" made by companies as prices have risen with inflation. — AFP

Climate protestors disrupt Shell shareholder meet

LONDON: British oil and gas giant Shell faced a stormy shareholders' gathering Tuesday, as environmental protesters hit out over its pledge to tackle carbon emissions. Pressure groups including Greenpeace, Fossil Free London, Neon and Tipping Point demonstrated outside Shell's annual general meeting in London. More than 100 activists interrupted the opening remarks from chief executive Wael Sawan, according to Fossil Free London, while others attempted to occupy the stage.

Shareholder activist group Follow This introduced a resolution calling on Shell to strengthen its ambitions to fight climate change. However, chairman Andrew Mackenzie argued that the resolution would "weaken" the business and "reduce our ability to help the world".

Tuesday's AGM comes after Shell posted a sharp jump in first-quarter profit on resurgent oil prices, mirroring bumper earnings at rivals BP, Chevron, Exxon-Mobil and TotalEnergies.

The carbon-intensive sector has faced fierce criticism from the green lobby over plans to shift away from dirty fossil fuels and toward cleaner renewable energy. Campaigners have slammed Shell over its goal to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050, accusing



LONDON: Members of the Dutch activist group "Milieudefensie" hold placards as they demonstrate outside ExCel, in London, during the multinational oil and gas company Shell Annual General Meeting (AGM), on May 23, 2023. — AFP

it of "greenwashing" or marketing as climate-friendly its operations.

"Shut down Shell," protesters chanted as they also interrupted speeches from Mackenzie and other board members. Another group of protestors sang: "Go to hell Shell and don't you come back no more, no more, no more, no more" to the tune of "Hit the Road Jack" by Ray Charles.

Dozens of protesters were reportedly escorted out of the event by members of the group's security team. Earlier this month, Shell revealed that profit after tax surged 22 percent to \$8.7 billion in the three months to March from a year earlier. — AFP

Eight EU countries oppose bloc's car emissions limits

BRUSSELS: Eight EU member states including France, Italy and Poland urged Brussels to scrap its planned vehicle emissions limits, warning they risked hurting investment in a document seen by AFP Monday.

The EU proposed changes late last year, known as the "Euro 7" standards, to reduce air pollution from new vehicles sold in Europe with limits to pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide.

The caps were set to enter into force in July 2025. "We oppose any new exhaust emission rules (including new testing requirements or new emission limits) for cars and vans," the countries—Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania and Slovakia—wrote.

"These new rules would divert the industry's investments from achieving the net-zero transition pathway," they added in a letter sent to member states. France and Italy have large auto industries, but not as big as Germany's. The EU agreed on a planned phaseout of sales of new fossil fuel cars by 2035 earlier this year as it pushes for 100 percent electric vehicles.

The ban on internal combustion engines is key to the EU's ambitious plans to become a "climate neutral" economy by 2050, with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions.

Air pollution linked to road transport is responsible for 70,000 deaths each year, according to the EU.

The draft calls for a reduction in the emission of NOx, the nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide that cause smog and acid rain, by 35 percent from cars and 56 percent from trucks and buses compared to previous rules. The automotive industry opposes tougher petrol and diesel vehicle standards, insisting they will have very little positive environmental impact since the industry is moving towards electric cars. The sector employs 13 million people in Europe.

Environmental activists say the EU's limits are not enough to tackle air pollution, accusing Brussels of acquiescing to pressure from the auto lobby. The 27 member states must find a common position despite their differences before they can begin what will likely be tense negotiations with the European Parliament. Italian Business Minister Adolfo Urso called on the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, on Monday to be "reasonable and pragmatic".

Germany, the EU's biggest car manufacturer, did not sign the text but has previously expressed concern about tougher standards for its businesses.

The German coalition government of greens, social democrats and liberals, has struggled to find common ground on the issue. — AFP

Business

IMF asks Sri Lanka to speed up its debt restructuring program

Delay could undermine efforts to overcome economic crisis

COLOMBO: The International Monetary Fund asked Sri Lanka Tuesday to speed its debt restructuring and warned any delays could undermine efforts to overcome the country's worst economic crisis. Sri Lanka expected a quick deal with creditors shortly after defaulting on its \$46 billion foreign debt in April last year, but restructuring talks began in earnest only last month.

The economic crisis led to severe shortages of food, fuel and medicines last year and triggered months of protests that led to the toppling of former president Gotabaya Rajapaksa in July.

The new government secured a \$2.9 billion bailout from the IMF in March under a 48-month program that commits Colombo to painful reforms. Colombo has doubled taxes and announced it is selling off state enterprises to boost the balance sheet, but the IMF said more needed to be done.

"The mission discussed additional fiscal efforts that will be critical to ensure successful revenue mobilization," the IMF said at the end of a 12-day staff-level visit for talks with Colombo.

The IMF delegation said they expected more progress by the first formal review of the bailout program in September. "Achieving timely restructuring agreements with creditors in line with the program targets by the time of the first re-

view is essential to restoring debt sustainability.

"Keeping up the reform momentum and ensuring timely implementation of program commitments... are key for Sri Lanka to emerge from the economic crisis," the IMF said in a statement.

Foreign debt restructuring was held up as the country's main bilateral creditor, China, was initially reluctant to take a haircut and instead offered more loans to pay off old debts.

Just over \$14 billion of the total foreign credit is bilateral debt to foreign governments, 52 percent of which is owed to China. Beijing initially proposed a two-year moratorium on the repayment of its debts, but without accepting a reduction in the amount, an insufficient concession for the IMF. Terms of China's debt restructuring have not been made public.

Beijing gave financial assurances in March allowing the IMF to release \$330 million, the first tranche of the bailout package. The IMF expects Colombo to restructure its domestic debt too. The government's local debt was estimated at about 15,033 billion rupees (\$50 billion) as of the end of last year.

Opposition parties have warned that any trim to the rupee debt could send the entire domestic financial system into a tailspin, but the Central Bank of Sri Lanka has said it will ensure the stability of commercial banks. — AFP



COLOMBO: A man lifts a gas tank amid fuel shortages and an ongoing economic crisis as he joins a protest to demand the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapakse in Colombo. — AFP

KIPCO recognizes best employees in its Group companies

KUWAIT: KIPCO – Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) – recognized the 'Employees of the Year' in its core operating companies, at the company's Annual Gala Dinner. The event, hosted by KIPCO's Group CEO Sheikh Dana Naser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah brought together 300 CEOs and executives representing more than 30 subsidiaries and affiliates in Kuwait and abroad.

In her speech, Sheikh Dana Naser Al-Sabah welcomed the guests and said: "Today, KIPCO is bigger and more diversified, and I would like to take

this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for the efforts you have made to make this happen. I am looking forward to us embarking on a new journey together, a journey that is both exciting and challenging at the same time."

She added: "KIPCO has always been bold and decisive in every move taken, and we will make sure that this remains true. With boldness and decisiveness, we will move forward and seek opportunities wherever and whenever they are available."

The event saw the recognition of employees from Burgan Bank, Gulf Insurance Group, United Real Estate, Kamco Invest and Alternative Energy. KIPCO also recognized the efforts of its Group Chief Investment Officer, Joe Kawkabani, and its Deputy CFO, Moustapha Chami, for their efforts related to the recent merger. This transformative transaction has helped reshape the company in line with the vision of the Board of Directors, under the stewardship of the Group CEO.



KIPCO Group CEO Sheikh Dana Naser Al-Sabah addressing the audience.



NBK participates as Gold Sponsor of AUM Career Fair

KUWAIT: Reflecting its consistent support of fresh graduates as they make the first step in their career, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) participated as the Gold Sponsor of the American University of the Middle East (AUM) Career Fair 2023.

NBK's participation in the fair reflects its continuous endeavors to support the Kuwaiti youth and to attract the best national talents and to provide them with suitable job opportunities in an important sector like the banking and financial sector. The fair was held over 3 days from 22 to 24 May during which NBK's pavilion attracted a large number of visitors from the participants, as Group Human Resources staff provided answers to all inquiries raised by the students who filled out the job applications for available vacancies. This comes in line with the bank's endeavors to encourage these graduates to join the banking sector, which is pivotal in developing the Kuwaiti economy.

Speaking on this, Jarrah Al-Shatti, Senior Talent Acquisition Officer at National Bank of Kuwait said: "By sponsoring career fairs, NBK aims to offer a meeting point between private sector companies and potential candidates looking for a career. It also helps graduates navigate their way into the labor market and connect directly with companies and institutions to secure job opportunities."

"NBK is committed to provide training programs for young Kuwaiti fresh graduates and students, to equip them with the expertise, professional knowledge, and on-job training, as professional preparation for them to navigate their way into the labor market, reflecting its role as one of the key supporters of the youth among private sector institutions in Kuwait," he added.

"We always seek to solidify our leadership in the private sector in attracting, training, upskilling national talent and qualifying them for joining the banking sector. We also do our utmost endeavors to build professional young national cadres who are able to take on leading roles in the future and promote a sustainable future for the Kuwaiti economy," he continued. "NBK boasts a unique and solid workplace culture matching international peers. It ensures continuous development for its employees through exceptional training opportunities including professional training programs that are aligned with the highest international standards to help develop their skills and expertise for a thriving and sustainable career," Al-Shatti remarked.

NBK is an employer of choice that offers equal opportunities and embraces diversity in the workplace. In addition, NBK's recruitment strategy is based on acquiring, training and developing the young national cadres through the best-in-class programs to help them build a successful career that qualifies them to take on future leading roles in the bank. This makes NBK the private sector employer of choice for the Kuwaiti fresh graduates as it boasts the highest Kuwaiti employee retention rate.

NBK annually sponsors many career fairs for the Kuwaiti youth to introduce to them suitable job opportunities that meet their aspirations, reflecting its constant commitment to nurture the young national talent and qualify them for the labor market. It also provides unwavering support to all career fairs that help youth and fresh graduates to find the right job.



(From left): Moustapha Chami, Sheikh Dana Naser Al-Sabah, Joe Kawkabani and Samer Khanachet.



KIPCO gala dinner.

KAICO brings Royal Enfield Hunter and Scram to Kuwaiti riders

KUWAIT: KAICO, the exclusive distributor for Royal Enfield in Kuwait, is thrilled to announce the availability of the latest Royal Enfield motorcycle models, the Hunter and Scram, in Kuwait. Royal Enfield is an iconic Indian motorcycle brand known for its classic designs and modern engineering. The Hunter is a versatile roadster, perfect for commuting or cruising around town, while the Scram is a capable off-road bike that can handle any terrain with

ease. Both motorcycles are built on Royal Enfield's new J Platform, which features a modern frame, suspension, and braking system, making for a smooth and comfortable ride.

KAICO is proud to bring the Hunter and Scram to Kuwaiti riders and be a part of this new chapter in Royal Enfield's journey. "The Hunter and Scram are exceptional bikes, and we are confident that they will be a hit with the Kuwaiti riding community," said Ashish Tandon, GM of KAICO.

To make these exceptional motorcycles available in Kuwait, KAICO has partnered with Royal Enfield, one of the fastest-growing motorcycle brands in the world. "We are delighted to display the Hunter and Scram in our showroom, and bring these motorcycles to Kuwaiti riders," said Vinukumar Nair, head of



Royal Enfield Sales. "The Hunter and Scram embody the spirit of adventure and freedom that Royal Enfield is known for, and we're excited to see them on Kuwaiti roads."

The Hunter and Scram are available now at Royal Enfield showrooms in Kuwait, located at Ardiya.

Human-driven cyber incidents increased by 1.5 times in 2022

KUWAIT: Research based on the analysis of incidents reported to customers of Kaspersky Managed Detection and Response (MDR) has revealed that Security Operations Center (SOC) analysts discovered more than three high-severity incidents with direct human involvement every day in 2022.

The efficiency that external specialists provided while dealing with cybersecurity solutions and requirements of special knowledge were the main reasons for the companies to outsource external experts in 2022. To address the lack of gaps in expertise among IT Security professionals and provide them with insights on the current threat landscape, Kaspersky analyzed anonymized customer incidents detected by its MDR service.

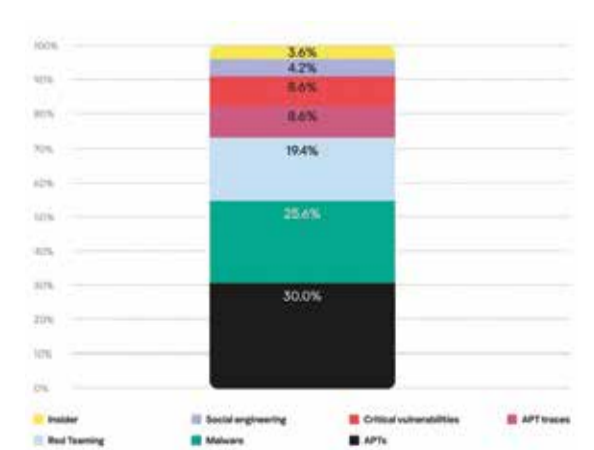
Kaspersky's annual Managed Detection and Response Analyst Report1 showed the high-severity incidents required an average 43.8 minutes to be detected by Kaspersky MDR2. Due to an increase in human-driven attacks this processing time grew by approx-

imately 6 percent compared to previous year, as they take up more of SOC analyst time.

Regarding the nature of such incidents, 30 percent of them were associated with APTs3, 26 percent accounted for malware attacks, and just over 19 percent resulted from "ethical hacking" (pen tests, red teaming or any other types of cyber exercises conducted in customers' infrastructures either for the security assessment of IT systems or to test the operational readiness of the MDR service). The proportion of incidents involving publicly available critical vulnerabilities and the detection of traces of previous attacks involving humans was around 9 percent. The remaining incidents resulted from the successful use of social engineering techniques or were linked to insider threats.

"The MDR report shows that sophisticated attacks driven by humans continue to grow. They require more resources to be investigated and they take up more of SOC analyst time as this type of attack lends itself to automation to a lesser degree. To detect these attacks efficiently we recommend companies to implement comprehensive threat hunting practices combined with classic alert monitoring," comments Sergey Soldatov, Head of Security Operations Center, Kaspersky.

For greater protection from advanced attacks, Kaspersky experts



recommend the following:

- Deploy a solution that combines detection and response capabilities and help identify threats without involving additional in-house resources.
- Provide your SOC team with access to the latest threat intelligence and ensure in-depth visibility into cyberthreats targeting your organization.
- Provide your staff with essential cybersecurity knowledge to reduce the likelihood of targeted attacks.
- Implement expert Incident Response training to improve the expertise of your in-house digital forensics and incident response team.

Business



Abdullah Al-Mejhem during the event.



A group photo of Premium Relationship Managers.

Boubyan Bank launches 'Premium' account for its high net-worth clients

New account offers clients access to a variety of services both inside and outside Kuwait

KUWAIT: In an effort to provide its clients with exceptional banking experiences, Boubyan Bank announced the launch of the new "Premium" account, in line with the developments witnessed by the bank and its goals to provide clients with a distinctive set of services and products that suit their needs inside and outside Kuwait.

The new account was launched during a private event at Dar Hamad attended by a number of senior bank officials, Premium team, and a group of influencers. A group of Boubyan partners and exclusive service providers for Premium account were also present at the event.

Chief Consumer and Private Banking Offer, Abdullah Al-Mejhem, said in his speech during the event: "We are pleased to launch the new account, which reflects our constant engagement with our clients over the past years and our keenness to listen, learn and understand their various banking needs." He affirmed Boubyan Bank's keenness to reach the highest levels of customer satisfaction mentioning that the bank was named the Best Islamic Bank in Customer Service for the 13th year in a row, in addition to receiving the 'First Place Award in Customer Service' as a country winner across all economic sectors in Kuwait for six years by Service Hero.

He explained, based on Boubyan's efforts to provide the latest in services and products, its attention to the smallest details, and to make Boubyan clients feel distinguished, the bank sensed a special need for various services dedicated for its affluent clients. Therefore, a new account was designed to serve this segment and provide it with its financial, banking and investment needs in an easier and more luxurious manner. Adding that the Premium account represents a distinctive experience for clients with high incomes, whose nature of work, daily life, sometimes frequent travelling require a special type of service that suits them, and this is what we made sure to provide in the new account.

Holistic banking services

For his part, Bashar Al-Doub, Deputy General Manager of Banking Services clarified: "The "Premium" account is allocated to Boubyan Bank's top-tier clients with a monthly income of KD 3,000 or more, or who have a total balance of KD 100,000. Clients in this category are eligible to join the "Premium" family and enjoy a full-service banking experience and benefits.

'Premium Hubs' have been specially designed and allocated to serve premium clients in 10 of Boubyan Bank branches across Kuwait, which allows us to con-

Abdullah Al-Mejhem

The new account complements the lifestyle of this segment, meets all their daily needs

stantly connect with them in case of any inquiries or transactions related to this segment, he added.

A personal relationship manager is also assigned to manage all the banking and financial needs of the customer and be in constant and direct contact with them through the phone, WhatsApp, e-mail, in addition to the Boubyan application, in order to provide them with banking and financial advice and solutions that help them achieve their goals.



Bashar Al-Doub with one of the guests during the event.

Insurance with Boubyan Takaful

The Premium account also enjoys broad support beyond Boubyan Bank. All subsidiaries of the Boubyan Group also play a big role in providing their services to Premium account holders. The Boubyan Group strives to offer optimal solutions in different areas, starting with (Boubyan Takaful), which offers insurance plans specially designed for top-tier clients to ensure protection and peace of mind at an appropriate cost to meet their needs and support them.

Seizing opportunities with Boubyan Capital

Boubyan Capital provides a comprehensive range of innovative solutions in wealth management to meet the needs of its clients and direct them to achieve their goals in protecting and growing their wealth optimally.

Financial and investment solutions in the UK

Nomo Bank, the latest member of the Boubyan Group, is a fully digital and Sharia-compliant bank in the UK that gives clients access to a wide range of currencies and investment products that help clients diversify their investment portfolios, increase their returns, manage their money and banking services with ease. In addition to providing them with fixed deposits at competitive rates, and the best solutions for property finance in the UK.

Boubyan exclusive partnerships for 'Premium' clients

The Premium customer can also benefit from Boubyan Concierge services, which offer the highest levels of comfort and luxury, starting from making travel and hotel reservations, and transportation to and from the airport, restaurants reservations, and handling daily errands such as clearing some official paperwork on behalf of the client.

Because Boubyan is aware of the lifestyle of its elite clients, it announced a special partnership contract with Hello Explorer platform and the traveler Fatima Al-Matar to provide customized travel trips, unique tourism packages and experiences tailored to each Premium customer. A package of exclusive benefits and offers has also been provided by Boubyan's distinguished group of partners, such as Tanagra, which offers a special and exclusive discount for Premium clients. Hyatt Regency Al-Kout Mall and Grand Regency 360 Mall also offer special bed and breakfast rates to the guests from Premium clients.

A privileged lifestyle with the MasterCard World Elite Credit Card

In order to give clients additional benefits, the MasterCard World Elite credit card with a unique metal vertical design has been designated as the primary card for Premium clients, through which they can obtain special and distinguished banking services that meet their needs and enable them to conduct their banking transactions easily and smoothly.

Boubyan rewards program

The card gives Premium clients the advantage of joining the silver category

Bashar Al-Doub

A wide range of exclusive offers from distinguished partners that have a deep understanding of the needs of this segment

of the Boubyan rewards program to enjoy a world of rewards with every purchase they make using the credit card inside or outside Kuwait. The silver category allows customer to earn monthly points that reach up to KD 300, which can be redeemed at any time through the Boubyan application for cash back (cash back), airline miles, shopping vouchers, airline tickets, hotels and car

This is in addition to enjoying a discount of up to 15 percent on VIP service at the airport, a 15 percent discount from IHG Hotels and Resorts, a 10 percent discount from Booking.com, and a group of discounts when renting cars from both Rentalcars.com and Budget.com up to 10 percent. In addition to membership in the Hertz Plus Rewards Gold program, which includes discounted prices, in-



Abdullah Al-Tuwajiri with Mutlaq Al-Qamlas and Abdullah Al-Mejhem.

rentals. In addition to exclusive benefits, they will also be able to qualify for the Gold category in the program depending on their spending, which entitles them to obtain unlimited points per month that can be exchanged for special rewards.

Through the MasterCard World Elite credit card, the customer will also enjoy a range of services that cover different aspects of daily life, such as travel and insurance along with special offers and discounts from the most famous shopping along with safety and protection every time the card is used.

Travel and tourism

The card also allows cardholders free access to more than 1,000 airport lounges worldwide, with one accompanying guest without additional charges.

stant cashback, and other benefits with Global Blue VIP Services that allow free entry to the VIP lounges in Global Blue City and use of express services without any charges.

Luxurious shopping experiences

The customer will be granted a variety of exclusive offers and discounts from the Bicester Village Shopping Collection, such as shopping packages or access to VIP lounges. In addition to enjoying discounts at the most famous online luxury shopping sites, up to 15 percent for Net-A-Porter and 10 percent for Farfetch.

Insurance services and benefits

As for insurance services, the World Elite MasterCard credit card gives the Premium clients insurance that covers all family members, up to \$500,000 per person.



A glimpse of the Premium event.



Vice-Chairman & Group Chief Executive Officer Adel Al-Majed as a guest speaker of the Premium event.

Lifestyle



A scientist analyzes a seed before being stored in the Kew Millennium Seed Bank in Wakehurst, south of London. - AFP photos



A scientist germinates seeds to check their health after being stored in the Kew Millennium Seed Bank in Wakehurst.



Seeds are stored at a temperature of -18 degrees Celsius in the Kew Millennium Seed Bank in Wakehurst.



Senior research leader Dr John Dickie poses for photographs in the Kew Millennium Seed Bank in Wakehurst.

THE NOAH'S ARK FOR PLANTS BENEATH THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE



A scientist holds seeds similar to ones stored in the Kew Millennium Seed Bank in Wakehurst.



Seeds are stored in jars after being extracted from the Kew Millennium Seed Bank in Wakehurst.

Inside bomb-proof frozen vaults underneath the English countryside hides a treasure trove of 40,000 species of wild plant seeds from around the world, many of which are in danger of disappearing. The world's largest seed bank, located in the sleepy countryside south of London, is in a race against time because two out of five plant species are threatened with extinction, according to scientists. Britain's David Attenborough, a leading environmental figure of international renown, has called the Millennium Seed Bank (MSB) "perhaps the most significant conservation initiative ever".

"The purpose is conservation of wild species through seeds, against those species becoming extinct, in the long run," explained John Dickie, the project's senior research leader. The 70-year-old has been involved with the MSB since its inception in the late 1990s and the opening of its current home in 2000 to celebrate the millennium. A total of 2.5 billion seeds are stored at the MSB in Wakehurst, 35 miles (56 kilometers) outside London, and at a branch of the capital's Kew Gardens botanical gardens.

They come in all shapes, colors and sizes, and belong to 40,020 different species originating from 190 countries. Nearly 20 percent of the world's flora is preserved at Wakehurst, with priority given to plants that are threatened, particularly by climate change, and endemic plants that can only be found in one geographical area. Plants that have a societal function, such as for medical or economic use, also have their place.

'Not rocket science'

"Plant species are endangered for a number of reasons but mainly through land use change, and increasingly through climate change," said Dickie. "Some plants will adapt. Others are not adaptable. At least they are here rather than not existing anymore," he added. Wakehurst receives new seeds from all over the world every week and then the process of saving them begins.

That process is "based on the technology that has already been in use for crop species", said Dickie. "It's not rocket science. Dry it, freeze it. It's just chemistry," he added, explaining that, once frozen, the seeds can be stored for decades, probably centuries. Dickie's team of around 20 researchers and various volunteers works in public view in their glass-fronted laboratory.



Seeds are pictured before being stored in the Kew Millennium Seed Bank in Wakehurst.



A scientist analyzes seeds in the Kew Millennium Seed Bank in Wakehurst.

Lucy Taylor is working on *Albizia Polyphylla* seeds that have arrived from Madagascar. "Madagascar is a very interesting place for us. As it was disconnected from Africa, there's a unique flora. And there's also a lot of pressure on land," she said. One of her jobs is to separate the empty seeds from the rest.

Iran regrets

"Many of them can be empty or infested with bugs or some kind of disease, so it's important for us to clean them as much as we can," explained Taylor. "We want to have the best quality collection possible but also space in our bank vault is limited." The seeds are X-rayed for diseases, and each is given its own identity card, with its name, country of origin and date of arrival at the MSB. The seeds are then stored in glass jars before scientists — kitted up like Arctic explorers — take

them to the minus 20 degree Celsius (minus four-degree Fahrenheit) underground vaults, built to withstand floods, bombings and radiation.

The largest collection of seeds is from the orchid family. But there are also rare plants, such as the world's smallest water lily and the *Deschampsia Antarctica*, also known as Antarctic hair grass, one of two flowering plants native to the frozen continent. The MSB, which receives public funding and donations, has partnerships with 90 countries.

Some, such as Indonesia, refuse to share their seeds with the MSB, but keep them on their territory and take responsibility for their conservation. Others, however, seem out of reach. One of Dickie's few regrets is that he has no relationship with Iran. — AFP

Cannes queasy over vomit-eating dieting drama

Cannes endured the nauseating sight of someone eating her own vomit on Monday, but the film's star, Mia Wasikowska, said it was a dark satire on the challenges facing teens. The film festival awarded its top prize last year to a movie involving a 15-minute vomiting sequence, "Triangle of Sadness", and this year got its own gross-out scene in "Club Zero", this time set around a nutrition cult. In one particularly revolting scene, a girl wanting to save the planet makes herself sick in front of her appalled parents and then eats her own vomit with a fork.



Australian actress Mia Wasikowska poses during a photocall for the film "Club Zero" at the 76th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.

Wasikowska, known from "Alice in Wonderland" and "Crimson Peak", said the film uses eating disorders and cults to explore the anxieties of younger generations faced by climate change and global inequalities. "I always think that if I was a teenager now I would be so nervous with the world that we are inheriting," Wasikowska told AFP.

"I just found it moving that these kids join this class because they care about the planet, a lot of them want to eat less meat, be more conscious. It's the most beautiful part of young people. And it gets corrupted, influenced." The new feature from Austrian director Jessica Hausner takes place in a presti-

gious European college and centres on a group of teenagers who come under the influence of Ms Novak (Wasikowska), who advocates "conscious eating".

Essentially this means eating nothing in a bid to save the planet and opt out of consumer culture. Speaking to AFP just ahead of the film's premiere in Cannes on Monday, Hausner said her film explored what happens when you follow an extreme idea to its limit. "It is not to make people uneasy, it is to show how radicalization works," Hausner said of the stomach-churning vomit scene. With its satirical tone and touches of absurdist humour, it echoes the themes and style of "Triangle of Sadness", which won the Palme d'Or for Sweden's Ruben Ostlund, who is heading this year's jury.

True believers

Hausner and Wasikowska, an Australian actress who has starred in films by Tim Burton, Jim Jarmusch and David Cronenberg, prepared by researching cults and sects. Key for Hausner was to make the teacher sincere in her beliefs rather than an evil manipulator. "Jessica was absolutely insistent that she is a true believer and really believes what she is doing is the right thing," Wasikowska said. The kids and Ms Novak "start to believe in something we would normally say is wrong and crazy, and this is very hard to accept, that people believe in ideas that are devastating or destructive", Hausner said.

Hausner's last feature "Little Joe", about an experiment in plant breeding going too far, was in competition at Cannes in 2019 and won best actress for Britain's Emily Beecham.

Like that film, "Club Zero" uses strong colors and creates an eerie atmosphere with an absurdist touch. "I don't set the films in a particular time, so I try to create an artificial style with the visuals," Hausner said, adding that she was "bored" with naturalism. — AFP



(From left) Portuguese actress Mina Andala, Egyptian actor Amr Waked, British producer Gabrielle Tana, British actress Junia Rees, unidentified actor, British actor Jude Law, Brazilian director Karim Ainouz, Swedish actress Alicia Vikander and British actor Sam Riley pose during a photocall for the film "Firebrand" at the 76th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

Monarchy is 'theatre', says Jude Law

Jude Law has become an immediate awards contender for his demonic performance as English King Henry VIII at Cannes, but he told reporters on Monday that he sees the current British monarchy as "theatre". "I am not one for gossip... I don't really enjoy following tittle-tattle stories," Law said when asked about the soap opera that currently surrounds the royal family. "I kind of see it like theatre, although I am slightly more obsessed by theatre," he added.

Law gives a brutish, scene-stealing turn as the 16th-century wife-killing monarch in "Firebrand", which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival late Sunday. Fat, fuming and with a stomach-turning infection in his leg, Law's version of Henry is one of the more disgusting tyrants ever put on film. To recreate the atmosphere, Law said he went to a perfume-maker who mixed up

"puss, blood, fecal matter and sweat" for him to use.

"Initially I used it very subtly," he said. But when director Karim Ainouz got hold of it, "there was a spray fest!" he added. His co-star Alicia Vikander, who plays Henry's sixth and final wife Catherine Parr, joked that the camera and boom operators were struggling not to puke from the smell. "When he walked on set, it was just horrible," said Ainouz, laughing.

'Act of justice'

"Firebrand" focuses on Vikander's Parr, the only of Henry's wives to outlive him and the first English woman to publish a book in her own name. It received fairly positive reviews at Cannes, though there is already controversy over its surprising and ahistorical ending. Variety called it "pure fantasy, rewriting Parr's legacy with flagrant disregard for the facts". But Ain-

ouz told AFP that "the twist at the end is a necessary act of vengeance".

As a Brazilian-Algerian, he said there was also "a small act of justice" in telling the history of England on the cusp of its colonial takeovers. Vikander told AFP she was drawn to Parr as "extremely intelligent and extremely progressive... and a woman who survived a tyrant for several years". But Law said he needed to understand Henry as more than just a monster. "There are so many layers to his behavior — the abuse he received as a child, separated from his family, brought up under guard to become a king, fed the lies that he is second only to God... what does that do to someone?" he said. Deadline was among those gushing over Law's performance, saying he "is truly becoming the consummate character actor of his generation". — AFP

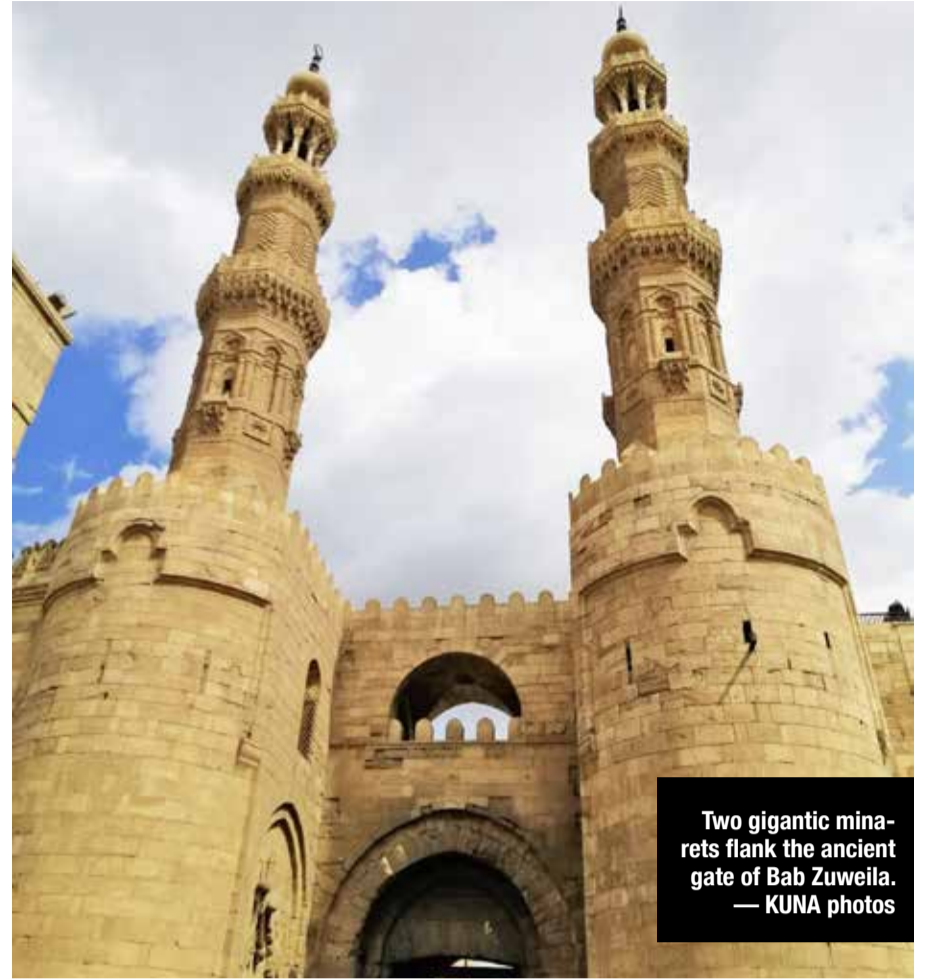
Lifestyle



Close-up of Bab Zuweila gate.



One of Bab Zuweila gate's ginormous doors.

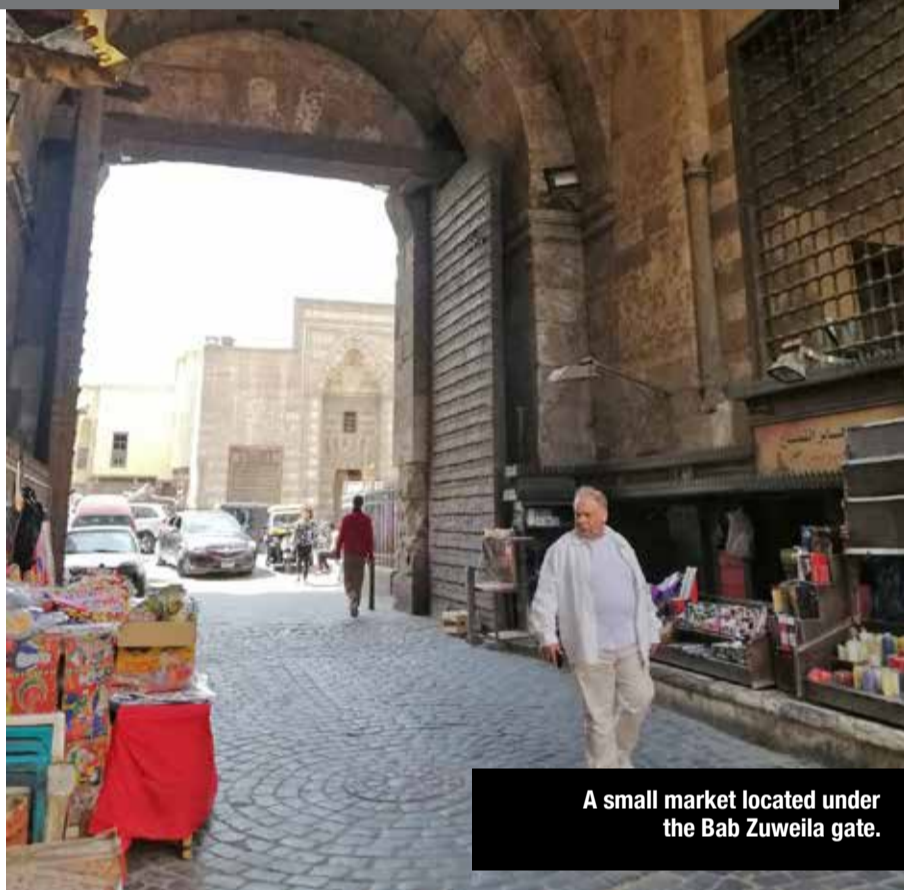


Two gigantic minarets flank the ancient gate of Bab Zuweila. — KUNA photos

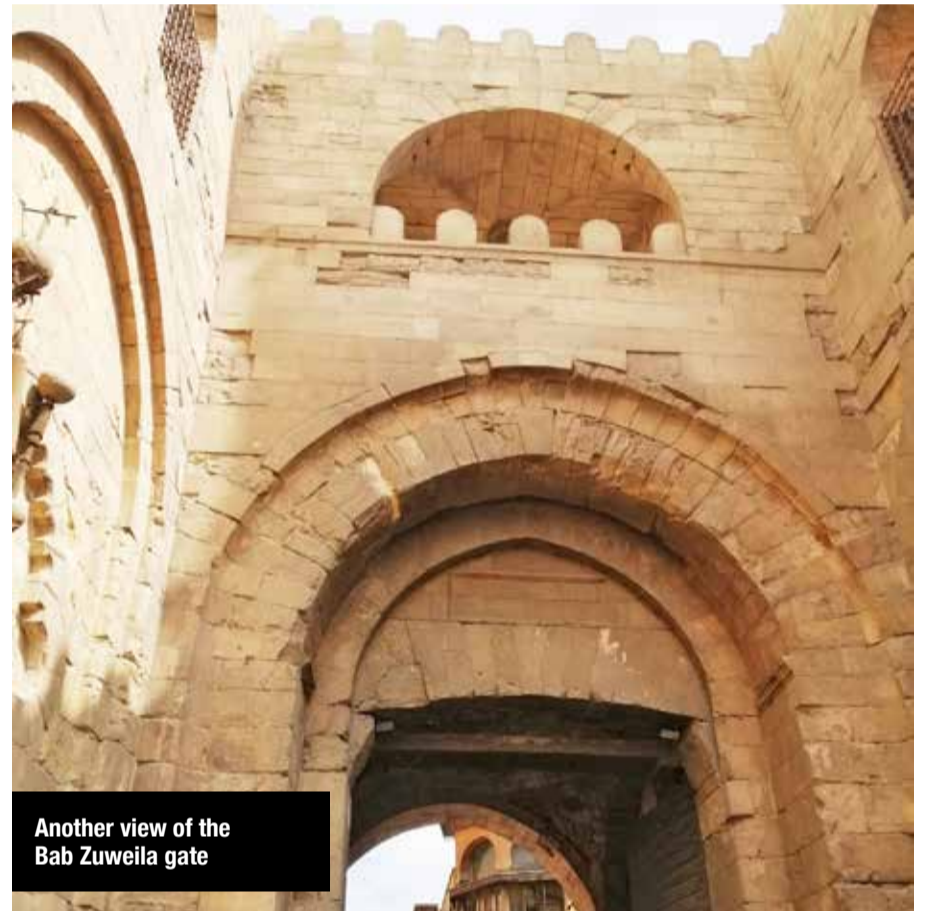
Ancient gate of Bab Zuweila contains vital events in Egypt's history

The ancient gate of Bab Zuweila, with its distinctive architectural structure, was built with two semi-circular twin towers or minarets, making it one of the most crucial landmarks in Fatimid-era Cairo, which represents the remaining southern gate from the walls that surrounded the Old city of Cairo, Egypt.

The gate, which is 25.72 meters wide, 25 meters deep, and 24 meters high above street level, was named after the tribe of Zuweila, who came from North Africa with Jawhar Al-Siqili as the commander of the Fatimid armies, who lived near the gate. It is also known as the Metwally Gate since during the Fatimid era, it was used to collect taxes from everyone who entered or left Cairo, as this gate was facing the historical capitals of Egypt of Al-Qata', Al-Askar and Fustat. History books indicate that Bab Zuweila witnessed the hanging of Sultan Tuman Bay, the last of the Mamluk sultans, which marked the end of the Mamluk state and the beginning of the Ottoman state in the year 923 AH/1517 AD.—KUNA



A small market located under the Bab Zuweila gate.



Another view of the Bab Zuweila gate

Beauty brand Lush unveils new Green Hub but business comes first



A photograph shows plastic containers and moulds awaiting to be recycled in the Green Hub at Lush cosmetic company headquarters in Poole, England.



Mark Constantine, co-founder and co-CEO of Lush, poses for a photograph in front of a display of bath bombs inside a "mock up" of a store at the cosmetic company's headquarters in Poole, England.

Known for its colorful shampoo bars and fruity bath bombs, UK-based cosmetics brand Lush has opened the doors of its new Green Hub as part of efforts to expand its in-house circular recycling. The facility at Lush's Poole headquarters in southern England sees its signature black plastic pots granulated into plastic pellets before being remoulded, while a special unit treats wastewater. Since its early days, Lush—now a staple of the British high street—has pledged its commitment to reducing its environmental impact and ethically sourcing ingredients.

But business remains a key driver of its decisions. "We're keen environmentalists but we're not fools. If the customers want this, then we'll strive to provide this," Mark Constantine, CEO and Lush co-founder, said in an interview with AFP. Constantine was among six friends, including his wife Mo, who founded Lush in 1995.

Recognizable by the strong fruity smells of its stores with market-like stalls, Lush sells two-thirds of its products "naked", without packaging, among them handmade soap bars and henna hair dye blocks. Some products, such as moisturizers and body lotions, are sold in black pots, which customers are encouraged to bring back for recycling. Others, like shower gel, are sold in plastic bottles. "We are supplying consumers with what they need when they need it. We are then secondarily thinking about the environment," Constantine said. "I don't



Bath bombs are displayed in cases in the "Ballistics Department" at Lush cosmetic company in Poole, England.

believe personally that people are shopping with us primarily for environmental reasons. I believe they want a product that works," he added.

Red lines

While Constantine said Lush will continue selling its popular shower gels, there are red lines that they will not cross, like putting pumps on plastic bottles. The metal bits in the pumps would make them hard to recycle, he said. Lush has been praised by independent organization Ethical Consumer and the Better Goods website for its commitment to non-animal testing.

But they have also highlighted issues, such as the use of palm oil, which campaigners blame for deforestation and the destruction of wild animal habitats. Use of synthetic ingredients and lack of "quantifiable" environmental targets

have also been raised. Lush says it no longer uses palm oil and is searching for alternatives to stop using its derivatives. Ruth Andrade, head of Lush's regenerative impact team, late last year outlined a climate "to-do list", to be implemented before 2030.

This includes protecting forests and wildlife, transferring to renewable power and making materials "regenerative and circular". The group also wants to reduce its carbon footprint by "radically" reducing transport emissions. With 14,500 employees worldwide, an employee trust controls a 10-percent stake in the company. Lush is also a key local employer in the coastal town of Poole, near Bournemouth.

Constantine has had a bittersweet relationship with his home region, which overwhelmingly supported Britain leaving the European Union in the Brexit vote. Speaking about the company's declining sales in France and Germany, Constantine says Brexit was more to blame than inflation.

Lush has however increased the price of its products in line with inflation, which is stuck above 10 percent in the UK. But Constantine said that even with a cost-of-living crisis that has forced Britons to cut back on other non-essential costs, "you can at least have a bath". And Constantine is confident that inflation won't "carry out for much longer", just in time for Christmas and the rollout of a new flagship store.—AFP



'Lord of the Rings' composer Howard Shore.

'Lord of the Rings' composer Howard Shore dreams his scores

Oscar-winning composer Howard Shore has scored landmark hits from "Silence of the Lambs" to "Lord of the Rings". He says the music emerges from his dreams. "I like to improvise," Shore told AFP. "I like to read the novel, the play or the script and then I dream and go into a state of improvisational association with the world of the film. "That's where the music comes from, from dreaming the story," he said. Shore, 76, was present at the Cannes Film Festival on Monday as part of the annual celebration of composers. Sacem, France's songwriters' association, are calling for Cannes to "give music its rightful place" and hand out an award for a movie's score. Under French and US law, composers are officially "co-authors" of every film alongside the director and screenwriter, Cecile Rap-veber, Sacem's CEO told AFP.

"It's clear, with very few exceptions, that if you take the music out of a film you'll quickly see something is missing," she said. "It's one of the indispensable elements that generate emotions and carry the message of the story," she added.

Shore welcomes any effort to recognize the work of film composers, who he says play a crucial role in "maintaining the relationship between the audience and storytelling". He won three Oscars for his work with Peter Jackson on the "Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit" trilogies. "Peter was in the studio every day. He was a great collaborator," Shore recalled. He has also worked regularly with Martin Scorsese (including on "The Departed" and "The Aviator") and other Hollywood greats such as David Fincher (for "Seven" and "The Game").—AFP



Workers make bath bombs in the "Ballistics Department" at Lush cosmetic company in Poole, England. — AFP photos



A picture shows the exterior of the Green Hub building where material and products are recycled at Lush cosmetic company in Poole, England.

Sports

So expensive! Paris Olympics ticket prices mar image of Games for all

'Hundreds of thousands' of free tickets pledged

PARIS: Athletes have joined the clamor of criticism at the high cost of tickets for the 2024 Paris Olympics, decried as undermining organizers' promises of a Games accessible to all. Phase two of sales got underway on May 11, with nearly 1.5 million individual tickets available, after over three million were sold as multi-event packs during phase one. Sales have been swift with two thirds of the latest batch snapped up on the first day, organizers said. Tickets for the men's judo heavyweight final, in which France's triple Olympic gold medalist Teddy Riner is expected to compete, sold out in two hours.

"Frankly it started very strong, almost too much so. It's proof of the huge enthusiasm," the organizing committee said. But just as during phase one, there were vocal protests, particularly on social media, that the exorbitant prices conflicted with the "Games for all" promised by Paris 2024 chief Tony Estanguet. "We expected the criticism, we were warned that the sales periods were a difficult time. But we underestimated the scale," conceded Estanguet, a former three-time Olympic canoeing champion.

"With four million registered in the draw for 1.5 million tickets on sale, we knew that some people would be disappointed." Of the promised one million seats at 24 euros (\$26), the lowest price for next year's Olympics, nearly 150,000 went up for sale in phase two. But as these tickets were the first to go, potential buyers quickly found themselves facing much higher prices. Three days after

the launch of the second phase, sports fans were offered tickets at 690 euros and even 980 euros for athletics semi-finals, and as high as 2,700 euros for the opening ceremony.

'Financial elite'

"The prices of the Olympic Games tickets... What a big joke," tweeted one disappointed buyer @BenjiTjumper, while @Kimky_Love wrote: "Excuse me Paris-2024 but the opening ceremony at 2 times the minimum wage (!), it's a joke?" Athletes were also unhappy with the prices. Belgian Nafissatou Thiam, a two-time Olympic heptathlon champion, told Belgian media DH: "I'm not even sure that my family will be able to come to see me, it's so expensive."

French judoka Amandine Buchard, a world bronze medalist, slammed organizers on Twitter: "Olympic Games accessible to all, you said... In fact, you have to take out a bank loan so that families and loved ones can have the chance to come and see us... Well at least if by then there are still tickets." "How can we put such high prices for our sport?" French runner Jimmy Gressier wrote on Instagram.

French Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera defended the pricing policy, telling parliament on May 16 ticket prices were lower than at previous Olympics. She did admit though that: "The accessible tickets, at 24 euros, exist but they go too quickly." For sports policy expert David Roizen, in the money-spinning world of modern sports,

a Games for all "doesn't exist". "The Champions League final, the Olympics, are events reserved for a financial elite," Roizen said. "It is a mistake to have raised the prospect of a Games for all."

Free tickets pledged

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of people will be able to watch the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics for free, organizers stressed Tuesday amid ongoing criticism about the price of tickets for next year's event. The final figure for the number of people who will be granted tickets for the vast and ambitious outdoor opening ceremony along the river Seine is still under discussion.

"Hundreds of thousands," Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin told a press conference when asked about the number of people on Tuesday. "It will depend on the weather and the publicity you do for it." Around 100,000 tickets will be sold for exclusive river-side positions, with organizers initially saying another 500,000 would be given an opportunity to watch from higher positions on roads above the Seine.

Athletes are set to sail down the river in a flotilla of 115 boats, the first time the opening ceremony for the Olympics has taken place outside of the athletics stadium. "With its open and public nature, this ceremony will enable hundreds of thousands of people to see it for free," Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo told the same press conference with

Darmanin and Games chief Tony Estanguet. With demand far outstripping supply, Paris 2024 organizers have faced a stream of criticism online and even from some athletes over the price of tickets, which first went on sale in February and March.

A second release, which began on May 11, has led to outrage over prices as high as 2,700 euros (\$2900) for the paying positions for the opening ceremony. "I'm not even sure that my family will be able to come to see me, it's so expensive," Belgium's Nafissatou Thiam, a two-time Olympic heptathlon champion, told Belgian media DH recently. The ceremony also poses a huge security challenge for French organizers, with around 10,000 athletes taking part and 200 heads of state set to attend in addition to the huge crowds on the river banks.

Around 37,000 members of the security forces would be on duty for the opening ceremony, Darmanin said, with summer holidays cancelled for the period of the Games which will run from July 26 to August 11. Around 2,000-3,000 private security agents are also being recruited for the opening ceremony. Darmanin stressed drones were considered the biggest security threat, but he added air defense technology was available and would be trialed later this year during the Rugby World Cup in France. "It's a new threat. It's not certain that anything will happen but it is certainly the most difficult to prepare for," he said. — AFP



Mark Cavendish of Great Britain

'Manx Missile' Cavendish to retire

PARIS: Mark Cavendish said on Monday he will retire at the end of the season, bringing the curtain down on the career of one of cycling's all-time great sprinters. The British rider, whose 34 Tour de France stage wins are joint most with Belgian legend Eddy Merckx, will have one final chance to claim the record outright in July when he takes part in the race one last time. The 38-year-old, known as the "Manx Missile", made the announcement alongside his wife and children at a press conference in Coccaglio during Monday's rest day at the Giro d'Italia.

"I've absolutely loved racing every kilometer of this race so far, so I feel it's the perfect time to say it's my final Giro d'Italia and 2023 will be my final season as a professional cyclist," Cavendish said. "Cycling's been my life for over 25 years. I've lived an absolute dream. "The bike has given me the opportunity to see the world and meet incredible people, a lot of whom I'm proud to now call friends. "I love the sport more than you can even imagine and I can't see myself going too far from it, that's for sure."

Over a storied career Cavendish's deep racing knowledge, a fearless, aggressive approach and the ability to marshal teammates and outspeed rivals earned him a staggering 161 wins with 53 of those coming at Grand Tours. "This race (the Giro) has an important place in my heart as a cyclist and a person," he said. "The Giro d'Italia gave me my first Grand Tour wins in 2008. Italy was my home for many years during my career. And the people here welcomed me, as one of their own."

Traumatic experience

One of cycling's most popular riders, Cavendish also endured private trauma away from the sport. In an horrific incident last year, he and his wife were held at knifepoint by robbers in a late-night attack. Born in Douglas, on the Isle of Man, the former junior bank clerk joined a nascent British Cycling Academy in 2003. By 2008 he won a first Tour de France stage with German team T-Mobile, racking up 30 in a period of dominance until 2016, when he was stuck down by the draining condition of Epstein-Barr virus.

Tour de France director Christian Prudhomme told AFP ahead of the 2018 Tour that Cavendish had "nothing to prove". "Many people will mention Mario Cipollini but for me Mark Cavendish is the Tour de France's all-time great sprinter," the race director said. Cavendish, however, had other ideas about what he had left to prove. He went five years without a win and also ended up without a team in early 2021. On a rookie's salary, however, Cavendish was taken 'home' to Belgian outfit Deceuninck Quick-Step by maverick team boss Patrick Lefevere, a larger-than-life character Cavendish trusted and believed.

On stage 13 of the Tour de France that summer Cavendish equaled Merckx's 46-year-old record of Tour de France stage wins by taking a fourth win on that edition. Cavendish also won the world championships at Copenhagen in 2011 and the Monument one-day race Milan-San Remo in 2009. He has ridden for T-Mobile, Team Sky, Bahrain, Quick-Step and is currently with Astana. Cavendish also received an MBE for services to British cycling. — AFP

Nuggets book NBA Finals for first time

LOS ANGELES: Nikola Jokic outdueled LeBron James as the Denver Nuggets completed a 4-0 Western Conference championship sweep over the Los Angeles Lakers on Monday to reach the NBA Finals for the first time in franchise history. Two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Jokic bagged a 30-point triple-double as the Nuggets overturned a 15-point half-time deficit for a 113-111 victory that sent the Lakers crashing out and left James reportedly contemplating a shock retirement from basketball.

James had looked to be single-handedly keeping the Lakers' season alive after scoring 31 points in a magnificent first-half display that left the 17-time NBA champions leading 73-58 at half-time. But Jokic led a resurgent Nuggets offense in the third quarter, scoring 13 points as the Western Conference top seeds outscored the Lakers 36-16 to turn the contest on its head. A dramatic fourth-quarter finale saw Jokic put Denver 113-111 ahead with a typically barnstorming driving layup through heavy traffic with 51.7sec remaining.

With four seconds left, James had one last chance to tie it up and force overtime, but his attempted driving floater was blocked by Denver's Aaron Gordon to leave the Nuggets celebrating a famous win. A dejected James left the court immediately following the loss as his latest bid for a fifth NBA title ended in disappointment. James later spoke cryptically about his future in a post-game press conference, while an ESPN report said he was contemplating retirement. "Just for me personally, going forward with

the game of basketball, I've got a lot to think about," James said.

Denver - one of 11 teams in the league who have never won the NBA championship - will face either the Miami Heat or Boston Celtics in the finals. Miami lead Boston 3-0 and can clinch their place in the finals with a victory at home on Tuesday. "We don't give up," Jokic told ESPN. "I've been saying this for five years - when we were bad or when we were good - we don't give up. And that's what happened today. "They jumped on us the first half, they were better, more aggressive, scoring easily and didn't miss, basically. "But in the second half we turned the page and everybody stepped up. It was a collective effort, it's not just one guy."

Jokic finished with 30 points, 14 rebounds and 13 assists, while Jamal Murray added 25 points. All of Denver's starters finished with double-digit points tallies, reflecting the team's depth and balance. The Nuggets will head into the finals brimming with confidence that they can end their near-half-century wait for a maiden NBA crown.

James, meanwhile, described Denver as the best team he has faced since joining Los Angeles five years ago. "They have scoring. They have shooting. They have play-making. They have smarts. They have length. They have depth," James said. "And one thing about their team, when you have a guy like Jokic, who is as big as he is but also as cerebral as he is, you can't really make many mistakes versus a guy like that."

'Self-inflicted wounds'

James finished with 40 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists for the Lakers in a heroic attempt to keep the series alive. "He had an amazing game," Jokic said. "We couldn't stop him in the first half... he's still one of the best to ever play this game." But the



LOS ANGELES: Tristan Thompson #9 of the Los Angeles Lakers shoots the ball past Nikola Jokic #15 of the Denver Nuggets during the second half in game four of the Western Conference Finals on May 22, 2023. — AFP

Lakers' supporting cast once again failed to step up when it mattered, with a series of missed baskets in the fourth quarter allowing the Nuggets to hold on to their slender advantage to clinch victory.

Lakers head coach Darvin Ham said his team had paid the price for not making enough shots, praising Denver's ruthlessness down the stretch. "I just think, again, the phrase for me is 'self-inflicted wounds'. You can't have those," Ham said of the Lakers' performance. "The sign of a great team is if you make any mistake, they're going to make you pay for it. And they did just that." Ham, who was appointed last year with a brief to rebuild the Lakers after a dismal failure to reach the playoffs, insisted that the NBA giants were on the right path. "This is year one," Ham said. "Losing sucks, but I think we can do something special here." — AFP

Gymnastics Federation renews confidence in its Chairman of the Board

KUWAIT: The General Assembly of the Gymnastics Federation renewed its confidence in its Chairman of the Board, Fahad Al-Souhah, and re-elected him for the next term ending in 2027, while Saud Al-Mulla was elected deputy chairman, Abdellatif Murad (secretary), and Nasser Al-Halfy (treasurer). Mohammad Al-Daihani was elected assistant treasurer and Abdelaziz Al-Hunaidi was picked as board member. The assembly approved the administrative and financial reports as well as the proposed budget for the new fiscal year. Al-Souhah thanked the general assembly members for their presence and cooperation, adding that the board will exert all efforts to continue the success of the gymnastics sport and build on it at the Gulf, Arab, and international levels.

Directors discuss ways to enhance tennis, game

KUWAIT: Director General of Public Authority for Sport Yousuf Al-Baidan received the new tennis federation board of directors headed by Ali Hayat, Deputy Chairman Abdelreda Al-Ghareeb, Treasurer Fouad Al-Mushari, Secretary Faleh Al-Otaibi, Assistant Secretary Abdelsamad Al-Aryan, and board member Mohammad Al-Azmi.

The two sides discussed several topics and means of removing obstacles the new board is facing and getting all facilities and forms of support and cooperation in order to enhance the game in the coming period. Al-Baidan said all federations will be dealt with equally according to rules and regulations, adding that the Public Authority will recognize federations that make achievements in the name of Kuwait as an incentive for all to work hard to achieve excellence in Kuwaiti sport.



Sports

Empoli humble Juventus after 10-point deduction

A blow to Champions League hopes

ROME: Juventus lost 4-1 at Empoli on Monday hours after their points reduction for illicit transfer activity was revised in a blow to their Champions League hopes. The Turin giants are a point below sixth-placed Roma in the Europa League Conference qualification spot. Earlier, the Italian Football Federation's (FIGC) appeals court announced Juve's 10-point deduction. The decision came following a revision of their initial 15-point penalty inflicted on the club over illicit transfer activity.

"Finding yourself with 10 points down a quarter of an hour from the match is at least a mitigating factor," Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri told reporters. "It's been a very tiring year," he added. It caps a difficult few days for the two-time European champions as they were knocked out of the Europa League semi-finals after defeat at Sevilla on Thursday. With two league games of the season remaining, Juve, on 59 points, can still catch AC Milan, on 64, in the fourth and final Champions League berth, with the teams meeting in Turin on Sunday.

In Empoli, the hosts' 36-year-old striker Fran-

cesco Caputo scored either side of Sebastiano Luperto's 21st-minute strike for the side in 14th place. Italy's Federico Chiesa claimed an 85th-minute consolation for the visitors who play mid-table Udinese as well as Milan before the end of the campaign. With three minutes of added time played the home side rubbed salt into Juve's wounds as 22-year-old Roberto Piccoli scored his second goal of the season.

The decision by the FIGC and the result at Empoli also mean that Lazio, who replaced Juve in second place, have qualified for the Champions League group stage for the first time since 2020 and only the second time since 2007. Earlier on Monday, at the Stadio Olimpico, Nemanja Matic scored an 83rd-minute equaliser as Roma drew 2-2 with Salernitana. "It's a joke knowing this with two games to play," Roma boss Jose Mourinho told reporters. "For us, for everyone, even for Juve." "It wasn't easy for them, points won on the pitch which were then taken away two rounds from the end of the season," he added. — AFP



Juventus' Italian coach Massimiliano Allegri

Brazil protests to Spain over racist abuse of Vinicius

BRASILIA: Brazil said on Monday it had formally protested to the Spanish ambassador and would lodge an official complaint with authorities in Madrid over the latest racist abuse directed at Brazilian footballer Vinicius Junior. There has been an outpouring of condemnation in Vinicius's native Brazil since the Real Madrid star was targeted with racist abuse during a 1-0 loss at Valencia on Sunday. The Brazilian government said Racial Equality Minister Anielle Franco would present an official complaint to Span-

ish authorities and La Liga. A foreign ministry source meanwhile told AFP the government had protested to Spain's ambassador in Brazil.

"The Spanish ambassador is away from Brasilia but we have already been in contact with her by telephone to express the Brazilian government's displeasure over the repeated racist attacks against (Vinicius) and the need for an adequate response," the source said. In a show of support, the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro went dark for an hour on Monday night. The archdiocese in charge of the statue said the gesture was "a symbol of the joint fight against racism and in solidarity with the player and with all those who suffer from prejudice in the world."

"Black and imposing," Vinicius tweeted of the darkened statue, saying he was "moved" and thanked followers for their support. "But I want, above all, to inspire and bring more light to our

fight," he added. Sunday's match in Valencia was halted for several minutes after Vinicius, who has repeatedly been targeted with racial slurs in Spain, was abused again from the stands. The referee wrote in his post-match report that shouts of "monkey" had been directed at the player.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva condemned the abuse, which triggered a flood of support for Vinicius, including from fellow Brazil stars Neymar and Richarlison and retired legend Ronaldo. Brazil "deeply regrets that no effective measures have yet been taken to prevent the recurrence of these racist acts," the government said in a statement. It called on Spanish authorities to "punish the perpetrators and stop further cases," and urged FIFA, the Spanish Football Federation and La Liga to take "the necessary measures." Spanish prosecutors have opened an investigation into the incident. — AFP

Three detained over racist insults against Vinicius

MADRID: Spanish police arrested Tuesday three youths suspected of hurling racist insults at Real Madrid forward Vinicius Junior during a weekend match, sparking an international outcry. The 22-year-old Brazilian international forward was targeted by a home supporter during a 1-0 defeat at Valencia on Sunday and was later sent off. He has often been racially abused at stadiums across Spain this season. "Police arrested today three young people in Valencia for the racist behavior that occurred Sunday in the match between Valencia and Real Madrid," Spain's National Police said in a statement.

Sunday's match was held up for several minutes and the referee wrote in his post-match report that shouts of "monkey" had been directed at Vinicius. Spanish prosecutors opened an investigation into the incident, which was condemned by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez. Earlier on Tuesday police said they had arrested Tuesday four men suspected of hanging a dummy of Real Madrid forward Vinicius Junior from a bridge in Madrid in January.

The four men, who were arrested in Madrid, are "suspected of a hate crime for hanging from a bridge a mannequin with Vinicius' shirt," police said in a separate statement. The dummy wearing Vinicius Junior's jersey was hung by the neck from a highway bridge near Real Madrid's training ground on January 26 ahead of the club's match against Atletico Madrid. A banner in the red and white colours of Atletico reading "Madrid hates Real" was also flung over the bridge.

Racism protocol obsolete

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said on Tuesday that FIFA's racism protocol in football was "obsolete" after Brazilian forward Vinicius Junior was abused by Valencia fans. The 22-year-old forward suffered vile racist taunts at Mestalla



VALENCIA: Spanish referee De Burgos Bengoetxea talks with Real Madrid's Brazilian forward Vinicius Junior during the Spanish league football match between Valencia CF and Real Madrid CF on May 21, 2023. — AFP

on Sunday in La Liga, with three fans arrested by Spanish police on Tuesday. Referee Ricardo de Burgos Bengoetxea activated the racism protocol after Vinicius squared off with fans, singling out one whom he saw abuse him.

FIFA's three-step process involves the match being paused until a stadium announcement is made asking for racist abuse to stop, which happened at Mestalla. The second step, after any further abuse, is to temporarily take players off the pitch and the third step, if it continues, is to abandon the game and give three points to the opposition. "The protocol is obsolete," Ancelotti told reporters. "The protocol had to be applied when the team bus reached the stadium, because the insults started there."

"Two hours before the game, and it was not an isolated case—someone from Valencia said it was—sure, it was not 46,000 people but it was not one or two." Video emerged on Monday of Valencia fans chanting "Vinicius, you

are a monkey," when Real Madrid arrived at Mestalla. "The protocol has to start there," continued Ancelotti. "If you start the protocol in the 70th minute, you have made a mistake. It has to start two hours before the game, and then during the game. It's obsolete, yes." Vinicius was sent off later in the game for hitting Valencia's Hugo Duro and will not be able to face Rayo Vallecano on Wednesday.

Ancelotti said the player did not train on Tuesday because he felt some knee discomfort. The striker said Spain was viewed as a "racist country" in a statement he made on Instagram late on Sunday, which Ancelotti disagreed with, but he called for drastic action to combat racism. "Spain is not racist, I have to say that too, but there is racism in Spain, like in other places and that has to end," Ancelotti said. "It's a moment to take drastic measures. Institutions have chances, above all now, to take radical measures on this important subject." — AFP

Man City prepare for climax to treble bid

LONDON: Ilkay Gundogan has urged Manchester City to stay focused as the Premier League champions prepare for the climax to their treble bid. City were crowned English champions for the fifth time in six seasons on Saturday when second placed Arsenal lost at Nottingham Forest. Pep Guardiola's side enjoyed their title party on Sunday with a 1-0 win against Chelsea before skipper Gundogan lifted the trophy. With their third successive title in the bag, City can focus on emulating the Manchester United team that won the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup in 1998-99.

But before that City must finish their league campaign with trips to Brighton and Brentford on Wednesday and Sunday respectively. City, winner of their last 12 league matches, are unbeaten in 24 games and German midfielder Gundogan is wary of losing momentum. "We haven't lost any games for so many weeks and that's the standard that we have to set for ourselves," he said. "We do nothing different - we do the same things that we've done in the last few weeks and hopefully it can be a really special end to the season."

"I love the club and being part of this amazing team. Obviously, we want to finish the season with two more trophies. We have two more big finals, and the last two games of the Premier League season are going to be preparation for that. We don't want to drop anything. I would love to lift two more trophies." City's treble chase comes down to two matches as they face Manchester United in the FA Cup final at Wembley on June 3, and Inter Milan in the Champions League final in Istanbul seven days later.

Belgium midfielder Kevin De Bruyne, who like Gundogan is now a five-time Premier League winner, is confident City can do something "special" at the end of their latest triumphant campaign. "We like to win, and we're never bored of it. We've won a lot in the past but we want to win again and again," De Bruyne said. "We keep on working. We enjoy the games against Brighton and Brentford and prepare for United and Inter and hopefully we can do something special. "Everybody wants it. We know we need to win two games, but they are hard games, and we need to prepare ourselves the best as possible and hopefully we can win them." — AFP

Classifieds

Change of Name

I, Rashida, holder of Indian Passport No. P5031442, issued in Jaipur on 27/09/2016 and Civil ID No. 281022207276, have changed my name Rashida to Rashida Companywala in all dealings and documents. I will be known by name of Rashida (given name) and Companywala (surname). (#3539) 24/05/2023

I, Taher, holder of Indian Passport No. U9301842, issued in Jaipur on 04/03/2021 and Civil ID No. 306020902089, have changed my

name Taher to Taher Companywala in all dealings and documents. I will be known by name of Taher (given name) and Companywala (surname) (#3539) 24/05/2023

I, Inus, S/o Mohammed Amin, holder of Indian Passport No. L-1434907, issued in Kuwait on 11-09-2013, permanent resident of B-sector, V-1-line, room no. 05, Cheeta Camp, Mumbai-400088, presently residing in Khaitan, Block-09, Street-30, Unit-1, Building No.10, Kuwait will henceforth

be known as Mohammed Yunus Mohammed Amin (given name) Shaikh (surname) as per documents. Objection(s), if any, may be forwarded to Embassy of India, State of Kuwait. (#3540) 24/05/2023

I, Mohammed Khalid Noor Mohamed, holder of Passport No. R2315837 do hereby change my name to Mohammed Khalid Noor Mohamed Sheikh for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Mohammed Khalid Noor Mohamed

Sheikh and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (#3538) 23/05/2023

I, Athi Muralidaran, holder of Indian passport No. L4538347 issued at Embassy of India, Kuwait. I am a permanent resident of Shree Murugan Kudil, Plot No. 41, Brindavan street, Indra Nagar Trichy-620021, India. And presently residing in Kuwait hereby declare my given name is Muralidaran and surname is Athi. (#3537) 23/05/2023

I, Mohammad Shahabuddin s/o Mohammad Aleeh Khan, holder of Indian passport No. L7923811 resident of Vill & post Bahadurpur Dist. Sultanpur Uttar Pradesh, India. And recently residence at Adiliya, Block 2, Street 23, House 15 Kuwait. And has change my name Mohammad Shahabuddin to Mohammad Shahabuddin Khan as Mohammad Shahabuddin (Given name) and Khan (surname) here in after in all my dealing and documents. I will be known by name of Mohammad Shahabuddin Khan. (#3536) 23/05/2023

LeBron James mulls retirement

38-year-old to bring the curtain down on his 20th season

LOS ANGELES: LeBron James is reportedly considering retirement from basketball after the Los Angeles Lakers were swept out of the NBA playoffs by the Denver Nuggets on Monday. ESPN reported that the 38-year-old was thinking about "walking away" from the sport after the Lakers' defeat brought the curtain down on his 20th season in the league. Chris Haynes, a reporter for the TNT broadcaster, said in a separate tweet citing league sources that James' retirement was "under consideration."

James himself fuelled speculation about his future in a cryptic post-game press conference, saying that he planned to take time to reflect on the next stage of his career after the Lakers' exit. Asked for his reflections on the past season, in which he became the league's all-time leading points scorer and took a rejuvenated Lakers to the brink of the NBA Finals, James said the campaign had been "challenging." "I don't know. I think it was okay. I don't like to say it's a successful year because I don't play for anything besides winning championships at this point in my career," said James, who delivered a vintage 40-point performance in the Lakers' 113-111 loss on Monday.

"I don't get a kick out of making a Conference (finals) appearance. I've done it, a lot. And it's not fun to me to not be able to be a part of getting to the Finals. "But we'll see. We'll see. We'll see what happens going forward. I don't know. I've got a lot to think about to be honest." "Just for me personal-

ly, going forward with the game of basketball, I've got a lot to think about," he added. James signed a two-year contract extension with the Lakers last August that would keep him at the club through the 2024-2025 season.

'It's challenging'

He has long said that he wants to prolong his career in order to play with or against his eldest son Bronny James, who will play college basketball next season at the University of Southern California, and who could conceivably enter the NBA in time for the 2024-2025 campaign. However, in his postgame remarks on Monday, James hinted that the demands of the NBA's marathon 82-game season might be taking their toll. "For me, it's all about availability for me and keeping my mind sharp and things of that nature, being present on the floor, being present in the locker room and bus rides and plane rides, things of that nature," James said. "It's challenging."

There was little evidence of weariness, however, in James' first-half performance on Monday, where he erupted for 31 points in a desperate bid to keep the Lakers' playoff hopes alive. "That first half was vintage LeBron James," said Denver coach Michael Malone, who worked alongside James as an assistant coach at the Cleveland Cavaliers from 2005 to 2010. "Having coached him for five years in Cleveland, he understood what time it was with their team, firmly



LeBron James #6 of the Los Angeles Lakers

Leicester on the brink of EPL exit after sorry season

LONDON: Seven years ago, Leicester lifted the Premier League trophy. Now they are on the brink of relegation from the top-flight after a miserable season. The Foxes, who drew 0-0 at Newcastle on Monday, will only avoid relegation if they beat West Ham this weekend on the final day of the season and fourth bottom Everton drop points at home to Bournemouth. Dean Smith adopted a safety-first approach against Newcastle and Leicester failed to muster a shot until stoppage-time, but they kept their first clean sheet in the league since November.

It is a far cry from the heady days of 2016, when Claudio Ranieri delivered a fairytale triumph for the ages, overcoming monumental odds to win the title after Leicester narrowly avoided relegation the previous year. Despite that incredible success, the Italian did not last long at the King Power Stadium, but the arrival of Brendan Rodgers in 2019 gave fresh impetus to the Thai-owned club.

They finished fifth in the Premier League two years in a row - just missing out on Champions League qualification - and won the FA Cup for the first time in 2021. Even last year the club ended a comfortable eighth and reached the semi-finals of the Europa Conference League. But things began to unravel for Leicester in the first game of this season when they let a 2-0 lead slip to draw 2-2 with Brentford. What followed was a horror show as they lost six straight league matches and despite spor-

adic mini revivals they have been unable to pull themselves clear of danger. Leicester have scored more goals - 49 - than any other club in the bottom half of the table but their defensive problems have cost them dear. Smith, who was appointed as interim manager after Rodgers left by mutual consent in April, was unapologetic after his side's defensively minded performance against Newcastle. "We haven't kept a clean sheet for too long and the reason we are where we are is because of that in my opinion," he said. The former Aston Villa boss added: "If it's too little, too late, who knows? But we've taken it to Sunday now."

Problems mount

Leicester have long been a byword for canny recruitment with Jamie Vardy, Riyad Mahrez, N'Golo Kante and Kasper Schmeichel playing starring roles in their title-winning side. They continued to recruit well, bringing in players of the calibre of Youri Tielemans, James Maddison and Wesley Fofana. Fofana signed for Chelsea last year while Schmeichel left for Nice, depriving the club of leadership and experience on the pitch. Vardy is now a fading force.

Signings including Patson Daka, Boubakary Soumare, Jannik Vestergaard and Wout Faes have not made the desired impact. Rodgers raised the alarm in the early weeks of the season, saying he had "not had the help in the market this team needed". "I came to Leicester to compete and initially I was able to do that," he said in September. "You have to add quality but in the last two (transfer) windows we haven't been able to do that." Two of Leicester's star names - Tielemans and Maddison - are likely to leave the club if they go down.

Vardy, for so long the team's talisman, is 36 and has had a peripheral role this term, while central defender Jonny Evans has only played 12 league games



NEWCASTLE: Newcastle United's English defender Kieran Trippier (right) fights for the ball with Leicester City's English midfielder Harvey Barnes during the English Premier League football match between Newcastle United and Leicester on May 22, 2023. — AFP

all season. Dropping into the Championship is not the financial calamity it once was, with clubs cushioned by generous parachute payments for up to three years. But losing their Premier League status

for the first time in nine years will be a huge blow to the pride of a club who had experienced the unexpected thrill of winning silverware so recently. It will be a long way back to the top. — AFP

Newcastle back in Champions League, for first in 20 years

NEWCASTLE: Eddie Howe hailed Newcastle's "incredible" players as they qualified for the Champions League for the first time in 20 years after a 0-0 draw against relegation-haunted Leicester on Monday. Fifth placed Liverpool's draw with Aston Villa on Saturday meant Newcastle needed just one point from their last two games to be assured of a Champions League place. Howe's third placed side achieved their target at the first attempt at a jubilant St James' Park.

Howe and his players embarked on a lengthy lap of honor after the final whistle as they soaked up the acclaim from the Toon Army. "It's a big relief actually, an amazing night. You always hope and you have to dream. But we didn't feel we were ready for the top four," Howe said. "After last season's relegation battle, it was whether we could consolidate and become a better team. "I have to compliment the whole squad because physically it's been a big demand. They've seen the fruits of their own labor."

Newcastle's remarkable rise from relegation candidates to a top four finish in the Premier League in just 18 months is a tribute to Howe's management and financial might of the club's Saudi-backed ownership group. The Magpies also reached the first domestic final since 1999 this season, losing to Manchester United in the League Cup. After two decades in Premier League purgatory since Bobby Robson last led Newcastle into the Champions League, the Magpies will believe they can maintain their transformation into trophy contenders now they are back among Europe's heavyweights.

"The lads have been unbelievable for me. I can't praise them enough. Their attitude, their mentality," Howe said. "I'm just grateful to have the opportunity to manage here. We've had great success and that's satisfying." Just seven years after their fairytale Pre-



NEWCASTLE: Newcastle United's Paraguayan midfielder Miguel Almiron celebrates with his son at the end of the English Premier League football match between Newcastle United and Leicester on May 22, 2023. — AFP

mier League title triumph, Leicester are on the verge of being relegated from the top-flight for the 12th time in their history. That would equal the English record held by Birmingham, sending them back to the Championship for the first time since 2014.

Dean Smith's third from bottom team have won just one of their last 15 league games. They sit two points behind fourth bottom Everton and will go down if the Toffees win their last game against Bournemouth, regardless of Leicester's result in their final match against West Ham. "What we have done is taken it to the last game and made Everton need to win. That's what we had to do. I make no apologies for the way we played," Smith said.

Smith sprang a major surprise as he left James

Maddison and Harvey Barnes on the bench in a bid to be "harder to beat", while Newcastle lost Joelinton to an injury suffered in the pre-match warm-up. They nearly had to do without Joelinton's fellow Brazilian Bruno Guimaraes as well as the midfielder escaped with an early yellow card after a studs-up challenge that smashed into Boubakary Soumare's thigh. Newcastle held 80 percent of the possession throughout the game, but Leicester sat deep to frustrate them.

Leicester keeper Daniel Iversen almost gifted Newcastle the opening goal, spilling a catch under pressure from Dan Burn. Callum Wilson seized on the loose ball and shot against the post before his header from the rebound was cleared off the line by Wilfred Ndidi. Newcastle hit the woodwork again

moments later through Miguel Almiron's half-volley from Fabian Schaer's knock down. Iversen misjudged another cross just before half-time, leaving Wilson with a chance that the striker headed over from close-range.

Smith sent on Maddison at the interval and Iversen partially redeemed himself with a superb save to tip over Alexander Isak's powerful drive from the edge of the area. Guimaraes missed a sitter when he headed against the post from virtually on the goal-line after Leicester's Wout Faes accidentally flicked a corner in his direction. Leicester nearly won it with their first shot of proceedings when Nick Pope denied Timothy Castagne in stoppage-time, but Newcastle held on to clinch their return to Europe's top table. — AFP