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Erdogan cements grip on Turkey

President wins historic runoff • Main cities erupt in jubilation



ISTANBUL: Supporters of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan celebrate near Taksim Mosque in Taksim Square on May 28, 2023 after Erdogan declared victory in a historic runoff election. — AFP

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared victory Sunday in a historic runoff vote that posed the biggest challenge to his 20 years of transformative but divisive rule. The 69-year-old leader overcame Turkey's biggest economic crisis in generations and the most powerful opposition alliance to ever face his Islamic-rooted party to take an unassailable lead.

Near complete results showed him leading secular opposition rival Kemal Kilicdaroglu by four percentage points. "We will be ruling the country for the coming five years," Erdogan told his cheering supporters from atop a bus in his home district in Istanbul. "God willing, we will be deserving of your trust."

Turkey's main cities erupted in jubilation as Erdogan spoke. Traffic on Istanbul's iconic Taksim Square ground to a halt and huge crowds gathered outside his presidential palace in Ankara. Turkey's longest-serving leader was tested like never before in what was widely seen as the country's most consequential election in its 100-year history as a post-Ottoman republic.

Kilicdaroglu cobbled together a powerful coalition that grouped Erdogan's disenchanted former allies with secular nationalists and religious conservatives. He pushed Erdogan into Turkey's first runoff on May 14 and narrowed the margin further in the second round. Opposition supporters viewed it as a

do-or-die chance to save Turkey from being turned into an autocracy by a man whose consolidation of power rivals that of Ottoman sultans.

"I invite all my citizens to cast their ballot in order to get rid of this authoritarian regime and bring true freedom and democracy to this country," Kilicdaroglu said after casting his ballot on Sunday. Kilicdaroglu re-emerged as a transformed man after the first round. The former civil servant's message of social unity and freedoms gave way to desk-thumping speeches about the need to immediately expel migrants and fight terrorism.

His rightwing turn was targeted at nationalists who emerged as the big winners of the parallel parliamentary elections. The 74-year-old had always adhered to the firm nationalist principles of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk — a revered military commander who formed Turkey and Kilicdaroglu's secular CHP party. But these had played a secondary role to his promotion of socially liberal values practiced by younger voters and big-city residents.

Analysts doubted Kilicdaroglu's gamble would work. His informal alliance with a pro-Kurdish party that Erdogan portrays as the political wing of banned militants left him exposed to charges of working with "terrorists".

Continued on Page 6

Members of network buying votes detained, candidates summoned

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The public prosecution on Sunday ordered the detention of a 10-member network arrested by the interior ministry on suspicion of acting as brokers to buy votes for candidates. The prosecution also summoned at least two candidates running in the June 6 general elections — one of them a former MP. The interior ministry said in a statement they recovered cash and lists of names of potential voters who could sell their votes to candidates. The ministry vowed it will continue to crack down on vote buyers and refer them to the public prosecution.

Meanwhile, withdrawal of candidates ends on Monday, which is seven days before polling day. The number of candidates left in the fray until Sunday was 228, and more candidates are expected to pull out. The number of those who filed to run in the polls was around 250, a low number compared to the previous polls held in Sept 2022 but later canceled by the constitutional court.

The election campaign has so far remained lackluster, although it has picked up some steam in the past few days. Almost all candidates plan to hold one or more election rallies in the week before the polls. A majority of candidates have so far focused on the political crisis that has rocked the country, stalling development for most of the past two decades.

Candidate Ali Al-Sabri said the Kuwaiti people have found themselves in the middle of a political crisis that was created by others, and unfortunately "we cannot see a way out of the dilemma". Candidate Saud Al-Asfour, a member of the scrapped 2022 Assembly, said this long series of crises has one objective: to make Kuwaiti people frustrated from democracy, leading to decreasing popular participation.

Former MP Khalil Al-Saleh said Kuwait needs to move from a period full of disputes to one of concrete achievements, calling on future lawmakers to agree on a reform initiative with a definitive timeframe to improve the standard of living of Kuwaiti citizens. He said the initiative should eventually force the government to raise the salaries of citizens and pensioners.

Negotiations only if Manila adheres to Kuwait's demands

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mansour Al-Otaibi said that the door remains open for negotiations with the Philippines on the ban on issuing visas for Filipino nationals, as long as the Philippines adheres to Kuwait's demands. The demands include that the Philippines admits to violating Kuwaiti laws and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations through

the practices of its embassy in the country.

"These violations should be stopped by the Philippine Embassy, and we hope to resolve them in the coming period," he said on Sunday. "The Philippines must acknowledge the violations committed by its embassy, pledge not to repeat them and hold perpetrators accountable," he said. Meanwhile, Otaibi confirmed that the Kuwaiti ambassador to Sudan and members of the diplomatic mission have returned home following the recent attacks on Kuwait's embassy in Khartoum.

The interior ministry had said last Wednesday that the visa ban would remain in place indefinitely after labor talks between Kuwait and a Philippine delegation ended without agreement. Renewal of residence permits of Filipino legal residents will continue as usual.

Continued on Page 6



Mansour Al-Otaibi

Omani Sultan visits Tehran

TEHRAN: Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, whose Gulf country has been a long-time mediator between Iran and the West, arrived in Tehran on Sunday for a two-day visit. His trip comes just two days after Tehran freed Belgian aid worker Olivier Vandecasteele from almost 15 months in custody in exchange for diplomat Assadollah Assadi, who was held in Belgium over a 2018 plot to bomb an Iranian opposition rally outside Paris.

The Gulf sultanate helped facilitate the prisoner swap. The sultan was greeted on arrival at Tehran's Mehrabad

airport on Sunday by First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber and later met President Ebrahim Raisi at the Sadabad palace in north Tehran. Ahead of his visit, the newspaper Asharq al-Awsat quoted Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Hamad Al-Busaidi as saying it comes "in pursuance of constructive cooperation and consultation about different issues on the regional and international arenas".

The Omani leader's visit comes a year after Raisi visited Muscat, and follows a China-brokered rapprochement deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran announced in March. Busaidi said Oman was optimistic the sultan's "historic" trip to Iran would be "beneficial



TEHRAN: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi meets Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al-Said on May 28, 2023. — AFP

Modi opens new parliament amid boycott

NEW DELHI: Flanked by priests, Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a new Indian parliament on Sunday in a ceremony steeped in religious symbolism but boycotted by opposition parties. The new building is the centerpiece of a remodeling of the heart of New Delhi by Modi aimed at ridding the Indian capital of the vestiges of British colonial rule.

"India is not only a democratic nation but also the mother of democracy," Modi said. "This is not just a building... this is the temple of democracy that gives the world a message of India's determination." The

unveiling was preceded by a multifaith prayer ceremony and Modi later entered the chamber accompanied by a posse of chanting Hindu seers in saffron robes before installing a ceremonial scepter. He later re-entered the chamber to chants of "Modi Modi" by government lawmakers.

Many in Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) party espouse the idea of Hindu hegemony in the Hindu-majority nation of 1.4 billion people, which is home to multiple faiths and which has a strictly secular constitution. Sunday's ceremony also took place on the birth anniversary of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, an important Hindu ideologue who was a mentor to the assassin of independence hero Mahatma Gandhi. Nineteen opposition parties boycotted the event because Modi, and not Indian President Droupadi Murmu, was inaugurating the new chamber, calling it a "direct assault on our

Continued on Page 6



NEW DELHI: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi gestures during the inauguration of the new parliament building on May 28, 2023. — AFP



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Participating in elections paves way for development: Academics

Voters to 'pay dearly' if they choose candidates based on personal interest

KUWAIT: Academics are calling on Kuwaiti society and youth to participate in the coming June 6 elections in order to help the right qualified candidate reach parliament and better serve their country. "The democratic process is going through a stage of push and pull, the National Assembly has a role in protecting freedoms and preventing corruption, and refusal to vote serves those who want this country to be backward and fall into regression," said Associate Professor of Public Relations and Media at the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) Ali Abdel Samad.

He pointed to the importance of "choosing a candidate who focuses on specific interests and does not promise too many things that they may not be able to accomplish." He said a good candidate is one who shares citizens' concerns and works towards finding solutions that address the root cause of problems facing citizens.

"A choice that's based on personal interest will not contribute to development, but will harm society. The voter will pay dearly for it," he said.

Professor of Communication and Digital Media at Kuwait University Bashayer Al-Sanea said that participation



Muhammad Akbar



Abdullah Al-Ghanim



Bashayer Al-Sanea



Ali Abdel Samad

in the electoral process is "the best option to achieve the desired development and block those only after their personal interests. The election represents a true chance to express our views and achieve our aspiration for a better future, she added. "When the views and needs of citizens are properly represented in parliament, balance and sustainable development are achieved and democracy is strengthened".

Professor of Political Science at Ku-

wait University Dr Abdullah Al-Ghanim said political participation is "fundamental" for reforming the political situation.

"The ballot paper is the first step in this path; the ballot boxes are the first steps of political reform. A voter must use his conscience and choose a qualified candidate away from partisanship, sectarianism or tribe, and he must make a rational choice based on a comparison between candidates and who is looking for the interest of the country",

he said. Ghanim stressed that "the most important thing in the electoral process is the realization that if the choice is based on personal interest, it will not contribute to development, but will lead to harming society".

Muhammad Akbar, professor of media at the American University, said: "The voter should choose the honest, educated candidate with a conscious, and who enjoys the spirit of patriotism and served the country

in his field of work".

He added that the Kuwaiti people must choose according to democratic criteria that call for the development of the country and the development of legislation that serves society and is in the public interest for a better future.

He pointed out the importance of resorting the motivating participation in the elections, overcoming negative criticism, and broadcasting positive messages calling for optimism. — KUNA



The late Jassem Al-Kharafi, who served as speaker of the parliament from 1999 to 2011, is seen when he was unanimously elected as speaker by all members of the parliament in 2009.



The late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Jaber Al-Sabah gives a speech in this archive photo. — KUNA

Turmoil and progress: A brief history of the National Assembly

By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: The history of the Kuwaiti parliament has been a mix of turmoil and significant leaps of progress, which have shaped the identity of Kuwaiti politics. The National Assembly has its own flavor, full of exciting, confusing, joyous and unscripted actions.

Founding of the parliament

The Kuwaiti parliament first met in 1963 after Kuwait gained its independence from Britain, under the reign of late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. During the first session of the National Assembly, Sheikh Abdullah recited a poem three times: "Things are guided to the people of opinion if they are good. If a regime dominates, the wicked will lead. People don't fix chaos when they lack moderation, and there is no moderation if ignorance prevails."

The speaker of the largest number of National Assembly sessions was the late Jassem Al-Kharafi,

who served as speaker of the parliament from 1999 to 2011, holding the office longer than anyone, and having been the only speaker to be unanimously elected by all members of the parliament.

Women's suffrage

In 2006, women's suffrage was obtained, which saw five women being elected to the parliament. Women used a number of approaches to achieve their goals, including lobbying, demonstration, marches, rallies and mock elections, until they were finally allowed to participate.

Securing succession

The Washington Institute of Near East Policy said the role of the National Assembly became more important in 2006 when the parliament unanimously elected late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad A-Jaber Al-Sabah, stating: "If one is to appreciate the intensity and complexity of the factional struggle that took place in Kuwait after 2006 and particularly during the period from 2011 to 2014, it is necessary to comprehend the role of the National Assembly in the succession process. Article 4 of Kuwait's 1962 constitution regulates matters of succession and stipulates that the incoming Amir's choice of crown prince needs to be approved by an absolute majority in the National Assembly."

Turmoil and a different era

In 2013 parliament was the first to serve its full term after a series of dissolutions, the last of which was the December 2012 parliament, which was dissolved in June 2013. There were 329 candidates (321 men and 8 women), with 48 seats won by men and two by women in the elections, who in turn elected Marzouq Al-Ghanem as speaker of the parliament.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union records: "This was the third snap election in 17 months and followed the constitutional court's June 2013 decision ordering the dissolution, on procedural grounds, of the legislature elected in December 2012. The court upheld the 2012 amendments to the electoral law reducing the number of votes per eligible voter from four to one. The amendments had triggered an opposition boycott in the December 2012 election.

"While some opposition figures again boycotted the 2013 election - they believed the electoral law favors pro-government candidates - many tribal groups and liberal candidates participated. Most candidates focused on local issues such as employment, housing, healthcare and education."

The 2020 and 2022 sessions ended prematurely due to the dissolution of parliament and the annulment of the elections respectively. Third time was the charm in 2013; would 2023 also be a good year for the National Assembly?

Expatriate sentenced to 20 years for embezzlement

KUWAIT: An Egyptian expatriate was sentenced to prison for 20 years and fined one million dinars for embezzling and laundering large sums of money from the Kuwaiti Teachers Association. The man, who worked as a financial manager for the association, was also found to have increased his salary several times since 2018 and taking advantage of the powers given to him by his position to unlawfully issue cheques in his name at the expense of the association without justification. According to the court and the complaint from the association to the attorney general, the association's newly elected board of directors at the time addressed one of the banks requesting a balance statement for the association's account. The balance, said he complaint, did not match the association's budget. The discovery prompted an investigation into the discrepancy, which revealed the crime.

University scholarship applications to open on June 10: MoE

KUWAIT: Minister of Education Hamad Al-Adwani said Sunday that there will be enough seats for all high school graduates in the government's scholarship programs for the 2023-2024 academic year both inside Kuwait and abroad. Students looking to apply for scholarships abroad can begin to do so on June 10 until July 2. Application for Kuwait University and Abdullah Al-Salem University begins July 15 till 29. Applying to private universities will be from Saturday, July 29 until Thursday, August 10, while applications for the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training will be accepted from July 27 until Aug 17. Adwani held Sunday morning the ministry's annual meeting with higher education institutions in order to determine the number of Kuwaiti students expected to graduate from high school this year and ensure there are enough seats for all of them.



Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah praises new Shariah grads

KUWAIT: Sheikh Mubarak Abdallah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said Kuwait was and will remain a beacon of good deeds through the efforts of advocates who were well-received around the world as they spread the tolerance of the religion without exaggeration or negligence.

He said Kuwait University Shariah graduates are "the bearers of Shariah knowledge and ambassadors of this country".

His remarks came during his patronage of the graduation ceremony of Shariah students. He said he was proud and happy of the new batch of Shariah students as he is looking forward to seeing these graduates become "the seed of good deeds" in Kuwait. He urged them to respect their parents who got them to where they are now and thanked the teachers for their time and effort.

Sheikh Mubarak added: "What makes me proud-



er of Kuwait University as a beacon of science is that the late Sheikh Abdallah Al-Mubarak chaired the Maaref Council session during which the proposal was made to establish Kuwait University as he was the head of Maaref Council from 1947 until the beginning of the sixties of the 20th century."

Untreated sleep apnea could lead to diabetes: Dasman

KUWAIT: Obstructive sleep apnea contributes to a number of dangerous health conditions if left untreated, said Dasman Diabetes Institute Sunday.

The remarks came following the second scientific seminar held by the institute to discuss accurate diagnosis of the condition, with participation from an elite group of specialists and researchers in this field from Kuwait and the Netherlands.

Sleep apnea could cause heart disease and

hypertension, said the institute. It could also lead to Type II diabetes because it exacerbates insulin resistance which hinders diabetes control as required.

The seminar discussed several topics related to the condition, including the extent and spread of the Obstructive Sleep Apnea, its dangers and its relation with diabetes. It also tackled the challenges faced in diagnosis, treatment and discovering vital indicators for this case and its link to obesity.

Visiting Professor Nicholas Divaris, Professor Fahad Al-Mulla, Dr Abdelmohsen Al-Torky, Dr Mohammad Abu Farha and Dr Jihad Abu Baker were among the participants, in the presence of Netherlands Ambassador Laurens Westhoff and the Institute Director General Dr Qais Al-Duwairi.



Local

Journalists discuss social media, accountability at Arab Media Forum

Limited freedoms 'real crisis' in Arab media: Editor



Waleed Al-Jassem



Ahmad Khattabi



Hatim Al-Tai

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: Kuwait Times and Kuwait News participated as media sponsors of the 18th Arab Media Forum, which opened on Sunday at St Regis Hotel under the slogan "Media of the Future and the Future of Media". General Secretary of Arab Media Forum Madi Al-Khamees told Kuwait Times: "Today, we launch our initial activities of the Arab Media Forum in its 18th edition in the past 20 years. Two years of the COVID pandemic prevented us from holding the Arab Media Forum with our colleagues. However, we are meeting this year to discuss the media and its future and what it will face in the near future, and what are the updates in this regard."

Fourteen seminars that revolve around the main topic have been scheduled. During the first seminar moderated by Lafi Al-Subaie, Assistant Undersecretary for Press, Publishing and Printing Affairs at the Ministry of Information, Jamil Al-Dhiyabi, Editor-in-Chief of Saudi newspaper Okaz said creating content is the core element for any media's success. "It is not a matter of legislation and laws, but rather creating content creatively and keeping up with developments. It is necessary to involve and interact with people and audiences and share information, where the audience may have new information and sometimes correct the information of the editor. The most important topic in any past, current and future media work is content creation," he reiterated.

Assistant Secretary General for Media and Communication at the League of Arab States Ahmad Rashid Khattabi said it is impossible to understand the future without looking back at the past to some

extent. He also mentioned that media is an ancient phenomenon in human history, where communication has always existed, until humanity reached this unprecedented point. "Today, we have an approximate 5 billion users of social media sites, which makes the speed of spreading news faster than ever to create this media flow, where we are now following the world's news moment by moment," he said.

Hatim Al-Tai, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Roya newspaper, said: "With the emergence of the Internet, we have entered a completely new phase that required years to clearly and explicitly transition to the concept of digital media instead of traditional media. Today, we are in a completely new phase that we were not previously in, where we are facing a new business model, but we do not yet know all its positives and negatives. However, we hope this will lead



KUWAIT: Panelists highlight the role of media during a panel discussion at Arab Media Forum Sunday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Jamil Dhiyabi



Madi Al-Khamees

to better performance. We no longer read newspapers, yet we follow them through social media platforms at no cost. Therefore, this drives the imposition of fees on online subscribers, but the issue remains with Arab awareness, as Arabs must reach a stage where there are those who will pay for these things."

Additionally, Waleed Al-Jassem, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Rai newspaper, said media is as it is whether in the past or present, but the true crisis of the media is freedom of expression. Social media platforms

succeeded and thrived because they are working without constraints. "The problem lies in stifling freedoms, and the media only succeeds through creativity, which hates restrictions. I believe the real crisis in Arab media is the limited freedom that falls under the control of the law, accountability and investigation, which makes the journalist weary due to facing travel bans or inability to renew their passport, among other obstacles that come as result of freedom of expression," he said.



HUMANISOFT Vice Chairman Tareq Al-Othman awards Zain's Waleed Al-Khashti in recognition of Zain.

AUM recognizes Zain's support for education

KUWAIT: Zain was recently awarded by the American University of the Middle East at the AUM Corporate Award 2023, held in the university's cultural center, in recognition of its extended partnership with AUM throughout the past years. Zain was also recognized for its strategic efforts in developing the local education sector, supporting academic programs, and attracting national talents.

During the ceremony, HUMANISOFT Vice Chairman Tareq Al-Othman awarded Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti in recognition of the company's continuous support to the annual AUM Career Fair, which Zain sponsored recently.

The recognition also came to shed light on the strategic role Zain continuously plays in attracting national talents, many of which are distinguished AUM alumni, and providing career opportunities in the Kuwaiti private sector, especially within STEM areas.

Zain expressed its gratitude to AUM for this recognition, which is an acknowledgment from one of the nation's top academic institutions of the company's role in contributing to develop the education



Tareq Al-Othman is seen with Zain officials at the Career Fair.

and human resources sectors.

Zain strongly believes in the importance of supporting education initiatives given that they play a crucial role in pushing the national economy wheel forward and help embrace, develop, and empower national talents.

Zain recently sponsored AUM's 9th Career Fair, organized by the Tawteen Career Development and Recruitment center, which attracted 20,000 students, graduates, and career seekers. Zain introduced students and alumni to its leading experience in the telecom sector, as well as its internal policy and wonderful workplace environment. The company also presented the available job vacancies, provided a detailed explanation of the nature of work at various

departments and divisions, and answered questions and inquiries from visitors.

Zain is always eager to participate in career fairs under the umbrella of its Human Resources strategy, which closely focuses on supporting the education sector hand in hand with various universities, colleges, and educational institutions in Kuwait (both public and private), with the aim of providing students and graduates with career opportunities in the private sector.

Zain is committed to playing an active role in the investment in the human capital of Kuwait. The company seeks to provide young and eager Kuwaitis with job opportunities that allow them to apply their practical skills, achieve their potential, and fully develop their capabilities.

Lawyers optimistic political instability in Kuwait shall pass

By Majd Othman

KUWAIT: Under the sponsor of the Ministry of Information and in collaboration with Kuwait Society of Lawyers, Infinity International Center launched a two-day "Law and Development Conference". The conference discusses the importance of activating the implementation of laws in Kuwait to achieve development.

The conference included Chairman of Kuwait Society of Lawyers Sharyan Al-Sharyan, guest speakers, Senior Legal Counsel Amr Wageeh, Director of Legal Affairs Department at Information Technology Company Haytham Al-Dakkour, Counsel Bilal Sandid, Lawyer Mohammad Al-Jassem and Lawyer Mohammad Bo-Abbas.

Speaking to Kuwait Times, Sharyan said despite Kuwait having been through many obstacles and regressing in most of the fields in the past, "we are still optimistic because Kuwait has always been pioneering, advanced and progressive for many countries regarding its laws, constitution, freedoms, press and theatre". "Therefore, this development can get sick but cannot die," he added.

Sharyan pointed out governmental and parliamentary changes in the country are considered normal changes that happen everywhere. "It is a temporary thing that shall pass through dialogue between the parliament



KUWAIT: Guest speakers, seen in this photo, discussed the relationship between law and development. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Sharyan Al-Sharyan

and government that we are all looking forward to that," he added. Sharyan stressed the country has many laws and legislations to help it develop, but the issue is that these laws are not being implemented due to a system of "exception" and behaviors that are not exposed to accountability.

"Observing Singapore, which is one of the most developed countries in the matter of infrastructure, streets and advanced projects, it is noticeable that the main pillar of its success is the implementation of laws on everybody," he said. "When a corrupt contractor is not held accountable, then for sure there is a corrupt

judge." He discussed the importance of education to participate in upgrading the level of those responsible for the laws and their implementation, as well as setting legislations.

Sharyan concluded by saying that choosing the right person who has a vision, discipline and honesty, whether male or female, is a responsibility of the voters, which will help in selecting appropriate people who will improve the laws and their implementation for the development of the country.

The guest speakers discussed increasing awareness to understand the importance of laws and legislations for the success of the development plan, improving job performance of jurists in public and private sector institutions, enhancing the important role of legal departments in institutions and ministries and identifying the most important legal challenges related to development.

Kuwait, Mexico sign cultural exchange deal

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi met on Sunday with visiting Mexican counterpart Carmen Moreno Toscano. During the meeting, both sides discussed bilateral ties, issues of common interests and latest regional and international developments. After the meeting, both sides signed an agreement of cooperation between the Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters and the Mexican Secretariat of Culture. — KUNA



Kuwaiti and Mexican officials discuss common interests and regional and international developments.

News in Brief

35,000 military personnel
to get Military Duty Medal

KUWAIT: Acting Defense Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah gave instructions to take the necessary administrative action to grant more than 35,000 military personnel of various ranks the Military Duty Medal of the Second and Third Grade after they fulfilled requirements for this purpose. The Army Command said instructions of Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid, who is also First deputy Premier and Interior Minister, to grant this medal comes out of the political leadership's care for the affairs of armed forces members and its keenness to raise their morale and achieve justice and equality among them. — KUNA

Ministry of Health shuts
down 20 pharmacies

KUWAIT: Inspection teams from the Ministry of Health have shut down 20 pharmacies for not adhering to health laws, announced the ministry Sunday. The pharmacies were found in violation of law 28 for the year 1996 and its 2016 amendments. The law regulates the conditions by which a pharmacy would receive a license and stipulates that it's illegal for any pharmacy to operate without a license under the conditions set by the law. The health ministry did not specify the nature of the violations beyond the law number.

Outdoor labor ban
to begin June 1

KUWAIT: The outdoor labor ban will start on June 1 and end on August 31, the Public Authority of Manpower announced. During this period, workers won't be allowed to work outdoors from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. The ban is in place to protect laborers from working under extreme weather conditions during the summer, the authority explained.

Vehicles catch
fire in Salmiyah

KUWAIT: Several vehicles caught fire in Salmiyah area prompting the response of Shiqaya and Jahra fire centers. Upon arriving at the scene, firemen found out the fire started in a bus and a vehicle. The fire was put out with no injuries reported.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: A seagull flies over the waters of the Arabian Gulf in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwaiti youth call for reforms to
fill unemployment, education gaps

Cultural, sports programs top of mind for building creative, healthy communities

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: In 2017, Kuwait unveiled a new plan to transform the country into a regional financial and cultural hub by 2035 through 164 strategic development programs to attract investment. But how do youth in Kuwait see the ongoing development? Kuwait Times spoke with young citizens to learn their perspectives on how to develop Kuwait.

Azzam Al-Khalidi, 23, said Kuwait still needs to work on various aspects to contribute to the overall growth and well-being of development plans, as well as young individuals in the country. "I think education reform is the main issue for the young generation. The education system needs more involvement of modern teaching methods to promote critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills, and to introduce practical training for the job market," he said.

For Ali Al-Mohareb, 26, focusing on productivity

is important, explaining that Kuwaiti government jobs are not going to be able to overcome unemployment in the coming years, so focusing on developing entrepreneurship and innovation is important. He stressed the need to adopt an entrepreneurial culture by supporting youth-led startups and providing mentorship programs and funding and encouraging innovation and collaboration across different sectors.

Mohareb indicated the government must address the challenges of youth unemployment by collaborating with the private sector to create job opportunities and promote internships, apprenticeships and skill development programs. "Kuwait must also encourage youth participation in the decision-making processes by involving them in local governance, policy discussions and community development initiatives. Young people must be heard and voice their opinions to contribute to shaping Kuwait's future," he added.

Rahaf Alamairi, 25, revealed that investing in cultural and sports programs can be a great addition to the country, where they promote creativity, talent development and, healthy lifestyles among young people, and can lead to immediate and long-term benefits for youth, their families and communities. "In each developed country, you will see youth centers where young people can engage in various activities including cultural and sports activities. Kuwait must consider this since it has very talented artists and athletes," she added.

She noted it will help if the government promotes cultural programs and exchanges with other countries to introduce youth to other viewpoints and promote intercultural understanding. Alamairi also emphasized the importance of digital literacy and to equip young people with essential technological skills to promote inclusion and diversity in all facets of society.



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KUWAIT: Women receive training in skills needed for running small businesses that will enable them to sustain themselves and their families. — KUNA photos

Kuwaiti charities
help families, build
houses in Yemen

ADEN: The delegation of Kuwait's Najat Charity laid on Saturday the foundation stone of a project to build two Kuwait-funded villages in Taiz governorate, southwest Yemen, as part of the eight-year long "Kuwait beside You" campaign. The first stage of the project envisages building 25 housing units, including 10 units in Al-Jare village in Dhubab district which overlooks the southern part of the Red Sea, said Abdullah Al-Shehab, head of Al-Najat's programs and projects division.

Fifteen units will be built in Al-Zahari village in Al-Mocha district in the first phase, he told KUNA. Shehab noted that the housing project aims to build a total of 80 housing units, including 30 in Al-Jare and 50 in Al-Zahari, over a total area of 225 square kilometers. He expressed confidence that the project will alleviate the suffering of orphans and families impoverished by the conflict in Yemen. The construction works have started in collaboration with Yemen's Yanabia Al-Khair Charity, he added. Al-Najat's delegation, which also includes Abdullah Matar and Abdullah Mohammad Ba-Zyad, paid an inspection visit to the educational health complex being built in Lahij governorate, south Yemen.

Last week, Kuwait's International Islamic Charity Organization launched an economic empowerment project for 45 Yemeni families in Taiz. The project trained the breadwinners of these families, who are women and youth, in various professions, providing them with the requirements to make a living. It's also part of the ongoing "Kuwait beside You" campaign.



The families chosen for the project are among the most vulnerable in the governorate, said Executive Director of the Jannat Development Foundation Mukhtar Hazber in a statement.

For one month, the families received, in addition to training, psychological and social support and were taught how to manage small projects. The training, which involved using sewing machines, mobile phone maintenance and making confectionary products, will help the families start projects, enabling them to sustain themselves and improve their quality of life. — KUNA



The Najat Charity delegation lays the foundation stone for two Kuwait-funded villages in Taiz.



Sudan army chief asks UN to dismiss envoy

Seven charged over Northern Ireland policeman shooting

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KYIV: Rescuers put out the fire in an industrial facility after a massive Russian drone strike mainly targeting the Ukrainian capital, in Kyiv, on May 28, 2023. — AFP

Zelensky thanks air defence after largest drone attack on Kyiv

‘Every time you shoot down enemy drones and missiles, lives are saved... you are heroes!’

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Sunday praised his country's air defence forces, after the capital Kyiv saw the largest drone attack since the beginning of the Russian invasion. The overnight attack killed two people and wounded three others.

The latest drone attack came as Russia has intensified aerial strikes on the capital this month, and warned the West against escalating the conflict after the United States agreed to greenlight F-16 deliveries. Ukraine said the latest attack in Kyiv was “the most important” of the invasion, with more than forty out of 54 drones targeting the capital. “Every time you shoot down enemy drones and missiles, lives are saved... you are heroes!” Zelensky told his air defence forces on Sunday morning, also thanking rescuers.

This was the 14th drone attack on the Ukrainian capital by Russia this month. “People are in shock. There's a lot of damage, the windows were broken, the roof was damaged,” said Sergei Movchan, a 50-year-old resident whose house was damaged by debris. Kyiv had been relatively spared since the be-

ginning of the year, but in May its residents have had to live with almost nightly air raid sirens and thundering explosions. “Russians are intimidating us. But I think it's the agony of their regime,” Movchan said.

‘Record’ number

In Kyiv the air raid alert lasted more than five hours as the attack was carried out in several waves, city authorities said. The Kyiv military administration said that “more than 40 Russian drones were destroyed by air defence” systems in the “most important drone attack against the capital since the start of the invasion” in February 2022.

Authorities reported that two killed and three others wounded as debris of the downed drones fell in several districts. Kyiv's mayor, Vitali Klitschko described the assault as “massive” with drones “arriving from several directions at once”.

Sunday was to be celebrated as Kyiv's city day, usually marked by street concerts and celebrations. “Today the enemy decided to ‘congratulate’ the popu-

lation on Kyiv Day with the help of their killer drones,” the authorities said. “Kyiv has stood up. Kyiv is strong and powerful,” said presidential chief of staff Andriy Yermak. Ukraine's air force said that “a record” of 54 drones were launched from the regions of Bryansk and Krasnodar in Russia, adding that 52 were destroyed. Moscow was targeting “military installations and critical infrastructure in the centre of the country and in particular the Kyiv region”, it said.

‘Playing with fire’

As the drone war rages, Russia has over the past few weeks seen its own territory attacked as well, blaming Kyiv for dozens of artillery, mortar and drone strikes on the southern Belgorod region. Ukraine has denied most of the accusations.

The reports of attacks come at a time when Kyiv says it is finalizing plans for a counter-offensive to recover lost territory, including the Crimea peninsula which was annexed in 2014. Most drones target Russian regions bordering Ukraine but they have sometimes reached

hundreds of kilometres inside Russia, including on the Kremlin itself. On Saturday, a building from where an energy pipeline is administered was damaged by two drones in western Russia, governor Mikhail Vedernikov said. The past week also saw an unprecedented two-day incursion from Ukraine claimed by two anti-Kremlin groups, with Russia using its air force and artillery to push back the fighters.

Moscow has accused Kyiv — and its Western supporters — of the escalating number of attacks and sabotage operations, including of the most spectacular against the Kremlin on May 3, but Ukraine has denied involvement.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Sunday said Western nations were “playing with fire” by agreeing to supply Ukraine with advanced US F-16 fighter jets. It was “an unacceptable escalation” of the conflict, Lavrov said in an excerpt from a Russian TV interview posted on social media, denouncing an attempt to “weaken Russia” by “Washington, London and their satellites in the EU”. — AFP

Spain votes in local polls that up pressure on PM

MADRID: Spaniards were voting Sunday in local and regional polls seen as a barometer for a year-end general election which surveys suggest Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez will lose, heralding a return of the right.

The stakes are high for Sanchez, whose Socialist party governs the eurozone's fourth-largest economy in coalition with the far-left Podemos. Voters are casting ballots for mayors in 8,131 municipalities while also electing leaders and assemblies in 12 of Spain's 17 regions - 10 of which are currently run by the Socialists.

Voting opened at 9:00 am (0700 GMT) with some 35.5 million people eligible for the local elections and 18.3 million for the regional elections. Balloting ends at 8:00 pm. With no exit polls, initial results are due out two hours later.

“Most of our citizens will vote positively... for what is important: for public healthcare, public education and housing policies for our young people,” said Sanchez as he cast his ballot in Madrid. If the left “exceeds expectations and manages to retain control of most regional governments in play... this would suggest the national elections will be very closely fought, and bode well for the left's chances of staying in power”, Eurasia Group analyst Federico Santi said this week.

But if surveys — which forecast a shift to the right — prove correct, success at a regional level will provide opposition leader Alberto Nunez Feijoo, head of the right-wing Popular Party (PP), with the “momentum” he needs to win the end-of-year election, he said.

After casting his ballot, Feijoo urged people “to vote massively” and ensure the next government was a strong one. “We have difficult years ahead of us but... the stronger the government, the stronger our democracy will be and the faster we will get out of the economic, institutional and social problems we have in our country,” he said. Sunday's elections find Sanchez, who has been in office

since 2018, facing several obstacles: voter fatigue with his left-wing government, soaring inflation — even though Spain's rate is lower than other EU nations — and falling purchasing power.

Feijoo has denounced Sanchez as not only pandering to the far left but also to the Basque and Catalan separatist parties on which his minority government has relied for parliamentary support. He has positioned Sunday's vote as a referendum on “Sanchismo”, a derogatory term for Sanchez's policies. In his campaign closing remarks, Sanchez focused on his government's record in bolstering the economy, fighting drought and managing Spain's increasingly sparse water resources.

“Social democratic policies suit Spain a lot better than neo-liberal policies because we manage the economy a lot better,” he said. Of the 12 regions where new leaders will be elected, 10 are currently run by Socialists, either alone or in coalition.

The number of regions the PP manages to wrest from the Socialists will be important in determining public perceptions of whether Feijoo has won this first round — and whether his victory in the year-end general election is



BARCELONA: The candidate of ‘Barcelona en comu’ (Barcelona in common) for her re-election as Mayor of Barcelona, Ada Colau, casts her ballot at a polling station in La Sedeta high school, in Barcelona on May 28, 2023 during local and regional polls. — AFP

Somalia to introduce direct universal suffrage in 2024

MOGADISHU: Somalia's government and federal member states said Sunday that direct universal suffrage would be introduced with local elections set for June 2024. The move follows a pledge by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in March to end a complex indirect system in place since 1969.

“The basic principles should be that the election of the Federal Somali Republic must be one that gives the public the opportunity to cast their votes democratically in a one-person, one-vote system,” the government said after reaching an agreement with state leaders.

The reform aims to “encourage the multiparty political system” that is independent and “corruption free”, it added. Somalia is struggling to emerge from decades of conflict and chaos, but is battling a bloody Islamist insurgency and natural disasters including a punishing drought that has left millions facing hunger.

The country has not had one-person, one-vote elections nationwide since 1969, when the dictator Siad Barre seized power. Instead, clan affiliations have been the organizing principle of Somali politics, with influential roles such as speaker, prime minister and president divided among the main groups.

State legislatures and clan delegates also pick lawmakers for the national parliament, who in turn choose the president. But rivalries between the clans have resulted in decades of strife and political wrangling, which in recent years have been exploited by the Al-Shabaab militants aligned with Al-Qaeda.

On Thursday, Somalia held its first elections by

universal suffrage since 1969, in a local ballot in the semi-autonomous state of Puntland.

Direct voting has also been held in Puntland's neighbor Somaliland, which declared independence in 1991 but has never been recognized internationally. Although the regional electoral commission said the Puntland voting was marred by unspecified security incidents, the United Nations, the African Union and several neighboring governments hailed a “historic” vote.

“The partners believe that Puntland's experience with direct elections has the potential to inform and inspire the expansion of democracy across Somalia, at all levels of government,” they said in a statement.

The agreement for nationwide universal suffrage was reached after four days of meetings by the National Consultative Forum, which included Mohamud, Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre and federal state leaders. But Puntland's state president Said Abdullahi Deni did not attend the meeting as the region voted. — AFP



JEDDAH: File photo shows Deputy Amir of Makkah Prince Badr bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz (right) welcoming Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud (left) upon his arrival in Jeddah to take part in the Arab League Summit. — AFP

International

Turkey voters divided in Erdogan's Istanbul birthplace

Electors would vote '100 percent' for Turkey's longest-serving leader

ISTANBUL: In a working-class Istanbul harbor where Recep Tayyip Erdogan grew up playing football, Hasan Karakaya had only one description for Turkey's president after voting on Sunday: "He's the best."

"I was the first to vote. I have voted for the same one, always the same one," the lemonade seller in his 50s told AFP. Taxi driver Ozcan Ege also glowed with praise for Kasimpasa's favorite son.

Ege, 65, grew up in the neighborhood and remembers Erdogan as a "hard-working" and "intelligent" teenager, predicting he will win with 60 percent of the national vote. "But here he will have 90 percent," he said.

Erdogan defied expectations when he almost secured an outright victory in the first round on May 14, making him the clear favorite to extend his two-decade rule to 2028. He has frequently played up his humble roots in the hilly neighborhood on the European side of Istanbul, which neighbors a much richer one where the secular opposition dominates. "I learned life in Kasimpasa, not in an ivory tower," Erdogan said earlier this week as campaigning for the runoff election drew to a close.

'No one like Erdogan'

Yasar Kirici, 80, was the neighbor of the future president. "He came by the front of our door every day. He was a great lad," he said. The man supporters reverently call "Reis" ("chief") visited Kasimpasa just before the first round and "greeted us from his car", Kirici said with a smile.

"He doesn't come here a lot anymore. He doesn't have the time, he's busy sorting the world's prob-

lems," he added. A short distance away, Ilyas Arslan served soup to a recently arrived client. "There's no one like Erdogan — he's like a dad to us!" enthused the man in his 50s, clad in a white apron.

Textile worker Mustafa Siper said Kasimpasa electors would vote "100 percent" for Turkey's longest-serving leader. Secular challenger Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the head of a six-party opposition alliance, "can't win", he concluded.

But not everyone in Kasimpasa is a fervent follower of Erdogan and his Islamic-rooted party. Sitting outside his shop with a steaming cup of tea, Hasan Kirici once vied with Erdogan during games of street football — this time he's opposing the 69-year-old at the ballot box. Kirici, 70, said he opted for Kilicdaroglu because a local football pitch was closed and "now all the youngsters are taking drugs".

Cost-of-living concerns

His neighbor Recep Ozcelik, 75, will also vote for Kilicdaroglu, blaming Erdogan for a severe cost-of-living crisis. "How much does a kilo of cheese cost now?" fumed the retired driver, complaining about the difficulties of eating meat like he used to.

Kilicdaroglu is also making inroads among Kasimpasa's younger voters, including 30-year-old Ramazan Parlak. "He's a democrat, he's an honest man," Parlak said of the opposition leader. "Turkey has become Afghanistan. If Erdogan wins, I will leave for Germany or France."

Sitting at a nearby bus stop, Kaan Karababa, 25, fears that an Erdogan re-election will be disastrous for



ANKARA: A voter casts her ballot at a polling station during the presidential runoff vote in Ankara on May 28, 2023. — AFP

Turkey. "The economic crisis will get worse and refugees will continue to come in masses," he told AFP.

But taxi driver Ege dismissed the economic troubles plaguing Turks. "Inflation isn't a problem, people always have a little money," he said. Despite a

slight limp in his walk and a more haggard face, Erdogan managed to maintain his relentless campaigning, holding up to three rallies per day. "He's not too old," Ege insisted. "Maybe he's a little tired, but that's normal, he works day and night." — AFP

Seven charged over Northern Ireland policeman shooting

BELFAST: Seven men have been charged over the shooting of an off-duty police officer in Northern Ireland earlier this year, investigators said Saturday. Some of the defendants will face terrorism charges, while all stand accused of attempted murder.

Detective Chief Inspector John Caldwell, a high-profile officer who has led major investigations, survived

the late-February attack, in which he was shot multiple times at a sports centre. He had been coaching a youth football group which included his son, in the town of Omagh in the British province.

The shooting, condemned by politicians as "outrageous and shameful", was carried out by two men. Seven have now been charged, officers said. "Two men aged 28, and five men aged 33, 38, 45, 47 and 72, have been charged with attempted murder," the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) said in a statement.

It added that two of the men had been charged with membership of a proscribed organization, namely the Irish Republican Army (IRA), while three of the others face charges of preparing a terrorist act. Ear-

lier, the force said four others arrested in connection with the shooting had been released, "pending a report to the Public Prosecution Service". The seven charged will appear in court on Monday.

London's Northern Ireland Minister Chris Heaton-Harris welcomed the news of the charges. "I would like to thank the PSNI for their efforts and the progress they have made in the case," he wrote on Twitter.

Caldwell spent about two months in hospital, before being released in April. Officers in Northern Ireland are subject to sporadic attacks that were once common in the region, which was plagued by decades of sectarian violence known as the Troubles before the signing of peace accords in 1998.

Tensions are currently running high in the province, with unionists loyal to the UK collapsing its power-sharing government to protest against post-Brexit trading rules, which they say are distancing Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK.

Omagh was the scene of one of the worst incidents of the Troubles, when a dissident group of the IRA detonated a car bomb on August 15, 1998, leaving 29 dead and 220 wounded. Splinter group the New IRA has been linked to two attacks in recent years, including the planting of a bomb under a policeman's car in April 2021. The group had also admitted responsibility for the death of Lyra McKee, a journalist killed in April 2019 while covering clashes in the city of Londonderry. — AFP



LONDON: Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris arrives for a cabinet meeting at 10 Downing Street in central London. — AFP

Nigeria's departing President Buhari defends legacy

ABUJA: Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari defended his political record on Sunday, the day before he steps down, saying he leaves the country in a better state than when he took power in 2015. On Monday, he will hand over the reins of Africa's most populous nation to the new head of state, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who was elected in February despite the opposition

claiming massive electoral fraud.

"I am confident that I am leaving office with Nigeria better in 2023 than in 2015," the 80-year-old Buhari said in a televised address. "Our democracy is getting better and more entrenched with each election," he added, citing "considerable results in the battle to achieve a safe and secure environment for all Nigerians."

"Our battle to ensure that all Nigerians live in a safe and secure environment has achieved considerable results." But the administration of 71-year-old Tinubu inherits a 14-year-old jihadist insurgency in the northeast, which has resulted in some 40,000 deaths with two million more displaced.

Under Buhari, the military recaptured territory that had been under the control of the jihadist group Boko

Haram. But rivals linked to the Islamic State group, ISWAP, have since emerged as the dominant threat.

A former putschist general in the army, Buhari was elected in 2015, and again in 2019, on the promise of putting an end to corruption and insecurity in Nigeria. His first election aroused great enthusiasm. But according to many observers and analysts, Buhari leaves behind a very disappointing, if not catastrophic, legacy.

Africa's leading economy is in the throes of a serious economic crisis with double-digit inflation, exploding debt, poverty and unemployment — as well as the security crisis, with rampant violence by both criminal and jihadist groups responsible for mass killings and kidnappings.

Human rights organizations including Human Rights

Watch have denounced a significant step backwards in terms of human rights, including abuses by the security forces, bloody repression of demonstrations and a six-month suspension of Twitter.

Human Rights Watch has urged Tinubu to "reverse course on significant human rights backsliding". Buhari's televised speech created a stir on Nigerian social networks, with online comments denouncing "a speech contrary to the reality" experienced by ordinary Nigerians.

Some cited the explosion in kidnappings for ransom, and the considerable increase in the price of rice as examples. And many articles in the Nigerian press on Sunday scrutinized Buhari's "failure" as head of government. — AFP

Erdogan cements grip on Turkey...

Continued from Page 1

And Kilicdaroglu's courtship of Turkey's hard right was hampered by the endorsement Erdogan received from an ultra-nationalist who finished third two weeks ago. Some opposition supporters sounded defeated already, after emerging from the polls. "Today is not like the last time. I was more excited then," Bayram Ali Yuce said in one of Istanbul's anti-Erdogan neighborhoods. "The outcome seems more obvious now. But I still voted."

Erdogan is lionized by poorer and more rural swathes of Turkey's fractured society because of his promotion of religious freedoms and modernization of once-dilapidated cities in the Anatolian heartland. "It was important for me to keep what was gained over the past 20 years in Turkey," company director Mehmet Emin Ayaz told AFP in Ankara. "Turkey isn't what it was in the old days. There is a new Turkey today," the 64-year-old said.

But Erdogan has caused growing consternation across the Western world because of his crackdowns on dissent and pursuit of a muscular foreign policy. He launched military incursions into Syria that infuriated European powers and put Turkish soldiers on

the opposite side of Kurdish forces supported by the United States. His personal relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin has also survived the Kremlin's war on Ukraine.

Turkey's troubled economy is benefiting from a crucial deferment of payment on Russian energy imports that helped Erdogan spend lavishly on campaign pledges this year. Erdogan also delayed Finland's membership of NATO and is still refusing to let Sweden join the US-led defense bloc. Turkey's unravelling economy will pose the most immediate test for Erdogan.

Erdogan went through a series of central bankers to find one who would enact his wish to slash interest rates at all costs in 2021 — flouting conventional economics in the belief that lower rates can cure chronically high inflation. Turkey's currency soon entered freefall and the annual inflation rate touched 85 percent last year. Erdogan has promised to continue these policies and rejected predictions of economic peril from analysts.

Turkey burned through tens of billions of dollars trying to support the lira from politically sensitive falls ahead of the vote. Many analysts say Turkey must now hike interest rates or abandon its attempts to support the lira. "The day of reckoning for Turkey's economy and financial markets may now just be around the corner," analysts at Capital Economics warned. — AFP

pino side had accepted the conditions, the interior ministry would have reviewed the ban on visas.

The Public Authority of Manpower also listed a number of violations committed by the Philippine Embassy. They include asking labor recruitment offices to remove domestic helpers from Kuwaiti homes under the pretext they have completed their work contract. It also charged the embassy pressured recruitment offices to house domestic helpers at their residences, despite knowing this is banned in Kuwait.

PAM said the embassy also forced recruitment offices to search for runaway maids, bypassing official agencies in the country. The embassy also forced recruitment offices to include items in work contracts that employers don't want. PAM also charged mistreatment of Kuwaiti citizens when they visit the embassy. The embassy also accommodates workers in private housing or a shelter affiliated with it, despite some of these workers being in violation of the residency law or have absconding notices filed against them.

Modi opens new parliament...

Continued from Page 1

democracy". Modi "has relentlessly hollowed out" parliament, with opposition lawmakers "disqualified, suspended and muted" and laws passed "with almost no debate", a statement by the parties said.

The hexagonal new legislature building — shaped like a coffin, one opposition party said — stands next to the ageing and cramped colonial-era parliament building designed by British architects Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker in the 1920s that it will replace. The often fractious legislature saw a string of noisy disruptions in February as the government blocked opposition demands — led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi — for a probe into links between Modi and tycoon Gautam Adani. Adani's business empire has been hit by allegations of accounting fraud, which it denies.

Rahul Gandhi, the embattled scion of India's most famous political dynasty, was disqualified from the lower parliament house days later after he was sentenced to two years imprisonment in an unrelated criminal defamation case over a campaign remark in 2019. "The prime minister is considering the inauguration of Parliament House as a coronation," Gandhi tweeted on Sunday.

But Amit Malviya, who heads the BJP's social media campaign, pointed to the 1927 inauguration of the old parliament building by the British viceroy and attended by Gandhi's great-great-grandfather Motilal Nehru. "The Congress, which then had no compunc-



NEW DELHI: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi releases a 75-rupee coin to commemorate the opening of the new parliament building on May 28, 2023. — AFP

tion genuflecting in front of the British, today, has a problem attending the inauguration, even though the person helming the ceremony is a democratically elected prime minister," Malviya told AFP. Outside, police detained several wrestlers, including Olympic medalists, as well as dozens of their supporters as they attempted to march to parliament. — AFP

Negotiations only if Manila adheres to...

Continued from Page 1

The statement issued by the interior ministry Wednesday said the Filipino delegation "refused to comply with conditions presented by Kuwait" to not repeat violations by the Philippine Embassy. "As a result, the interior ministry insists on its position rejecting any violation of the sovereignty of Kuwait and the dignity of its citizens," the statement said.

The conditions set by Kuwait include an admission by the Philippine Embassy that it violated laws, decisions and charters in Kuwait, which amount to a breach of diplomatic practices. Kuwait also demanded that the embassy pledge not to repeat such violations in the future. Concerned authorities in Kuwait will then have to issue an official warning against the violation of local laws and regulations. The statement said that if the Fili-

sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear program. The JCPOA collapsed in 2018 after Washington unilaterally withdrew from it and reimposed sanctions, prompting Iran to suspend the implementation of its own commitments to curb nuclear activity.

Stop-start talks that began in April last year to restore the nuclear deal have yet to bear fruit. The last visit by an Omani sultan to Iran was in 2013 when Qaboos bin Said Al-Said visited Tehran during the presidency of Hassan Rouhani, who was in office when the 2015 deal was sealed. Sultan Qaboos also maintained good ties with Tehran and acted as an intermediary between Western countries and Iran. — AFP

Omani Sultan visits Tehran...

Continued from Page 1

in regional and global terms". Oman has close ties with Iran, and played a mediating role between Tehran and the United States in the build-up to a nuclear deal Iran and world powers reached in 2015.

The sultanate was reported to have hosted secret US-Iran talks ahead of the signing of the deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, which gave Iran relief from international

International

Sudanese army chief Al-Burhan asks UN to dismiss envoy

Saudis and US pressing for extension of ceasefire

KHARTOUM: Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan has accused UN special envoy Volker Perthes of stoking a brutal conflict with paramilitaries, the latest in a series of apparent moves to bolster his war effort.

United Nations chief Antonio Guterres said he was "shocked" by Burhan's letter, which requested "the nomination of a replacement" to Perthes and accused him of committing "fraud and disinformation" in facilitating a political process which broke down into six weeks of devastating urban warfare.

Burhan and his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who commands the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, were meant to meet for negotiations facilitated by the UN on April 15, the day they turned Khartoum into a war zone. The meeting aimed to restore a transition to civilian rule disrupted since 2021 when Burhan and Daglo together seized power in a coup before falling out. As their feud worsened, the international community tried to get them to reach a deal on integration of Daglo's RSF into the regular army.

Since late last year Perthes and the UN mission in Sudan, which he heads, have been the target of several protests by thousands of military and Islamist supporters who accused Perthes of "foreign intervention" and demanded his dismissal.

Similar protests have taken place in the eastern city of Port Sudan since the war started. Perthes had maintained his "optimism" and said the war took him "by surprise". In the letter, Burhan accused Perthes of bias and of not respecting "national sovereignty".

He said Perthes presented a misleading picture "of consensus" in his reports to the UN, and "without these signs of encouragement, the rebel leader Daglo would not have launched his military operations". It has never, however, been possible to verify who fired the first shots. The fighting across Sudan has killed more than 1,800 people, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project.

'We cannot look away'

The United Nations says more than a million people

have been displaced within Sudan, in addition to 319,000 who have fled to neighboring countries, raising concerns for regional stability.

George Clooney, the actor and longtime advocate for human rights in Sudan, called on the international community to "up its focus". "We cannot look away," he said. In a statement from UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric, Guterres said he was "shocked by the letter" from Burhan and "proud of the work done by Volker Perthes and reaffirms his full confidence in his Special Representative".

The US State Department voiced its "strong support" for Perthes and its "concern" over Burhan's letter calling for his resignation. A one-week ceasefire brokered by the US and Saudi Arabia expires Monday night.

The two nations called on the warring parties to continue talks on extending the ceasefire to help in the "delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance" to civilians, according to the official Saudi Press Agency. In a joint statement on Friday, the mediators "noted improved respect for the agreement" but said there was nevertheless "isolated gunfire in Khartoum". Burhan last week officially sacked Daglo as his deputy in the ruling Sovereign Council, replacing him with former rebel leader Malik Agar. But even after reports of Burhan's letter emerged, Agar said he had spoken to Perthes about "ways to resolve the crisis and end the war". The army is now also seeking to reinforce its ranks. On Friday the defence ministry called on "army pensioners" and reservists to head to command units, which the RSF called a "dangerous decision".

Islamist 'litmus test'

Perthes is currently in New York, where last Monday he briefed the Security Council on Sudan. He responded to those who "accuse the UN" by saying those responsible are "the two generals at war".

Perthes "may not be allowed back into Sudan," according to Sudanese analyst Kholood Khair, founder of Khartoum-based think tank Confluence Advisory. "His



KHARTOUM: People have a meal outside in Khartoum's Jabra neighborhood, on May 28, 2023, as fighting between two rival generals persists. — AFP

visa will be a litmus test to gauge the resurgence of the Islamists," she wrote on Twitter.

She and other analysts have said the international community, in its efforts to broker a political solution for Sudan before the war, was guilty of appeasing the two generals. Pro-democracy voices have long accused Burhan of being a Trojan horse for Islamists from the regime of strongman Omar Al-Bashir, whom the military ousted in 2019 after mass protests.

Several high-ranking officials from the Bashir era have found roles in Burhan's administration since the coup. During the fighting Burhan's backing has only

grown clearer, including "a web of crony-capitalist corporations, from banks and telecom companies owned by Islamists and intelligence officers to companies owned by the military itself," according to Sudan expert Alex de Waal.

Daglo himself has called Burhan an "Islamist" and a "coup plotter" intent on reviving "the vestiges of the old regime". Daglo, whose RSF are descendants of the notorious Janjaweed militia unleashed by Bashir in Darfur, has links to gold mines and de Waal has said he has thrived in an environment "where money and guns determine everything." — AFP

Governor of Darfur region issues call to arms

KHARTOUM: The governor of war-torn Sudan's western Darfur region, Mini Minawi, on Sunday called on citizens there to "take up arms", six weeks into the brutal conflict.

Much of the heaviest fighting has raged in the capital Khartoum and in Darfur, near the border with Chad, since the conflict erupted on April 15. Minawi, a former rebel leader, has voiced support for the national army in its battle against the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

"There are many who do not wish for the safety or rights of citizens and deliberately sabotage national institutions," he wrote on Twitter. "I call on all our honorable citizens, the people of Darfur, old and young, men and women, to take up arms to protect their property."

Darfur has already suffered decades of turmoil that has left hundreds of thousands dead, more than two million displaced and the region flooded with weapons. The war there, which began in 2003, saw Sudan's then president Omar Al-Bashir unleash the feared Janjaweed militia to crush a rebellion among ethnic minority groups.

The Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Mohamed Hamdan Daglo and now at war with the Sudanese army, traces its origins to the Janjaweed. Darfur has seen some of the worst of current fighting, with hundreds of civilians killed, markets burned and rampant looting of health and aid facilities.

Tens of thousands of Sudanese have fled across the border into Chad as concerns rise about the militarization of those who remain. Sudanese democracy

Texas lawmakers impeach attorney general for corruption

HOUSTON: Texas Republican lawmakers on Saturday overwhelmingly voted to impeach the southern state's attorney general on corruption charges, suspending him from office until he faces trial in the Senate.

Attorney General Ken Paxton's temporary removal marked the stunning downfall of an ardent defender of former president Donald Trump with an ascendant national profile. After an all-afternoon debate, lawmakers considering Paxton's impeachment voted 121 in favor, 23 against with two not voting. "The evidence is substantial. It is alarming and unnerving," said legislator Andrew Murr, a Republican.

Paxton did not back down despite the overwhelming vote against him. "What we just witnessed is illegal, unethical, and profoundly unjust," Paxton tweeted after the vote. Trump took to his Truth Social platform and said those who impeached Paxton were "radical left Democrats" and "RINOs" — or Republicans in name only.

The 20 articles of impeachment against Paxton were for corruption, misuse of public funds, unfitness for office and obstruction of justice. The indictment alleged that Paxton pressured his staff to protect a friend and donor from prosecution.



WAD MADANI: People queue at the entrance of an open bank branch in Wad Madani, the capital of Sudan's Al-Jazirah state, on May 28, 2023, as fighting between two rival generals persists. — AFP

activist and author Raga Makawi said there is "a real risk of people who were in the past part of non-violent movements now considering the right to bear arms in order to protect themselves".

The Small Arms Survey, a Geneva-based research project, calculated there were 6.6 guns for every 100 people in Sudan in 2017. The United Nations had already warned that civilians were being armed in the fighting before Minawi issued his call to arms.

The army, under chief Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, has also sought to reinforce its ranks. On Friday the

defence ministry called on "army pensioners" and reservists to head to command units. The fighting across Sudan has killed more than 1,800 people, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project.

The United Nations says more than a million people have been displaced within Sudan, in addition to 319,000 who have fled to neighboring countries. A one-week ceasefire brokered by the United States and Saudi Arabia and marred by breaches is due to expire Monday night. — AFP

Over 1,500 arrested at climate protest in The Netherlands

THE HAGUE: More than 1,500 people were arrested during a protest by the Extinction Rebellion climate group in The Hague on Saturday, Dutch police said. Activists blocked a section of a motorway during the afternoon in protest against Dutch fossil fuel subsidies.

Police said they had used water cannon to disperse activists blocking a major road in the city, and arrested "a total of 1,579 people... 40 of whom will be prosecuted" on charges including vandalism.

One of the activists bit a policeman during his arrest, police said. According to Extinction Rebellion, some 7,000 people gathered to join the demonstration. Anticipating the water cannon, some wore swimsuits or carried umbrellas as they sat in protest across the A12 motorway, holding banners and signs.

The protest marks the seventh organized by Extinction Rebellion in the same section of motorway at The Hague, close to the parliament and main ministry buildings. But Saturday saw the highest number of people arrested at a protest yet, according to Dutch news agency ANP.

"We're going to stay here until they drag us away," said postgraduate student Anne Kerevers, 31. "Climate change is an unfolding crisis and we know the

cause and it's still being subsidized by our government and it needs to stop," she told AFP.

Several Dutch celebrities were among the protesters, including actor Carice van Houten, best known for her role as Melisandre in the hit TV series "Game of Thrones". Van Houten posted a video on Instagram showing herself wearing a red poncho, getting drenched from a water cannon.

ANP reported that she was arrested and later allowed to return home, but did not specify whether she was among those who will be prosecuted.

'Broad support'

Police said they had repeatedly "given activists the opportunity to end their action and leave" before using the water cannon and making arrests. "We've been coming back every month, or every two months, and every time the number (of protesters) has doubled," said Aaron Pereira, a spokesman for Extinction Rebellion.

"There is broad popular support for real climate action and people are waking up to the fact that the government is actively going against this by subsidizing the fossil fuel industry." The environmental campaign group, shortened to XR, has become known for the disruptive and headline-catching stunts which have become their trademark. In recent years the group has caused huge disruption, hitting roads, airports and other public transport networks with direct action protests against climate change. — AFP

HK blasts AI over missing Uyghur man allegation

HONG KONG: Hong Kong on Saturday "strongly condemned" rights group Amnesty International for alleging that a Uyghur man had gone missing after he arrived at the city's airport. The group said in a statement Friday that Abuduwaili Abudurehman, born in China's northwestern region of Xinjiang, travelled from South Korea to Hong Kong on May 10 to visit a friend and had not been heard from since.

His final communication was a brief text to his friend waiting at the airport saying "Chinese police are asking me questions", according to the message shown to AFP by Amnesty. In a statement late Saturday, the Hong Kong government said Amnesty's claims were "groundless and unfounded" and "slandered the human rights situation" in the city.

"The records of the HKSAR Government show that the person has not entered or been refused entry by Hong Kong," a spokesperson said, demanding an apology from the group. Amnesty told AFP in response that the group "will remain concerned for (Abuduwaili's) safety" and that his friend is still unable to contact him.

The friend, who requested anonymity for safety concerns, told AFP on Saturday that Abuduwaili fled to Hong Kong for a visit, despite the friend's skepticism. "He miscalculated... he did not understand the grave consequences," the friend said. The text message attributed to Abuduwaili — which AFP has not been able to independently verify — was written in simplified Chinese and told his waiting friend to leave without him.

"I'm being checked. Chinese police are asking me questions, and it may take time for me to get out," the message read. The friend said Abuduwaili had a track record of being "held back for questioning" when travelling to China and so did not think much of it.

A day after receiving the message and hearing nothing, the friend contacted Hong Kong's immigration authorities but could not get much additional information, the friend said. According to Amnesty, Abuduwaili was on a Cathay Pacific flight from Seoul to Hong Kong that was scheduled to land at 11 pm (1500 GMT) on May 10, according to Amnesty. Airline Cathay Pacific did not respond to questions on whether he was on board.

'Deeply worrying'

Abuduwaili, who completed a doctorate degree at Seoul's Kookmin University last year, was on a Chinese government "watch list" because of his history of overseas travel, the rights group said earlier. Beijing stands accused of detaining over one million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang under security measures Washington and some lawmakers in other Western countries have labelled a "genocide". China denies the allegations, saying its actions are aimed at combating terrorism.

Chinese authorities are increasingly pressuring Uyghurs outside its borders and have, in some cases, forced their repatriation, according to Amnesty. Alkan Akad, Amnesty International's China researcher, said in the Friday statement that the "unknown fate of Abuduwaili Abudurehman is deeply worrying". — AFP

Business

MONDAY, MAY 29, 2023

Biden, Republicans reach deal to raise debt ceiling

'Good news' as US prevents catastrophic default

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden and Republican leader Kevin McCarthy announced a deal Saturday to raise the debt ceiling, dragging the United States back from the precipice of default with only a few days to spare. Congress will vote on the deal to extend the government's borrowing authority on Wednesday, just shy of the June 5 "X-date" when the Treasury estimates the government will no longer be able to pay its bills, plunging the world's biggest economy into turmoil.

Biden said in a statement that the deal was "good news for the American people, because it prevents what could have been a catastrophic default and would have led to an economic recession, retirement accounts devastated, and millions of jobs lost." McCarthy, who spoke with Biden on Saturday to close the deal, said there was still "a lot of work to do, but I believe this is an agreement in principle that's worthy of the American people." The Republican speaker added he would consult again with the president on Sunday and oversee final drafting of the bill, and the House would "then be voting on it on Wednesday."

'Compromise'

Raising the debt ceiling - a legal maneuver that takes place most years without drama - allows the government to keep borrowing money and remain solvent. This year, Republicans demanded deep spending cuts - largely in social spending for the poor - in return for raising the debt ceiling, saying the time had come for bitter medicine to address the country's mammoth \$31 trillion debt.

Biden argued that he would not ne-

gotiate over spending issues as a condition for raising the debt ceiling, accusing the Republicans of taking the economy hostage. Both sides have now somewhat climbed down. According to a source familiar with the negotiations, the deal includes freeing up the debt ceiling for two years, meaning there will be no need for negotiations in 2024, when the presidential election will be in full swing.

The big cuts Republicans wanted are not there, though non-defense spending will remain effectively flat next year, and only rise nominally in 2025, the source said. There will also be new rules for accessing certain federal assistance programs, though the source said the deal protected Biden's signature Inflation Reduction Act and student debt relief plan. Biden said "the agreement represents a compromise, which means not everyone gets what they want. That's the responsibility of governing."

Deadlines

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen had initially warned of a possible default around June 1 if Congress failed to raise the ceiling on borrowing, but gave lawmakers some breathing room on Friday when she updated the deadline to June 5. Even so, the legislation will still have to clear Congress much more quickly than the normal timetable for even the most uncontroversial bills.

Under House rules, lawmakers have to be given 72 hours before voting once a bill is presented. And if it passes the House, it will then have to go through the Senate, where Democrats hold the majority.



WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden speaks with reporters before departing from the South Lawn of the White House on Marine One in Washington, DC. —AFP

McCarthy is hoping to bring the narrow House majority of 222 Republicans with him, but the deal is likely to face opposition from 35 far-right lawmakers who told him to "hold the line" against compromising on far more sweeping spending cuts. That means a large number of Democrats will have to be persuaded to vote with a reduced number of Republicans - something that rarely happens on big bills.

In a sign of the uphill battle McCarthy might face corraling his party's votes,

hardline conservative Representative Lauren Boebert said she would oppose the deal. "Our voters deserve better than this," she said in a tweet on Saturday night. "You can count me as a NO on this deal." The Democrats, meanwhile, may face their own rebellion on the left of the party, which objects to any spending restrictions. Congress was adjourned for an extended holiday weekend but lawmakers will be called back to vote.

If a default occurs, the government

wouldn't miss loan repayments until mid-June but in the meantime it would likely have to halt \$25 billion in social security checks and federal salaries. The battle has been monitored closely by the major ratings agencies, with Morningstar and Fitch both warning that they could opt for a downgrade, even if the crisis is averted. When Barack Obama's administration narrowly averted a default 12 years ago, a ratings downgrade cost taxpayers more than \$1 billion in higher interest costs. — AFP



SHANGHAI: A flight attendant distributes bottles of water to passengers during the first commercial flight of China's first domestically produced passenger jet C919 from Shanghai to Beijing on May 28, 2023. — AFP photos

China's homegrown passenger jet makes maiden flight

BEIJING: China's first domestically produced passenger jet made its maiden commercial flight on Sunday, a milestone event in the nation's decades-long effort to compete with Western rivals in the air. Beijing hopes the C919 commercial jetliner will challenge foreign models like the Boeing 737 MAX and the Airbus A320, though many of its parts are sourced from abroad. Its first homegrown jetliner with mass commercial potential would also cut the country's reliance on foreign technology as ties with the West deteriorate. "In the future, most passengers will be able to choose to travel by large, domestically produced aircraft," state broadcaster CCTV said.

China Eastern Airlines flight MU9191 from Shanghai "arrived smoothly" in Beijing just after 12:30 pm, around 40 minutes ahead of schedule, according to CCTV. Footage showed passengers filing out of the plane and into the terminal, before a few dozen staff and officials posed for photographs in a brief cer-

emony on the tarmac. "(The flight) was extremely smooth, comfortable and memorable. I think I'll remember this fondly for some time to come," a male passenger told CCTV.

The broadcaster had aired footage of the plane rising into the skies above Shanghai Hongqiao Airport on Sunday morning, saying it had 130 passengers on board. State media footage showed passengers gathering at the sun-drenched Shanghai airfield to admire the sleek white jet before embarking. Passengers received red boarding passes and a sumptuous "themed meal" to commemorate the flight, CCTV reported. Other footage showed passengers waving national flags and singing a patriotic song while a cake was being cut during the flight.

China has invested heavily in production of the homegrown jet as it seeks to become self-sufficient in key technologies. The aircraft is manufactured by state-owned Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China (COMAC), but many of its parts - including its engines - are sourced from overseas. Zhang Xiaoguang, COMAC's director of marketing and sales, told state news agency Xinhua the flight was a "coming-of-age ceremony (for) the new aircraft", adding the C919 "will get better if it stands the test of the market".

From Monday, the C919 will operate on China Eastern's regular route between Shanghai and the southwestern city of Chengdu, CCTV reported. The first model of the narrow-body jet was formally handed over to China Eastern last year during a ceremony at an airport in Shanghai, hailed by state media as "an important milestone" for the country's aircraft industry. Zhang Yujin, COMAC's deputy general manager, told state-backed Shanghai outlet The Paper in January that the company had taken around 1,200 orders for the C919.

COMAC planned to increase annual production capacity to 150 models within five years, Zhang said at the time. Asia and China in particular are key targets for European manufacturer Airbus and its American rival Boeing, which are looking to capitalize on growing demand for air travel from the country's vast middle class. — AFP

Planet-friendly farming takes root in Tunisia

CAP NEGRO: Saber Zouani lost his job as a waiter when the COVID pandemic ravaged the Tunisian tourism sector, so he decided to try something new and started a permaculture farm. Now he grows all the food he needs and has become a pioneer of the style of ecological agriculture that is gaining fans worldwide, including in his North African country.

Many hope it will help Tunisia weather the impacts of climate change and wean it off its reliance on global supply chains, including grain and fertilizer imports from war-torn Ukraine and Russia. In his western home town of Cap Negro, Zouani, 37, proudly showed off his three-hectare (seven-acre) farm, set up to mimic natural ecosystems in line with ideas popularized in the 1970s by Australian ecologists.

Permaculture, as an alternative to industrial agriculture, aims to work in harmony with the environment, keep soil structures intact, and do without artificial inputs such as chemical fertilizers or pesticides. "No, these are not weeds," said Zouani, a biotechnology graduate, pointing to nettles and dandelions growing wild all around his rows of onions, peppers and radishes. When he harvests his vegetables, he said, he puts the excess green matter back onto the soil to slow evaporation - hoping to keep the ground as moist as a forest floor covered with fallen leaves.

'Create living soil'

Such methods are especially useful in Tunisia where an unprecedented drought has parched the countryside and left water reservoirs at dangerously low levels this spring. At his farm, Zouani captures precious rainwater in a pond and only sparingly waters his plants, which are all grown from his own seeds.

Zouani also keeps cows, sheep, goats and chickens and composts their droppings to create soil enriched with the nitrogen-rich natural fertilizer. "We need to create living soil, attract earthworms, fungi and all the nutrients for our plants and trees," said Zouani. Permaculture, he said, draws on farming methods and wisdoms of centuries past - "returning to our roots, to the traditional methods used by our grandparents". Zouani said he earns around 300 dinars (\$100) a month from selling farm produce, with enough left over to make him, his brother and their elderly parents self-sufficient.

In two or three years, he hopes to make "a decent income" and turn his farm, named "Om Hnia" in honor of his late grandmother, into an eatery and eventually a rural eco-lodge. Zouani started off more than two years ago with the help of the Tunisian Association of Permaculture, which gave him initial training and then financial support for basic equipment. The group's "Plant Your Farm" project aims to create 50 micro-farms over five years, of which around 30 are already up and running, said its president Rim Mathlouthi.

The goal, Mathlouthi said, is to "demonstrate to the authorities and other farmers that permaculture is a profitable and efficient agricultural system which brings back biodiversity when the soil is depleted from ploughing and chemical inputs". She said the initiative, with funding from Switzerland and others, even covers Tunisia's sun-baked arid regions and aims to entice jobless young people to cultivate abandoned family land.

It also hopes to help change a model "where the Tunisian farmer loses money because he is constantly spending, for a very small yield, on seeds, fertilizers and pesticides", said Mathlouthi. Permaculture also aims to help Tunisia adapt to the searing drought that has badly impacted a farm sector centered on wheat, barley and other water-intensive cereals. "Crises such as water stress or the Ukraine war are opportunities to promote solutions such as agro-ecology and permaculture," said Mathlouthi. — AFP



CAP NEGRO: A woman grazes sheep in Cap Negro in northern Tunisia. — AFP



SHANGHAI: China's first domestically produced passenger jet C919 sits on the tarmac before its first commercial flight from Shanghai to Beijing, in Shanghai Hongqiao Airport on May 28, 2023.

France in 'very close talks' with debt rating agency

Downgrade from rival Fitch reignited concerns

PARIS: France is in "very close talks" with debt rating agency Standard and Poor's, Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne said Sunday, after a downgrade from rival Fitch reignited government finance concerns in the EU's second-largest economy. Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire had offered "detailed explanations to Standard and Poor's of everything we're doing to get our public finances under control" ahead of their rating decision in early June, Borne told Jewish community

broadcaster Radio J. Citing "relatively large fiscal deficits and only modest progress with fiscal consolidation," Fitch last month downgraded France's debt rating to AA-, several notches below the top AAA class awarded to countries including Germany and the Netherlands. Such ratings help determine borrowing conditions when governments go to financial markets to raise money. France's debt hit almost 112 percent of annual output by the end of last year, driven

by a "whatever-it-takes" response to the coronavirus crisis and generous support to households and firms through the energy price crunch provoked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "We've introduced reforms, we've recently revealed a path for government finances into 2027... reducing our deficit to 2.7 percent of GDP" from its present level closer to 5.0 percent, Borne said. The finance ministry hopes controls on government spending combined with

faster growth can bring overall debt levels down to 108 percent of GDP in the coming five years. With less optimistic assumptions, Fitch last month forecast France's debt-to-GDP ratio would in fact grow to more than 114 percent over the same period. "We are acting to support our firms and economic growth, to support activity," Borne told Radio J. "We are not simple spectators waiting to see what economic conditions will be like," she added. In its April note, Fitch did praise a

stronger labor market in France thanks to reforms introduced since President Emmanuel Macron took office in 2017, with historically stubborn unemployment now down to 7.1 percent. Macron's widely contested pension reform raising the retirement age to 64 - resulting in mass demonstrations and intense opposition in parliament - "could further support the labor market and possibly improve growth prospects in the medium to long term," Fitch added at the time. — AFP

NBK-Egypt reports KD 6.9 million in net profits

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait-Egypt (NBK-Egypt) reported EGP 652.5 million (Equivalent to KD 6.9 million) in net profits in the three months ended March 31, 2023, compared to EGP 348.7 million (Equivalent to KD 6.7 million) for the same period of the year 2022, recording a growth of 87% YoY. In the first quarter of 2023, NBK-Egypt witnessed significant growth in key financial indicators. Net Interest Income recorded a remarkable increase of 100%, reaching EGP 1.54 billion compared to EGP 0.77 billion in the same period of the previous year.

Additionally, Net Operating Income experienced substantial growth of 99%, amounting to EGP 1.85 billion in 1Q2023 compared to EGP 0.93 billion in 1Q2022. Moreover, customer deposits saw a positive trend, rising by 4.50% to reach EGP 88.3 billion as of March 31, 2023, compared to EGP 84.5 billion by the end of 2022. NBK-Egypt's total assets reached EGP 109.3 billion by the end of the first quarter, exhibiting a 4% increase compared to the year-end balance of EGP 105.1 billion in 2022. Furthermore, the net balance of loans and credit facilities expanded to EGP 58.1 billion by the end of March 2023, reflecting a growth rate of 6.9% compared to EGP 54.3 billion recorded at the end of 2022.

Commenting on the financial results announced by NBK-Egypt, Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group Chief Officer, National Bank of Kuwait, and Chairman of NBK-Egypt, said: "The significant increase in NBK-Egypt's profits reported in the first quarter, coupled with its sustained profitability growth, underscores the strength of our financial position and the resilience of our business model. Despite the escalating operation-

al challenges, our flexible approach has enabled us to generate profits and maintain a solid performance."

Al-Bahar emphasized that the continued growth of NBK-Egypt's balance sheet and the positive progress observed in various financial indicators is a testament to the success of the bank's diversification strategy and the acceleration of its digital transformation. "Our goal is to enhance the bank's overall market share, particularly in retail services, within the region's largest market in terms of population. With Egypt's sizable young population, we are focused on catering to their needs and expanding our reach," Al-Bahar confirmed.

"Egypt's operating environment is currently going through an exceptional phase, comparable to that of other emerging markets that have faced consecutive economic shocks. However, we maintain an optimistic outlook for gradual improvement going forward. This optimism is rooted in the reform measures and exceptional actions implemented by the government and the Central Bank of Egypt," Al-Bahar observed.

"We have strategically positioned ourselves to leverage the favorable opportunities that will arise as the operating environment improves after the conclusion of these exceptional circumstances. A number of factors including decreasing inflation rates, stable exchange rates, and growing foreign investment will contribute to a positive impact on our operations in Egypt, enabling greater alignment and synergy with the overall operations of our Group," Al-Bahar noted.

"The sustained growth and success we have achieved in Egypt through our long-term investments affirm the Group's forward-thinking vision in choosing Egypt as a strategic investment destination. We are committed to further developing our presence in the country, driven by the rising demand for banking services and the increasing rates of financial inclusion", Al-Bahar noted, adding that the Bank's focus is on enhancing the quality of its services, expanding the range of its digital services and advanced payment solutions, and expanding its SME loans portfolio. Additionally, NBK-Egypt is

actively expanding and diversifying its operations to encompass a broader geographic scope and cater to a more diverse range of customer segments.

Meanwhile, Vice Chairman, CEO, and Managing Director of National Bank of Kuwait-Egypt, Yasser El-Tayeb, said: "NBK-Egypt's exceptional business results showcase its resilience and growth potential, even in the face of numerous challenges in both local and global markets." El-Tayeb emphasized that the Bank's growth is consistently balanced across all business activities while maintaining the highest adequacy rates and lowest risk ratios, positioning NBK-Egypt for sustained growth. This leadership position results from the Group's prudent policies and versatile business model, better positioning NBK-Egypt to meet the shifting demands of its customers and diversify its revenue streams.

El-Tayeb added that NBK-Egypt's revenues are appropriately balanced between corporate and retail credit segments, which have been consistently growing over the past few years, with a very diversified credit portfolio including a wide range of businesses across various sectors ranging from large scale corporations to SMEs. Meanwhile, the retail banking portfolio is also well diversified.

This solid position reflects the Bank's strength and the diversity of its revenue streams. He also highlighted that going forward, NBK-Egypt strives to further strengthen its position in retail banking through offering innovative services and products to its retail customers, in addition to ingraining the comprehensive concept of "inclusive banking" as the bank of choice that fulfills all their financial needs and requirements, in addition to continuing the horizontal growth plan by inaugurating new branches covering key locations throughout the Egyptian market.

Furthermore, El-Tayeb highlighted NBK-Egypt's commitment to align its strategies with the global movement towards sustainable finance and the transition to a green economy. The Bank aims to actively support environmentally friendly projects that promote sustainability and the utilization of renewable energy sources. Moreover, recognizing the significance of sus-



Yasser El-Tayeb

Shaikha Al-Bahar

tainable finance in ensuring long-term financial stability, NBK-Egypt is dedicated to exploring viable solutions that mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change and reduce carbon emissions.

Underlining the significance of digitalization and the adoption of emerging technologies, El-Tayeb said: "We strongly acknowledge the pivotal role of digital solutions and alternative channels in the banking industry, as we understand their significance in preserving our competitive edge over our counterparts." He added that recognizing the importance of digitalization in strengthening banks' competitive advantages, NBK-Egypt has consistently pursued initiatives to bolster electronic services and promote wider adoption of digital payment transactions.

This aligns with the national policy and the Central Bank of Egypt's efforts to foster financial inclusion and integrate new customer segments and merchants into the formal banking system, facilitating the transition towards a cashless society. As part of these endeavors, NBK-Egypt recently introduced the "InstaPay Application," which offers customers convenient access to all their bank accounts and facilitates instant money transfers via their mobile phones 24/7.

AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 25 MAY 2023

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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	32,057	7,463.95	-0.5%	-5.7%	-8.0%	520,852,500	193,614,509	36,422	15.4	1.1	73.4%
Main Market	8,881	5,404.80	-0.7%	-3.6%	-3.4%	238,892,818	41,978,320	11,809	14.0	0.7	26.6%
All Share	40,938	6,764.93	-0.5%	-5.3%	-7.2%	759,745,318	235,592,830	48,231	14.6	0.8	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	24,577	1,653.12	-0.7%	-5.9%	-7.8%	306,299,113	158,388,240	18,807	20.2	1.2	52.23%
Basic Materials	508	900.31	3.8%	0.9%	4.1%	1,952,072	1,305,887	878	4.9	1.4	0.30%
Consumer Discretionary	997	1,487.38	0.7%	2.1%	0.0%	32,887,276	5,711,600	2,154	13.9	0.8	3.59%
Consumer Staples	158	519.58	-0.1%	13.7%	8.3%	2,620,701	1,145,079	365	NM	1.0	0.08%
Energy	209	997.97	0.1%	2.0%	-12.3%	3,107,569	242,381	299	9.4	0.6	0.35%
Financial Services	4,210	1,171.18	-0.2%	-4.8%	-6.8%	254,654,263	32,177,725	11,365	21.1	0.7	9.19%
Health Care	227	457.01	-1.2%	0.0%	-1.0%	102	49.98	1	10.1	1.0	0.86%
Industrials	3,337	960.40	-0.8%	-4.5%	-11.0%	28,268,703	14,738,179	5,212	16.6	0.8	12.31%
Insurance	883	2,143.93	-0.1%	1.4%	38.2%	627,146	179,415	163	10.0	0.8	1.36%
Real Estate	2,364	1,101.23	1.3%	-3.8%	-8.9%	104,343,319	9,701,181	4,906	11.8	0.5	8.64%
Technology	8	581.27	-0.1%	-0.1%	-16.5%	1,138	91	2	NM	0.7	0.03%
Telecommunications	3,260	1,066.88	-1.6%	-9.2%	-9.7%	22,437,917	11,536,751	3,849	10.8	1.3	10.29%
Utilities	200	478.95	-1.1%	4.0%	-3.2%	2,545,999	466,249	230	14.9	1.8	0.76%

Top Gainers

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
KHOT	200	72.41%	35,374	5,889	24
SENERGY	34.5	16.95%	1,295,538	41,192	95
AGHC	265	14.72%	12,128,142	3,163,647	1,128
IFA	97.4	13.65%	15,940,953	1,479,153	670
ALMANAR	57.7	9.90%	35,525	1,961	30

Top Losers

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
NINV	188	-16.44%	23,676,335	4,648,612	1,920
EMIRATES	26	-15.31%	37,895	963	15
RKWC	82	-14.14%	487,654	43,233	7
ENERGYH	52.5	-11.91%	71,996	3,913	38
KPPC	23.7	-8.14%	6,565,918	158,555	195

Top Volume

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
BOUBYAN	596	2.41%	94,683,305	56,324,347	4,710
GFH	80.3	4.15%	74,232,049	5,877,845	1,801
KFH	709	-0.98%	64,774,969	46,010,797	6,594
CBK	503	-3.08%	42,682,941	21,341,514	38
KIB	169	1.59%	31,297,499	5,190,128	1,091

Top Value

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
BOUBYAN	596	2.41%	94,683,305	56,324,347	4,710
KFH	709	-0.98%	64,774,969	46,010,797	6,594
CBK	503	-3.08%	42,682,941	21,341,514	38
NBK	923	-1.07%	18,107,338	16,833,377	3,151
ZAIN	506	-1.94%	20,478,553	10,420,491	3,173

Market Summary:

- Premier market volume and value increased by 33% and 26%, and Main Market increased by 64% and 77%, respectively.
- Premier and Main indexes both showed stability during the week. This might lead to recovery support levels.
- Technically, the All Share index closed at 6764, support level 6759, and resistance at 6805. The Premier index closed at 7463, with support levels at 7411 and 7345, while resistance at 7512. The Main index closed at 5404, with support levels at 5393 and 5339, while resistance was at 5424.

Business

Hong Kong treads fine line on regulating retail crypto trade

Authorities not deterred by 'crypto winter'

HONG KONG: Retail investors in Hong Kong may soon be able to buy popular cryptocurrencies like bitcoin at government-licensed exchanges, thanks to new rules meant to bolster the city's standing as a digital asset hub. Global crypto markets have yet to recover from a string of high-profile failures in recent months, including the spectacular downfall of trading platform FTX and crypto-friendly US banks Signature and Silvergate. But the so-called "crypto winter" has not deterred Hong Kong authorities from embracing the sector, a pivot that began last October and culminated with new laws for crypto exchanges starting June 1. Officials are also hoping the shift will be a boon for the city's economy, which continues to struggle in the wake of the pandemic, social unrest and the impact on business confidence from a Beijing-imposed national security law.

Crucially, observers say it will cement Hong Kong as a key route for mainland Chinese investors looking to trade crypto, which is outlawed in the country. Regulators are hoping to woo firms with favorable business conditions, but must balance that against the need for investor protections - a well-developed area in traditional finance but less so in the virtual-asset space. "There is an explicit acknowledgement that these products are becoming more and more part of our economy," Giuliano Castellano, a law professor at the University of Hong Kong, told AFP.

The city has had a voluntary licensing system for crypto trading platforms since 2019, but licensees could only service professional clients with portfolios of at least HK\$8 million (\$1 million). Without licensed local options, Hong Kong's retail crypto traders are relegated to offshore websites such as Binance and Coinbase, or a raft of brick-and-mortar shops that buy and sell tokens for cash. The client-base restriction was unpopular with Hong Kong's crypto businesses, and officials eventually dropped it when designing the incoming rules. "The genie's out of the bottle," said Kristi Swartz, a fintech lawyer at DLA Piper, referring to retail crypto trading. "(They) just have to face reality... If it's already there, let's try to regulate it."

China's 'petri dish'

Hong Kong is racing regulators around the world to figure out ground rules for crypto, which despite its crashes still has a global market capitalization of more than \$1 trillion. The European Union earlier this month approved the world's first comprehensive rules on the sector and international securities watchdog IOSCO proposed its recommendations shortly afterwards. In contrast to evolving attitudes on crypto worldwide, China has maintained a strict ban since 2021.

Hong Kong - a Chinese city with financial regulations separate from the mainland - holds special appeal

for China's crypto businesses and investors, according to Leo Weese, co-founder of the Bitcoin Association of Hong Kong. "There is a huge appetite from... (Chinese) cryptocurrency ventures to have any kind of legal presence on Chinese soil," he said, adding that firms see it as a gateway to the lucrative mainland market. In both traditional finance and crypto, it is common for mainland Chinese investors to be recognized as Hong Kong clients if they have a bank account and address in the city.

"Once you have a Hong Kong licence, you are going to be able to convince a lot of your mainland clients... that it's safe for them to interact with you through their Hong Kong bank account," Weese told AFP. Major crypto exchanges like Huobi and OKX, both founded in China, have announced plans to apply for a Hong Kong licence. While Beijing's anti-crypto stance remains unchanged on paper, senior economy officials have publicly backed Hong Kong's ambitions. "You can see that China says, 'Look, if it happens in Hong Kong, population circa seven, eight million, that's fine. We can use it as our petri dish,'" Swartz told AFP.

Protecting investors

Unlike the outgoing system, the retail-friendly rules taking effect in June will be mandatory, meaning all exchanges doing business in Hong Kong will eventually need to get licensed. Hong Kong regulators said they

hope to move quickly on issuing the first licences. Some crypto businesses say the switch is not expected to disrupt day-to-day operations as authorities allow a one-year transition period. HashKey and OSL, the two existing licensees, told AFP they will apply for fresh licences and grow their retail presence.

"There's a very significant need in the market to have platforms that are easily accessible... but are also properly managed and properly regulated," said Michel Lee, HashKey Group's executive president. "This new regime adds a lot more clarity as to what you're getting, what's the safety standard you will be provided with." With the memory of FTX's collapse still fresh, Hong Kong regulators said the new rules aim to "provide robust investor protection and manage key risks".

One safeguard is that exchanges can only provide "large-cap virtual assets" - such as bitcoin and etherium - to retail investors, and must set up internal committees to decide which cryptocurrencies to offer. Retail clients also have to undergo knowledge tests and risk profiling before they can trade - though it remains unclear what level of knowledge is deemed enough. Meanwhile, products like stable coins and crypto derivatives are off-limits for retail investors for the time being. "The new regulations are meant to protect investors better," said Castellano, the legal scholar. "It's wise to have a cautionary approach." — AFP

Al-Rawda & Hawally Co-Op now available on Deliveroo App

KUWAIT: Deliveroo has signed a partnership with Al-Rawda & Hawally Co-Op. The new partnership will make it possible for customers in Al-Rawda and neighboring areas to enjoy speedy deliveries of their favorite grocery and household items. Notably, Al-Rawda & Hawally Co-op is the first co-operative society to join the Deliveroo app.

"Al-Rawda & Hawally Co-Op is pleased to be the first local co-op to join the Deliveroo app as part of our partnership with Deliveroo," said Omar AlAnsari, a board member at Al-Rawda Co-op. "Through this partnership, we hope to make it easier for our customers to enjoy their favorite groceries and household necessities with the added convenience of speedy home delivery."

"Deliveroo is delighted to partner with Al-Rawda & Hawally Co-op as we continue to expand our on-demand grocery selection and meet customers' evolving needs," said Seham AlHusaini, General Manager of Deliveroo Kuwait. "Al-Rawda & Hawally Co-op is a beloved co-op due to its extensive selection of groceries, and we are so pleased to be able to bring that selection online as part of our commitment to making digital grocery shopping easier and more efficient than ever."

With thousands of grocery products available, Deliveroo is here to deliver the groceries customers need in a fraction of the time it would take to visit a grocery store. Since its launch, Deliveroo has set itself apart with its unbeatable customer service, a wide selection of global & local restaurants, and consistently reliable delivery. To shop at Al-Rawda & Hawally Co-Op through Deliveroo, customers can simply search for "Grocery" tab in the app.



KUWAIT: Deliveroo and Al-Rawda & Hawally Co-Op officials sign partnership deal.



Al Mulla inaugurates 'Second Auto Show'

KUWAIT: Al Mulla Group, a leading diversified and privately owned business group in the State of Kuwait, has recently celebrated the opening of its 'Second Al Mulla Auto Show' extending over ten days at the 360 Kuwait. The announcement came at an official opening ceremony in the presence of Talal Al Mulla - CEO of Al Mulla Group, and Imad Flayhan - Managing Director of Al Mulla Automotive accompanied by the Honorable Ambassadors of the United States of America, Germany, Japan and Italy.

The spectacular auto exhibition features the latest models of renowned international brands in the automotive industry on offer by Al Mulla Automotive. The special event also included special launches and reveal ceremonies by Al Mulla & Behbehani Motor Company of new models of leading international car manufacturers.

Commenting on this event, the CEO of Al Mulla Group Talal Al Mulla said: "At Al Mulla Group we pride ourselves on partnering with world-renowned brands in the auto industry and taking their brands' reputation to new heights of success in the region. I am delighted today to witness the breadth of our diverse range of international auto brands on display at the Al Mulla Auto Show for the second time in the 360 Kuwait in the presence of our honorable guests.

At Al Mulla Group, we are committed to being the catalysts of excellence in everything that we do, and our Second Al Mulla Auto Show perfectly reflects our unparalleled endeavors to meet and exceed our customers' expectations of presenting the best products and services that they have known, and trusted Al Mulla to always deliver."

Managing Director of the Al Mulla Automotive Imad Flayhan said: "Following the unprecedented success of our first Al Mulla Auto Show in 2021, we are proud to once again showcase the breadth of unique products and services on offer from our Automotive and Financial Services Groups for a second round at the 360 Kuwait. Our auto show this year comes with added features such as the launches of new models in the auto industry from Al Mulla & Behbehani Motor Company. Visitors to the auto exhibition this year will live an unforgettable shopping experience with everything that they'd need when buying their dream car all under one roof."

Running from May 25 to June 3, 2023 at the 360 Kuwait, the Second Al Mulla Auto Show by Al Mulla Group promises to deliver once again unique auto shopping experience to car enthusiasts in Kuwait filled with information and interactive activities planned over ten days at 360 Kuwait one of the country's iconic shopping destinations.

Key business sectors at Al Mulla Group joined hands to bring our customers a comprehensive auto shopping experience highlighting the extensive breadth of offers from Al Mulla Automotive, and supported by exclusive insurance products, financial services solutions from the Al Mulla Financial Services Group, as well as a wide range of Auto Rental & Leasing options.

Special Features & Promotional Offers at the Al Mulla Auto Show include: Reveal of the All-New Grand Wagoneer by Jeep. At a special ceremony and in the presence of James Holtsnider, Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy in the State of Kuwait, Talal Behbehani - Board Member at Al Mulla & Behbehani Motor Co and Imad Flayhan - Managing Director of Al Mulla Automotive, Al Mulla & Behbehani Motor Company, announced the unveiling of the all-new Grand Wagoneer by Jeep. Visitors

to the Auto Show until June 3 will witness firsthand the most luxurious and technologically advanced SUV in the Jeep brand's legendary 80-year history.

All-New Alfa Romeo Tonale

The festivities at Al Mulla Auto Show continued with the reveal of the all-new Alfa Romeo Tonale model in the presence of Carlo Baldocci, Ambassador of the Italian Republic to the State of Kuwait accompanied by the Director of Al Mulla & Behbehani Motor Company Riaan Le Roux. For electric car enthusiasts, Alfa Romeo, Tonale marks a natural entry point into the world of electrification, offering a concrete commitment to sustainable mobility, while remaining faithful to its founding values. With two levels of electrification, Hybrid and Plug-in Hybrid, the Tonale debuts the 160-hp Hybrid VGT (Variable-Geometry Turbo) engine, an exclusive for Alfa Romeo.

Al Mulla Automobiles

Al Mulla Automobiles, the sole authorized distributor of Mercedes-Benz vehicles in Kuwait, featured the Mercedes-Benz GLE 450, the Mercedes-Benz C-Class, the Mercedes-Benz GLE 53 Coupe, and the versatile Mercedes-Benz V-Class. In addition to a wide range of its all-electric lineup including the EQA, EQS and highly anticipated EQS-SUV from Mercedes-Benz, which highlighted to guests the variety available from its focus on electric mobility. In addition to showcasing the exciting Mercedes-AMG GT 63 F1 Edition and the premiere showcase and display of the extraordinary Mercedes-AMG G 63 4x4.

Al Mulla Automobiles - Mercedes-Benz Kuwait took this opportunity to present its enticing promotional offers and programs. Beginning with its 'Buy Now, Pay in 2024' promotional offer on select vehicles and the launch of its unique leasing program which offers customers a chance to lease from a selection of its electric vehicles including EQS, EQA, EQB, EQC and EQE. During the auto show, customers and guests will have the opportunity to sign up for a 24 or 36 month leasing program with monthly installments all while presenting them with the opportunity to own the vehicle at the end of the lease.

This leasing program includes a wide range of benefits to customers including installation of the Mercedes-Benz at home wall box charging station free of charge, in addition to numerous other benefits on service and warranty. The two programs are part of a cooperation with Al Mulla Finance.

At the "Al Mulla Auto Show" Al-Mulla Motors, the sole authorized distributor of Mitsubishi vehicles in Kuwait since 1972, announced the exceptional launch of the strongest offers of the year on a group of Mitsubishi cars during its participation in the "Al-Mulla Auto Show" held at 360 Kuwait. Over the 10-day auto exhibition, Al Mulla Motors will display a diverse range of Mitsubishi cars during its participation in the exhibition that launched on May 25.

Moreover, an exceptional offer on Outlander 4X4 allows customers to purchase the car now and commence paying installments in 2024. In addition, visitors to the auto show will get extraordinary discounts by Al Mulla Motors on a range of its services, such as 50% discount on paint protection and window filming packages, as well as 25% discount on all original Mitsubishi accessories.

Exceptional offers

Al Mulla International Auto Trading Company, a member of Al Mulla Group and the sole authorized distributor of ACURA vehicles in Kuwait, presents its esteemed customers with exceptional deals as it



KUWAIT: Al Mulla Group recently celebrated the opening of its 'Second Al Mulla Auto Show' extending over ten days at the 360 Kuwait.



takes part in the "Al Mulla Auto Show". During its participation, ACURA Al Mulla is displaying a selection of its luxurious Japanese cars such as the MDX Type S, MDX Advance, TLX Type S, and RDX A-Spec, on which it extends exclusive offers and features that are available during the exhibition days only. Visitors to the Al Mulla Auto Show will have the opportunity to reserve their preferred ACURA vehicle, and start making monthly payments in 2024 through Al Mulla Finance.

Auto Rental & Leasing

ARABA by Al Mulla Rental and Leasing Co. announced its participation for the second year running in the Al Mulla Auto Show, to be held at 360 Kuwait from May 25 to June 3. This participation is in line with the company's mission to provide unique leasing solutions for those who prefer to rent a car rather than own one.

ARABA offers a wide range of over 30 types of brand new cars of the latest and most luxurious models from well-known brands. This lineup includes small and medium sedans to luxury, family and SUVs of all sizes as a smart and convenient alternative to owning a car. Renting or leasing a car is an ideal alternative for those who prefer not to bear the ongoing operational requirements, such as maintenance, insurance and car replacement and more.

With increasing auto-financing costs, operating lease is the practical answer, not to mention the freedom to change the model frequently. Customers will enjoy all the benefits of operating lease, also including airport custody, women's packages, 24-hour roadside assistance and the ability to travel outside Kuwait. This comes with immediate approval upon submission and an online payment facility.

"Araba" invites interested clientele to visit the Al Mulla Auto Show to select their favorite car and avail of two concurrent offers at the show, starting with one tailored for the "Graduates" and a second price promotion on selected cars with color and specifications of customers' choice. For inquiries about Al Mulla Auto Show's offers and all rental benefits, please contact the hotline 1800 007 or through the #almullarental page on Instagram and Facebook.

BRABUS Kuwait

BRABUS Kuwait displayed the G500 vehicle and its many premium modifications and vehicle enhancement options. BRABUS also demonstrated its unique capabilities to customize the Mercedes-Benz super cars and bring its globally renowned aftermarket services to visitors. In addition to creating an exciting environment for car enthusiasts to explore the wide range of modifications and enhancement options from BRABUS.

Business

INJAZ, Gulf Bank announce Company Program winners



KUWAIT: The Company Program Competition 2023 concluded its two-day competition, at Kuwait Technical College, announcing 12 winning projects by students from several teams, that competed for various awards in the university and high school categories. INJAZ Kuwait and Gulf Bank – the main sponsor of the competition – held a ceremony at the end of the competition, honoring the winning teams, in the presence of representatives from both Gulf Bank and the INJAZ Foundation. The competition also witnessed a large number of male and female students, their parents, volunteers, and schoolteachers, in addition to other supporting and sponsoring companies affiliated with INJAZ.

As part of its continuous effort to support youth, and its long-standing partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, Gulf Bank awarded the “Best Student Company for the year 2023” award to the two winning student companies, namely: Raskla, that won the university students category, and B-One, that won the high school students’ category – where they will also get to represent Kuwait in the regional Company Program competition. The regional competition will host 14 countries from the Arab region.

Gulf Bank

On this occasion, Gulf Bank’s Deputy General Manager of Corporate Communications, Ahmed Al-Amir, said: “We congratulate Raskla and B-one for winning the Best Student Company for the year 2023 award, and wish them all the best in representing Kuwait in the annual regional competition,” praising the vital role that INJAZ plays in organizing the competition annually.

He added: “At Gulf Bank, we are proud of our long-lasting partnership with INJAZ, that spans over 17 years, which has witnessed the adoption and support of many ideas and companies; some of which have become part of the economic and business world in Kuwait today.”

Al-Amir affirmed Gulf Bank’s keenness to support youth as part of its commitment to encourage and develop their professional work skills – which helps them keep pace with the requirements of the job market and its rapid changes both locally and globally. This is part of Gulf Bank’s 2025 strategy which centralizes youth, and Kuwait Vision 2035, which emphasizes the importance of investing in youth.

He pointed that the Company Program Competition is very popular amongst high school and university students and provides an unprecedented opportunity for them to practice practical experience in establishing and managing a real company; along with the support, and sponsorship, of major institutions, such as Gulf Bank. Al-Amir noted that the successful partnership between Gulf Bank and INJAZ Kuwait, has resulted in training around 26,000 male and female students during the academic years of 2022 and 2023, covering various academic levels ranging from primary to university levels, including fresh graduates.

INJAZ Association

For her part, the CEO of INJAZ Kuwait Association, Laila Hilal Al-Mutairi, stated that INJAZ continues to succeed due to the various companies that believe in the association, and continue to support INJAZ’s activities and programs.

Al-Mutairi mentioned that the partnership with Gulf Bank is extraordinary as it has been a strategic partnership that spans over many years, and Gulf Bank has continued to be a key supporter of the association’s activities; by providing volunteers and training programs for students. She added: “Throughout its journey, INJAZ Kuwait has trained more than 120,000 male and female students in various training programs, which aim to hone the skills of young people when it comes to job preparation, entrepreneurship and



financial knowledge, and we are always looking forward to providing everything that serves young people and prepare them to face future challenges.”

It is worth noting that INJAZ Kuwait, is part of the global network of Junior Achievement worldwide, a non-profit (NPO), non-governmental organization (NGO) driven by Kuwait’s private sector. Through strategic partnerships with Kuwait’s business and education sectors, and with the help of qualified and dedicated volunteers, INJAZ delivers both Arabic and English language educational programs on entrepreneurial and leadership skills, to build successful careers.

Honoring the Judges

The judges were honored in the Company Program Competition, led by Gulf Bank’s Chief Data and Innovation Officer, Mai Bader Al-Owaish. Approximately 100

volunteers from Gulf Bank, played a vital role in guiding and assisting university and high school students participating in the Company Program throughout the competition, as well as providing mentorship programs and performing interviews with university students.

What is Company’s Program

The Company Program teaches students entrepreneurial skills, how to prepare for the job market, and provides them with financial education. The students get an opportunity to establish and manage a real company and go through the full stages of establishing a new project. They begin by developing a business plan, feasibility studies, team building, raising capital, and finally creating and selling a product or service.

During the competition, high school and university students form teams and are

mentored by volunteers from the business community. The teams then come up with a business idea, develop a business plan, and launch their company, which they run for a period of several months. The teams are then judged on their business acumen, innovation, and overall success. The winning team is awarded a prize and recognition for their achievements.

Training Programs and Courses

The programs and training courses offered by INJAZ Kuwait include the following:

- How to get started
- Innovation Camp Workshop
- Company Program
- Little Innovator Workshop
- Recent achievement
- Lifetime Project
- My path to career
- Datathon

NBK Money Market Report

US negotiators inching closer to debt limit deal

KUWAIT: Republican and White House negotiators are inching closer to an agreement to raise the US debt limit with just a week to go before the US government faces a potential default. US Treasury yields edged lower across the curve while equity futures pointed to gains at the open. Moving to FX, the greenback remained strong however slipped against major peers on Friday after the index rose to a 9-month high of 104.41. The euro and pound continued to drag lower, closing at the 1.0726 and 1.2346 levels respectively on Friday after declining for three weeks straight.

PCE at 4.7% annually

Inflation remained stubbornly high in April according to the Federal Reserve’s preferred measure of inflation. The Personal Consumption Expenditures index rose 0.4% for the month excluding food and energy costs, higher than the 0.3% estimate. Annually, the gauge increased 4.7%, 0.1% higher than expected. The report revealed that spending gained 0.8% for the month, while personal income accelerated 0.4% – both numbers were expected to increase 0.4%. Markets were initially pricing in a pause for the Feds June meeting, however the higher than expected PCE report led markets to end the week pricing in a 69% probability for a 25 bps hike.

Business activity rises

Despite rising risks of a recession, US business activity gained ground, lifted by strong growth in the services sector. The flash US Composite PMI Output Index, which tracks the manufacturing and services sector, rose to a reading of 54.4 this month. The figure was the highest level since April 2022 and followed a final reading of 53.4 in April. Services led the gain, with the PMI rising to 55.1 from

53.6, while manufacturing remained in contractionary territory at 48.5.

The survey followed other data that illustrated labor market resilience as job growth accelerated and the unemployment rate fell back to a 53-year low of 3.4%. Retail sales rebounded strongly, while production at factories and homebuilding picked up. Most economists expect a recession in the second quarter of this year, pointing to the Fed’s interest rate hikes amounting to 500 bps since March 2022 as the central bank embarked on its fastest monetary policy tightening campaign since the 1980s.

GDP revised higher

Revisions to first quarter economic data showed the US economy grew faster than initially expected despite inflation coming in higher than first noted. GDP rose 1.3% in the Department of Commerce’s second estimate, compared with the 1.1% growth expected and the previous estimate of 1.1%. The change was mainly driven by an upward revision to private inventory investment, which includes finished goods, materials, and works in progress being saved for a later date. That means inventory investment had less of a drag on GDP earlier this year. Accounting for about two-thirds of economic output, robust consumer spending helped fuel the first quarter growth, evident by data released in the last few weeks.

Jobless claims tick up

Data on applications for US unemployment benefits were revised substantially lower after one state detected a surge in fraud, indicating the labor market is not softening as much as previously thought. Initial unemployment claims in the two weeks through May 13 were revised down by a combined 50,000 according to the Labor Department data revealed on Thursday. In the most recent week, claims increased by 4,000 to 229,000. The overall level of claims is still low, indicating resilient demand for workers. Meanwhile, continuing claims, which include those who have received un-

Rates - 28th May, 2023

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week’s Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.0813	1.0700	1.0831	1.0724	1.0515	1.0820	1.0738
GBP	1.2444	1.2306	1.2472	1.2434	1.2165	1.2545	1.2366
JPY	138.02	137.48	140.72	140.62	139.50	142.50	138.63
CHF	0.8997	0.8939	0.9075	0.9053	0.8870	0.9225	0.8968

employment benefits for a week or more, acting as a good indicator of the difficulty of finding new work, edged lower to 1.79 million in the week ended May 13.

UK inflation below 10%

Prices in the UK dropped sharply in April, with headline CPI inflation coming in at 8.7% year-on-year according to the Office for National Statistics, down from 10.1% in March however higher than the 8.2% estimate. “Electricity and gas prices contributed 1.42 percentage points to the fall in annual inflation in April as last April’s rise dropped out of the annual comparison, but this component still contributed 1.01 percentage points to annual inflation,” the ONS said in its report. On a monthly basis, consumer prices rose by 1.2%. The decline is largely because energy price rises are slowing from the high levels seen a year ago, right after Russia invaded Ukraine and was hit with sanctions.

British inflation remains stubbornly high even as the economy defied expectations for a recession, prompting the Bank of England to hike interest rates for the 12th consecutive time to 4.5% at its last meeting. Economists broadly expect another 25 bps hike at its next meeting due to stickier inflation in the UK compared to major economies as the labor market remains tight and Governor Andrew Bailey warns of a wage price spiral. As households continue to struggle with high food

and energy bills, workers across a range of sectors have launched mass strike action in disputes over pay and conditions.

Strong services demand

Growth in euro zone business activity sped up in April as robust services offset a downturn in manufacturing. The Composite PMI which is seen as an overall gauge of economic health, climbed to an 11-month high of 54.1 from 53.7 in March. The data marked the fourth straight month above the 50-mark that separates growth from contraction.

Digging into the report, the bloc’s dominant services industry hit a one-year high of 56.2, up from March’s 55.9 however still lower than the 56.6 estimate. By contrast, the manufacturing sector survey showed factory activity in the bloc contracted, dropping to 45.8 from March’s 47.3.

As input costs fell at the fastest pace since May 2020, factories increased their prices while demand weakened, evident by the output prices index falling to a 29-month low of 51.6 from 53.4.

Euro-zone GDP is likely to have grown in the second quarter thanks to a strong services sector, however the drag on manufacturing will likely slow the momentum of the economy as a whole. The European Central Bank is widely expected to hike by 25 bps at their June meeting. Similar to the Euro-zone, there is a clear contrast in the UK economy with solid services

activity while manufacturing remains on the softer side. The manufacturing PMI remained in contraction, dropping to 46.9 versus the 48 expected. Meanwhile the services sector PMI rose to 55.1, strong however slightly below expectations of the 55.5 level.

RBNZ signals end to tightening

The Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ) raised rates by 25 bps on Wednesday, sending the official cash rate to its highest level in more than 14 years at 5.5%. The central bank forecasts the cash rate to peak at its current level and will remain at the restrictive level until at least mid-2024 to ensure inflation returns to a target band of 1-3%. The dovish statements defied market expectations for further hikes and sent the New Zealand dollar down 1.25%.

The central bank is a front-runner among its peers in withdrawing pandemic-era stimulus, lifting rates by 525 basis points since October 2021. RBNZ Governor Adrian Orr said at a media conference that there were signs higher interest rates were already having the desired effect. “It is quite nice to see some of the things we were hoping would already be here actually be here. And that is the lower surprise on GDP, the decline in inflation and all the indicators that suggest the interest-sensitive parts of the New Zealand economy are yielding,” he said. Annual inflation is currently running just below a three-decade high of 6.7%.

Lifestyle



Bollywood actor Kamal Haasan arrives for the 23rd edition of the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards in Abu Dhabi. — AFP photos



Bollywood actor Chunky Panday arrives for the 23rd edition of the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards.



Bollywood actor Abhishek Bachchan.

Crime thriller steals best pic at Bollywood awards in UAE

Crime thriller "Drishyam 2" was crowned best picture as Bollywood glossed over its recent struggles with a high-octane International Indian Film Academy Awards show in Abu Dhabi on Saturday. Director Abhishek Pathak's gritty remake of a Malayalam film took the top honor at the end of a four-hour ceremony of pumping dance routines that showcased the Hindi-language movie industry.

Best director went to Ranganathan Madhavan for "Rocketry: The Nambi Effect". Hrithik Roshan won best actor for his role in "Vikram Vedha" and Alia Bhatt took best actress for "Gangubai Kathiawadi". "Brahmastra: Part One - Shiva" picked up a number of prizes including best supporting actress for Mouni Roy and best female playback singer for star vocalist Shreya Ghoshal.

The IIFA awards, intended to reach an international audience, were held for the second year running in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates where more than a third of the 10 million population is Indian. The Hindi-language film industry was worth \$2.5 billion in 2019. India also releases hundreds of films in its 21 other official languages, churning out about 1,600 each year total.

But Mumbai-based Bollywood, the world's most prolific producer of movies, has been mired in crisis since the pandemic with ticket sales remaining low since cinemas reopened.

The rise in streaming services, competition from other parts of India and demand for meatier fare than Bollywood's trademark song-and-dance routines have all contributed to the slump, experts say. However, superstar Shah Rukh Khan's



Bollywood actress Nora Fatehi

"Pathaan" smashed Indian box office records in January, in a positive sign for the industry.

Shiny gold shirt

Indian cinema also received a boost in March when viral dance hit "Naatu Naatu" won an Oscar



Bollywood actor Salman Khan speaks during a press conference.



Bollywood music composer/singer AR Rahman.



Bollywood actor Ritesh Deshmukh (left) and his wife actress Genelia Deshmukh.

for best song, a first for a film from the country. "What does IIFA mean for (Indian) cinema? I think opening up to the global stage and also bringing us to the global stage as well, so it's exciting both ways," said actress Jacqueline Fernandez, wearing an Arab-inspired head covering.

Among the highlights, heart-throb Varun Dhawan, wearing a shiny gold shirt, rode onto the stage on a mini-dune buggy, and ceremony host Vicky Kaushal drew screams from the audience when he launched into a dance number. Actor and eco-activist Dia Mirza reminded the crowd about pressing environmental concerns months before the UAE, one of the world's biggest oil producers, hosts the COP28 United Nations climate talks in November and December.

Veteran actor Kamal Haasan was awarded for his outstanding achievement in Indian cinema and Anil Kapoor won best supporting actor for his role in "Jugg Jugg Jeeyo". "Darlings" took best original story, and best female debut was Khushali Kumar in "Dhokha: Round D Corner". The IIFA show, one of a number of Indian awards ceremonies, has been held in several countries since its debut in London in 2000. Voting is done online by fans. — AFP



Bollywood actress Urvashi Rautela.

'Parasite' star Song Kang-ho feels weight of global stardom

Song Kang-ho says he feels the weight of responsibility as one of the most recognizable faces of Korean cinema after the global success of "Parasite". Having won best actor at Cannes last year for his role in "Broker", the 56-year-old actor was back at this year's festival with an out-of-competition comedy, "Cobweb", about a director desperately trying to change the ending of his film to turn it into a masterpiece.

Set during the authoritarian days of 1970s South Korea, "Cobweb" shows the director struggling to manage the chaos of angry producers, hysterical actors and over-bearing censors. Song said he didn't have to look far for motivation. "Maybe I've never been on a film set quite like this," he said, laughing, "But I've certainly had some similar psychological panic — it's not just me, anyone in the industry knows it."



South Korean actor Song Kang-ho arrives on stage to deliver the Best Actress Prize during the closing ceremony of the 76th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes. — AFP

'Tumbled into films'

Song was already a major star in South Korea long before "Parasite" won the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 2019 and Best Picture at the Oscars the following year. But he started out with humbler dreams on the stage in Seoul's renowned Daehak-ro theatre scene. "Not at all did I expect to become famous. I never even dreamed of playing in a film," he told AFP. "I was a stage actor 30 years ago and my dream was to become a very good actor on stage. I really tumbled into films and the cinema industry by chance."

But "Parasite" director Bong Joon-ho, who also cast him in cult favorite "Snowpiercer" and two other films, told the New York Times that he first met Song during that period in the 1990s and could immediately "tell he had the makings of a juggernaut". Song proved him right, bringing an everyman quality to very diverse roles, from a country detective in Bong's "Memories of Murder", a conflicted priest in "Thirst" or a cunning thief in "The Good, The Bad, The Weird".

He has become one of South Korea's biggest names just as its cultural dominance is peaking around the world across film, music and much more. "I would be lying if I said I don't feel the weight of it. I feel the responsibility," he said. "But I would say it's a healthy weight, not a negative one. I know that there are a lot of expectations of me as one of the faces of Korean film and I feel I have to live up to the expectations of my fans as well, but it's a positive thing."

He said it was South Korea's rocky past — through war with its northern neighbor and years of military dictatorship — that helped foster the dynamism of its culture once it became a democracy. "Korea really went through a very dynamic history because of its geopolitical position," Song said. "Artists felt a social imperative to create and push forward all the time. This was the source of the diversity in Korean cinema. 'It's like if you build a dam in a river — as soon as there is a small crack, the force of the water coming through is incredible.'" — AFP



A photo taken and made available by Italian news agency Ansa shows fluorescent green waters below the Rialto Bridge in Venice's Grand Canal. — AFP

Venice's Grand Canal turns phosphorescent green

A stretch of Venice's Grand Canal turned bright green Sunday, prompting police to investigate amid speculation about a stunt by environmentalists. Gondoliers could be seen punting through the phosphorescent waters, while tourists took photographs of the green area, from the Rialto Bridge up and along part of the Canal. The color was first spotted by local residents, the Veneto region's president Luca Zaia said on Twitter. "The prefect has called an urgent meeting with the police to investigate the origin of the liquid," he said.

The Italian fire service said it was helping the regional environmental protection agency take samples for testing. It is not the first time the Grand Canal has been turned green. In 1968, Argentine artist Nicolas Garcia Uruburu dyed the waters of Venice's Grand Canal green with a fluorescent dye during the 34th Venice Biennale in a stunt to promote ecological awareness. Police were looking into whether Sunday's action could be a protest by climate change activists, local daily La Nuova Venezia said. — AFP

Lifestyle



French director Justine Triet poses with her trophy during a photocall after she won the Palme d'Or for the film "Anatomie d'une Chute" (Anatomy of a Fall) during the closing ceremony of the 76th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP photos



French director Justine Triet (second left) poses with French actor Antoine Reinartz, German actress Sandra Hueller and actor Milo Machado Graner during a photocall after she won the Palme d'Or for the film "Anatomie d'une Chute" (Anatomy of a Fall).



French director Justine Triet (right) celebrates on stage with US actress Jane Fonda after she won the Palme d'Or.

'ANATOMY OF A FALL' WINS TOP PRIZE AS WOMEN DOMINATE CANNES

A tense courtroom drama about a writer accused of her husband's murder took the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival on Saturday, capping a strong year for women filmmakers. French director Justine Triet became only the third woman ever to win the festival's top prize with the icy tale "Anatomy of a Fall", led by a riveting performance from German actress Sandra Hueller. Triet used her acceptance speech to slam the government of President Emmanuel Macron for the "shocking" way it imposed a law increasing the retirement age in France.

But she said she was "deeply touched." "I am very pleased to be the third woman who has gotten this prize — things are truly changing and for the best," she told reporters. There were a record seven women among the 21 entries competing at Cannes this year, and many featured complex female characters. "Anatomy of a Fall" included a standout performance by "Messi" — the border collie who plays a pivotal role in the film, and won the Palm Dog award a day earlier.

Though Hueller did not win an award — Cannes traditionally only gives one prize per film — she was arguably the big winner on the night since she also starred in "The Zone of Interest" by Britain's Jonathan Glazer, which took the runner-up Grand Prix. The harrowing and unique look at the private life of a Nazi family at the Auschwitz concentration camp never shows the horrors of the camp directly, leaving them implied by disturbing background noises and small visual details. Hueller chillingly portrays the wife of the Nazi commandant, happily tending her garden and boasting she is "the queen of Auschwitz".



French director Justine Triet (front) celebrates on stage after she won the Palme d'Or.

The jury of nine film professionals was led by last year's winner Ruben Ostlund ("Triangle of Sadness"), and included Hollywood stars Paul Dano and Brie Larson. "We had a lot of intense, fun discussions," Ostlund told reporters, adding that it was "a very strong line-up". Best director

went to Vietnamese-born French filmmaker Tran Anh Hung for "The Pot-au-Feu", a lustrous homage to French cuisine that was loved by many international critics but seemed to leave most local pundits cold. He thanked his star Juliette Binoche, saying she was "quite extraordinary in the film".

Best actor went to Japan's Koji Yakusho for "Perfect Days". He thanked German director Wim Wenders for creating "a magnificent character" in the touching tale about a Tokyo toilet cleaner with a complex backstory. There was a surprise choice for best actress in Turkey's Merve Dizdar for "About Dry Grasses", the latest from previous Palme-winner Nuri Bilge Ceylan. Presenting the Palme d'Or, Hollywood legend Jane Fonda recalled the first time she came to Cannes in 1963. "There were no women directors competing at that time and it never even occurred to us that there was something wrong with that," she said. "We have come a long way."

'Deeply honored'

The third-place Jury Prize went to Aki Kaurismaki for his sweet, deadpan and very Finnish film "Fallen Leaves" that garnered huge cheers from festival-goers. The 76th edition of the world's leading film get-together was a particularly glitzy affair, with world premieres for the new Indiana Jones and Martin Scorsese films playing out of competition. Glazer received his award from Quentin Tarantino and 97-year-old cult director Roger Corman. The festival often felt like a dream retirement home populated by ageing male icons from Hollywood.

Harrison Ford, 80, got weepy when he received an honorary Palme d'Or ahead of the premiere of "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny". Scorsese, also 80, said he was happy to stay out of the competition with his Native American epic "Killers of the Flower Moon", joking to AFP: "It's time for others. I got to go. There are kids around." European auteurs Ken Loach, 86, Marco Bellocchio, 83, and Victor Erice, 82, all brought new films to the festival. — AFP



French director Justine Triet (center) celebrates on stage with fellow laureates after she won the Palme d'Or for the film "Anatomie d'une Chute" (Anatomy of a Fall) during the closing ceremony of the 76th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

The real winner at Cannes was actress Sandra Hueller

She may not have won an award, but many will agree that the big winner at Cannes this year was German actress Sandra Hueller, who starred in the festival's top two films. Hueller confirmed her reputation as one of Europe's most versatile and fearless actresses as she gave a gripping performance in courtroom drama "Anatomy of a Fall", which won the top prize Palme d'Or for French director Justine Triet on Saturday.

She also starred in Holocaust drama "The Zone of Interest" by Britain's Jonathan Glazer, which won the runner-up Grand Prix. "I think about human beings as vessels for all sorts of feelings and emotions... it's just a question of how to channel that and show that," Hueller told reporters.

Triet praised Hueller, telling AFP: "Everything that comes out of her is 100 percent strong." "Due to her theatre training, she has a completely different way of working. When she arrives, she has already been working for months on the film so her first takes are very strong," she said. "She is an actress who has a real point of view on her character, there is a real exchange."

'A responsibility'

Born on April 30, 1978, in East Germany, Hueller trained in theatre in Berlin after the end of the Cold War. She gained international acclaim for "Requiem" (2006), playing a woman with epilepsy in a religious community that believes she is possessed, which won her the best actress award at the Berlin Film Festival. Her lead role in black com-

edy "Toni Erdmann" (2016) confirmed her status as a star of the festival circuit, showing she had comic timing to match her dramatic chops.

Many felt "Toni Erdmann" was robbed of the Palme d'Or at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival, but that was more than compensated in 2023. Her performance in "The Zone of Interest" was particularly disturbing as she took on the role of Hedwig Hoess, wife of Auschwitz camp commandant Rudolf Hoess. She told reporters in Cannes that she "felt a responsibility as a German" to play the role.

"There was no real way to do it right," she said. "It was never about being good at something or doing something extraordinary. It was so little to do with acting, but with presence, with listening, being respectful for those around us." Both films at the festival showcase Hueller's "flinty intelligence, her emotional ferocity and her utter fearlessness," wrote the Los Angeles Times, calling her the "queen of Cannes".

Hueller said the two directors were "completely different" in their approach. "But both are so focused on what they do," she added. "Some directors are a bit manipulative... don't give you all the information you need for a character, but with these two everything was on the table — what they wanted to achieve, what they wanted to tell." Also known for her stage work, Hueller has collaborated frequently with renowned theatre director Thomas Ostermeier, trying her hand at everything from Shakespeare to avant-garde experimentalism. — AFP

The winners at the 76th Cannes Film Festival



The 76th edition of the Cannes Film Festival ended Saturday in the South of France with the awarding of its top prize, the Palme d'Or.

Here is a list of the winners:

- Palme d'Or: Justine Triet for "Anatomy of a Fall"
- Grand Prix: Jonathan Glazer for "The Zone of Interest"
- Best director: Tran Anh Hung for "The Pot-au-Feu"
- Best actress: Merve Dizdar for "About Dry Grasses"
- Best actor: Koji Yakusho for "Perfect Days"
- Best screenplay: Yuji Sakamoto for "Monster"
- Jury prize: Aki Kaurismaki for "Fallen Leaves"
- Camera d'Or for best first film: Thien An Pham for "Inside the Yellow Cocoon Shell"
- Best short film: Flora Anna Buda for "27". — AFP



German actress Sandra Hueller arrives for the Closing Ceremony and the screening of the film "Elemental" during the 76th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

Sports

Buzzer-beating Boston Celtics force Miami Heat to game 7

4th team in NBA history to level best-of-seven playoff series

MIAMI: With a dramatic buzzer-beater from Derrick White, the Boston Celtics forced their NBA Eastern Conference Finals series with the Miami Heat to a winner-take-all game seven in a heart-stopping 104-103 win in South Florida on Saturday. The Celtics became just the fourth team in NBA history to level a best-of-seven playoff series after trailing 3-0. They will now have a chance on Monday to mark an even more impressive milestone if they can become the first team to win a series after losing the opening three games and earn a place in the final against the Denver Nuggets.

It was a crushing loss for Miami, who were less than a second away from reaching their seventh NBA Final before White's inspired touch. The Celtics had led for most of the contest but Miami looked to have grabbed the win and the series when Jimmy Butler was fouled, attempting a three-point shot, by Boston's Al Horford.

With three seconds left on the clock, Butler, who had been well below-par until he came alive late in the fourth quarter, kept his cool to sink all three free throws and give the Heat a 103-102 lead. Facing elimination, Marcus Smart's three-point attempt bounced off the rim, but White was alert and strong to tip the rebound into the bucket, the shot leaving his fingertips only a fraction of a second before the buzzer. The Miami crowd were distraught as the Celtics celebrated in a huddle on the court. "Ball came to me, I made the shot. That's what I saw," said White, reflecting on the game-winning moment.

"It felt good. Everybody was asking me, 'did you get it off?' And I was like, 'yeah, I think so,' but it was so close, you never know," he said. "I'm happy we won. Whatever it takes. We got our backs against the

wall. Just happy we won." Heat coach Erik Spoelstra rued his team's luck on the decisive final play. "That thing just bounced a different way. That's the only place it could have bounced to hurt us. I thought we had a lot of things covered on that play and sometimes things just don't break your way," he said.

Jayson Tatum led Boston with 31 points and had 11 rebounds and five assists, while Jaylen Brown came up with 26 points and 10 rebounds. Butler went into the fourth quarter with just nine points but ended with 24, while Caleb Martin provided 21 points for Miami. Butler shot just 5-of-21 and took responsibility for Miami's situation. "I told the guys in the locker room, if I play better we are not even in this position," said Butler, who vowed to be back to his best in game seven.

'To hell and back'

The Celtics had led by 11 points midway through the second quarter as Miami struggled at both ends of the court, but the Heat rallied to reduce the deficit to 57-53 at half-time. Boston opened up another double-figure lead in the third, but once more couldn't quite shrug off Miami, and the Heat found a way to grab the lead with a Butler tip lay-up making it 83-82 with 7:57 left in the fourth.

But the Celtics responded strongly with a 16-5 run before the late drama began to unfold, with Butler scoring 10 points to give Miami the lead with three seconds to go. Butler was philosophical in defeat. "That's basketball for you. Basketball at its finest. Very, very, very entertaining," he said. "We can do it. I know that we will do it. We've got to go on the road and win in a very, very, very tough environment. But we are capable of it. So let's get busy."



MIAMI: Derrick White #9 of the Boston Celtics drives to the basket ahead of Bam Adebayo #13 of the Miami Heat during the fourth quarter in game six of the Eastern Conference Finals on May 27, 2023. — AFP

The momentum is clearly with Boston after yet again roaring back from a possible exit. "It gives you a supreme boost in confidence, man. It doesn't get too much worse than being down 0-3. We feel like we've been to hell and back," said Brown. "We feel

like we can face any adversity that gets thrown at us in the duration of the game or the duration of the season or in the postseason. It all means nothing if we don't come out and give our best effort on our home floor on Monday night." — AFP

News in Brief

Granada return to La Liga

BARCELONA: Granada sealed a swift return to La Liga and clinched Spain's second division title with a 2-0 win over Leganes on Saturday. Las Palmas also booked their place in the top flight next season by holding Alaves to a 0-0 draw on the final weekend of La Liga 2, finishing three points behind Granada. Levante, third after a late win over Real Oviedo, are in the play-offs along with Alaves, Eibar, and Albacete. Myrto Uzuni sent Granada ahead just before half-time and Bryan Zaragoza netted the second after the break as they eased to victory over Leganes. The Andalusian side were relegated from La Liga in 2022, finishing 18th, but returned at the first time of asking as champions despite losing 11 games, more than the five sides beneath them. Las Palmas had been stuck in the second division for five seasons after dropping down from the top flight in 2018. — AFP

Hamilton survives crash

MONTE CARLO: Delighted seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton said on Saturday that he had enjoyed himself at the Monaco Grand Prix more than any for 15 years thanks to Mercedes' upgrades package. Hamilton qualified sixth for Sunday's classic 78-lap race at the Mediterranean street circuit despite crashing in final practice. He admitted he had hoped to do better — and blamed himself for ignoring advice from his team. "The last time I enjoyed this track this much was 2007, 2008 and my Formula 3 days here, I've generally really enjoyed it," said Hamilton. "P1 to P2 was good, P2 to P3 I think was good, but then we made a change into P3 which didn't feel as good, but it was faster in the middle sector, but slower in the first and last. It was just that the car felt like a real handful, I really struggled to switch on the tyres and that was the first time in this session." — AFP

Troubled Samp strike deal

MILAN: Sampdoria announced on Saturday that a preliminary agreement had been struck with two companies, one owned by Leeds United owner Andrea Radrizzani, for new investment in the troubled Italian club. Recently relegated Sampdoria said that the early deal had been struck with Gestio Capital and Radrizzani's Aser Holding, and is widely expected to end with the club being sold. Italian media reported that Paris Saint-Germain owners Qatar Sports Investments will hold a minority stake in Samp should the transaction go through. They are ready to take the club from Massimo Ferrero, who had to resign the presidency in December 2021 after being arrested for fraudulent bankruptcy but remained owner. Samp added that the completion of the transaction, which was "more in line with the interest of the company's creditors and the recovery plan prepared by the club" than another offer, was conditional on a debt restructuring agreement being respected. — AFP

Jerry win Geneva Open final

GENEVA: Outsider Nicolas Jarry beat Grigor Dimitrov in straight sets in the Geneva Open final on Saturday to bounce into next week's French Open bolstered by a clay court title. Chilean Jarry, the world number 54, beat Dimitrov 7-6 (7/1), 6-1 to claim only the third singles title of his career. Bulgarian world number 33 Dimitrov was Jarry's third impressive scalp in three days at the Parc des Eaux-Vives. He knocked out top seed and world number four Casper Ruud — the 2021 and 2022 defending champion — in the quarter-finals. The Chilean number one then beat Alexander Zverev in the semis. "It was a very awesome week. Since the beginning my only mistake was one game against Casper," Jarry told reporters. The 27-year-old will move to a career high ranking of number 35. Former world number three Dimitrov missed the chance to claim his first title since winning the ATP Finals on his debut in 2017. — AFP

Kuwaitis shine at shooting event

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations, Eng Duajj Khalaf Al-Otaibi, has dedicated Khalid Al-Mudhaf's victory in the ISSF World Cup Shotgun Trap event and Mansour Al-Rashidi's victory in skeet to HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and thanked them for their continued support. Al-Otaibi was pleased with the results of the championship despite the tough competition. He lauded the role of the technical and administrative officials who are with the shooters, as well as the high level of shooting they demonstrated. Al-Otaibi also thanked the Public Authority for Sport (PAS), its director general, and his deputies for their support.



Eng. Duajj Khalaf Al-Otaibi



Dellandrea's goals give Stars a win in NHL playoffs

LOS ANGELES: Ty Dellandrea scored twice in 87 seconds during the third period on Saturday, giving the Dallas Stars a 4-2 NHL playoff victory at Vegas to sustain their championship hopes. The Stars pulled within 3-2 in the best-of-seven Western Conference final with game six set for Monday at Dallas. A seventh game, if needed, would be Wednesday in Vegas. The victory denied, at least temporarily, the host Golden Knights their second trip to the Stanley Cup Final in the club's six-season history.

The Stars are trying to become only the fifth team in NHL history to rally from a 3-0 deficit to win a best-of-seven series, and the first since

the 2014 Los Angeles Kings did it in the first round. "We feel good. We have a lot of fight in that room," Dellandrea said. "When we were down three we just kept focused, one game at a time, one period at a time. We're keeping our eyes pretty forward and narrow here, taking it slow, one day at a time. We've got a lot of confidence in that room."

The Stars took their first lead of the contest at 3-2 with 9:25 remaining in the third period on a sharp-angled shot by Dellandrea. The 22-year-old Canadian center fired a puck that deflected off Vegas defenseman Alex Pietrangolo's stick and went under the glove of Golden Knights goaltender Adin Hill and just inside the left post. Dellandrea made it 4-2 with 7:58 remaining in regulation time when a loose puck bouncing in front of the goal landed on his stick and he fired it past Hill to give the Stars their biggest lead of the series.

It was the first multi-goal NHL

game for Dellandrea, who managed only nine markers in the regular season, and his first go-ahead goal in an NHL third period. "It's exciting," Dellandrea said. "Our line was working good all night. Felt good for sure. We've got bigger things we want to accomplish. This is a big win. We get to go back home and have another opportunity. We've been through a little bit of adversity this round."

Stars answer quickly

Dallas captain Jamie Benn missed the contest while serving the second of a two-game suspension for a cross check of Vegas captain Mark Stone in game three. "A big message in the room is we want to get Jamie back, we want to get our captain back," Dellandrea said. "We focused on that and we've got him back." Either the Stars or Golden Knights will face the Eastern Conference champion Florida Panthers, who swept Carolina in the other semifinal series.

Ivan Barbeshev opened the scoring for the Golden Knights after 13:36 of the first period. The 27-year-old Russian center took a pass from Jack Eichel, came in from the left side, switched the puck from his backhand to his forehand as he skated across the front of the goal and fired the puck past sprawling Dallas goaltender Jake Oettinger for a 1-0 Vegas lead.

Luke Glendening answered for the Stars only 1:48 later on a tip-in off an assist from Thomas Harley to lift Dallas level. It was the second goal of the playoffs for the 34-year-old American center. Vegas fired the first six shots on goal but Dallas outshot the Golden Knights 13-10 in the first period. Chandler Stephenson put Vegas back on top 3:20 into the second period, taking a cross-ice pass from Shea Theodore and firing a quick shot high over the glove of Oettinger. Again the Stars answered quickly, with Jason Robertson netting the equalizer only 2:09 later, flicking a wrist shot past Hill. — AFP

Champion Crouser obliterates his own world record

LOS ANGELES: Olympic and world shot put champion Ryan Crouser produced a sensational performance to obliterate his own world record at the Los Angeles Grand Prix on Saturday. The 30-year-old American star heaved a mammoth 23.56m throw at Drake Stadium to smash his previous world mark of 23.37m set at the US Olympic trials in Eugene in 2021. Crouser, the 2016 and 2020 Olympic gold medalist and reigning world champion, had signaled he was in the mood for a big performance with two earlier throws that broke the 23m-barrier. But he brought the house down with a fourth throw of 23.56m that improved his previous world mark by a whopping 19cm.

Crouser said afterwards that his record was the result of a new throwing technique he has developed this year involving a "step across" — and warned he believes he can throw further. "I'm really excited," the 6ft 7in 320-pound man-mountain said. "I felt like I have a ton of power and I caught a big one but there's still a lot more which is really exciting because I haven't been throwing hard in training. I've been at 75% intensity, working on some technical stuff. Some of it stuck and some of

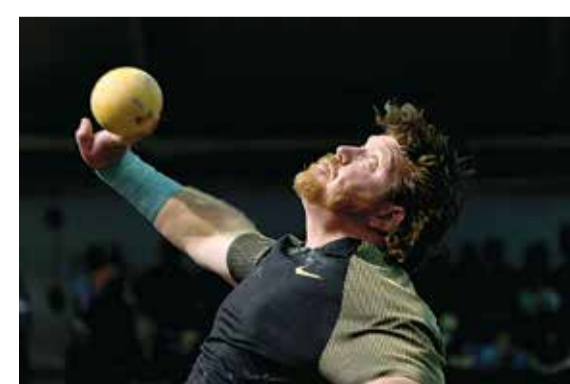
it still needs improvement so I'm really, really excited for this as a stepping stone going forward."

Quest for improvement

Although he has dominated shot putting for much of the past decade, Crouser said he is constantly innovating his technique in the quest for improvement. "I'm always competing against myself whether it was in high school or in college - I've always felt like my goal is to throw a personal best. It's such a special feeling to say 'Today I'm the best I've ever been'. That's what continues to push me to be better." Crouser's performance was the undeniable highlight of a high-caliber meeting that is part of a strategic move by USA Track and Field to stage more top-tier events on US soil. However a much-anticipated women's 100m fell flat when US sprint star Sha'Carri Richardson, fellow US sprinter Aleia Hobbs and the Ivory Coast's Marie-Josée Ta Lou all scratched from the final.

Richardson had eased through her heat in 10.90sec, second-fastest overall behind Ta Lou, who clocked 10.88sec to win her heat. However both women failed to show for the final. US media reported that Richardson had complained of cramps after her heat. In the men's 100m meanwhile, 2019 world champion Christian Coleman was surprisingly beaten into third place behind Jamaica's Ackeem Blake, who won in 9.89sec, with Cravont Charleston of the United States second in 9.91sec.

In the men's pole vault, Sweden's Olympic and world champion Armand "Mondo" Duplantis set a world leading jump of 5.91m to claim victory ahead of Sam Kendricks of



Ryan Crouser

the United States. Chris Nilsen was third in 5.71m. There was a world leading time, too, in the women's 100m hurdles, where Olympic champion Jasmine Camacho-Quinn stormed to victory in 12.31sec ahead of former world record holder Keni Harrison, second in 12.35sec.

Nigeria's world record holder and reigning world champion Tobi Amusan finished last in 12.69sec. Puerto-Rico's Camacho-Quinn said her performance augurs well for the rest of the season as she prepares for the World Championships in Budapest in August. "I messed up in the race - I was way too high over certain hurdles and I wasted a bit of time," Camacho-Quinn said. "Honestly, I'm happy for the time but I know I still have more." — AFP

Sports

Bayern seize German title, but major doubts remain

A record 11th straight Bundesliga title win

DORTMUND: Despite a record 11th straight Bundesliga title win, Bayern Munich's immediate future has been thrown into serious doubt after the shock sackings of CEO Oliver Kahn and sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic. Manager Thomas Tuchel revealed the decision had been pre-meditated, regardless of the result of Saturday's matches.

"I've known since yesterday" Tuchel said, saying "the two of them were responsible for the journey we've been on together. I'm trying to process it now." The drama continued after the sacking, with Kahn taking to Twitter and complaining he had been banned from the club's title celebration. Kahn congratulated the team on their win, but said "I would love to celebrate with you, but unfortunately I can't because the club has prohibited me from doing so."

'Feel the pressure'

Pre-match, Dortmund looked set for a memorable championship win, having closed the gap with Bayern from nine points at Christmas to take a two-point lead into the final round. A veteran of now 12 Bundesliga titles, Bayern captain Thomas Mueller piled on the pressure on Friday, unleashing mind games via social media, saying he knew Dortmund's players would be nervous.

"I think 200,000 to 400,000 fans will be expected at the championship celebration," Mueller wrote, saying "if Dortmund want to win, you have to stand up to (the pressure) as a player." "I believe that the players will also feel this pressure and that's where my hope lies." The side were 2-0 down after 25 minutes, with striker Sebastien Haller having missed a penalty.

While Dortmund fought back to draw 2-2, the point was not enough as Bayern won the title - their 33rd Bundesliga crown - on goal difference. Bayern

and Dortmund finished the season on 71 points, the lowest points total for a champion in Germany in more than a decade. Indeed, the failure to capitalize said a lot more about Dortmund's nerves than it did about Bayern's quality, with many of the Bavarians' European rivals less likely to be so accommodating.

'Instead of celebrating'

While much of the post-match focus was aimed squarely at Dortmund's inability to take advantage of a golden opportunity, Tuchel indicated suggested the upcoming celebrations would be muted. "Instead of celebrating, we now have another issue" the manager said in response to the sackings.

German football clubs give a greater degree of control to club officials than clubs in England and elsewhere, with the two seen as directly responsible for most aspects of management in recent seasons, including recruitment. Kahn and Salihamidzic were behind the decision to sack coach Julian Nagelsmann and hire Tuchel in March, despite the manager having lost just three of 37 games in all competitions this season.

The two also signed off on the exit of record-breaking forward Robert Lewandowski to Barcelona. Bayern still clearly miss the goals of Lewandowski, with none of the side's star-studded forward line stepping into the void. The Pole scored 344 goals in 375 games for Bayern, winning the league in each of his eight seasons in Bavaria. Lewandowski left Bayern frustrated at the public courting of then Dortmund forward Erling Haaland by Salihamidzic, later saying he felt disrespected after his service to the club.

Haaland eventually went to Man City and Bayern brought in Sadio Mane from Liverpool. Mane,



MUNICH: Bayern Munich's players celebrate with the trophy after the German first division Bundesliga football match between FC Cologne and FC Bayern Munich in Cologne, western Germany on May 27, 2023. — AFP

now 31, scored just seven league goals in 25 league games as he struggled with injury and form. Bayern's best forward is the 20-year-old Jamal Musiala, with others like Serge Gnabry, Leroy Sane, Kingsley Coman and Mane failing to deliver consistently. Money is also a major issue at Bayern, despite the club's domestic dominance in Germany.

Although Bayern may not splash the transfer cash to the same degree as their English and Spanish counterparts, the side's wage bill is reportedly

higher than Man City, with several older players on long-term deals. The average age of Bayern's squad is 26.5, one of the oldest in the Bundesliga and much higher than competitors Dortmund and Leipzig. Mueller and injured captain Manuel Neuer are well over 30 and Tuchel's failure to get the team playing in a consistent or fluid fashion. While Bayern's domestic supremacy is assured, internal uncertainty and the rise of state-funded super clubs mean the German champions have a cloudy future. — AFP

Hayes toasts WSL winners Chelsea

LONDON: Chelsea manager Emma Hayes said the drinks were on her after a 3-0 win at Reading on Saturday secured a fourth consecutive Women's Super League title. Sam Kerr scored twice, while Guro Reiten was also on target, to secure the victory the Blues needed to hold off Manchester United's fight to win the English top flight for the first time. Victory completed a league and FA Cup double for Chelsea after they beat United 1-0 at Wembley earlier this month.

And they came close to a treble after missing out narrowly to Barcelona in the Champions League semi-finals. "Drinks are on me. I'll be ordering the shots!" Hayes said. "I hope they have a fantastic time - they've earned it." Chelsea's reign of domestic dominance has been seriously challenged this season as United, Arsenal and Manchester City pushed them in a four-way title race until the final weeks of the season. The champions, though, showed their quality when it mattered most with a seven-game winning run to finish the league season.

"Sometimes I refer to it as a lemon that we've squeezed everything out of and we just keep trying to get a little bit more." Hayes added on her side's ability to keep winning. "We find those margins but that is because of the staff in the background. That's the work everybody is doing to keep us at the front of the pile." Fittingly, it was Chelsea's two star performers this season in Kerr and Reiten who took centre stage to seal the title. "We've played so many games, you have to go again every third or fourth day," said Reiten. "But we keep doing it again and again, digging deep, finding that special moment to win games and, yeah, we're good!"



LONDON: Chelsea's English goalkeeper Emily Orman lifts the trophy as Chelsea's players celebrate winning the title after the English Women's Super League football match between Reading and Chelsea at the Select Car Leasing Stadium in Reading, west of London on May 27, 2023. — AFP

The two combined for the opening goal after just 18 minutes when Kerr headed in Reiten's cross. The Norwegian midfielder then slotted through the legs of goalkeeper Grace Moloney to make it 2-0 before half-time. Kerr was crowned the football writers' women's player of the year this week and struck her 29th goal of the campaign in all competitions two minutes from time by tapping home at the second attempt. Defeat confirmed Reading's relegation from the top flight. United won 1-0 at Liverpool thanks to Lucia Garcia's goal but finished two points adrift of Chelsea.

The Red Devils women's side was only formed five years ago and they will play in the Champions League next season for the first time. "I think we've maxed out on our potential in terms of running with Chelsea to the wire. It's nice that it's close but we know we've got some way to go," said United and England goalkeeper Mary Earps. "I'm hungry for success. I want to go and win the Champions League now!" Arsenal claimed the third and final place in next season's Champions League ahead of City on goal difference despite losing 2-0 at home to Aston Villa. — AFP

Luton complete fairytale rise to EPL riches

LONDON: Luton completed a fairytale journey to the Premier League after beating Coventry on penalties in the Championship playoff final at Wembley on Saturday. The Hatters secured a fourth promotion in 10 seasons 6-5 in the shootout after the sides were tied at 1-1 after 120 minutes. Financial experts estimate promotion to world football's most watched league to be worth around £170 million (\$210 million) for a club that have been through turmoil since they last played in the top flight 31 years ago.

Luton are the first club to go from the

fifth tier to the top flight in the Premier League era. Midfielder Pelly Ruddock Mpanzu has been on that whole journey and becomes the first player to go from the National League to Premier League with the same club. "I feel like I completed football," said Mpanzu. It's been a journey. It's going to be a party all summer."

Some of Luton's cash windfall will go to upgrading the club's stadium, Kenilworth Road, which with a capacity just over 10,000 and set among rows of terraced houses, will be hosting the likes of Manchester United and Liverpool next season. Luton had to recover from an early shock when captain Tom Lockyer collapsed on the field. The Welsh centre-back was stretchered off and taken to hospital, where the club confirmed he was responsive and able to talk to his family. "I feel really good, but the only thing I'm

thinking about now is Tom Lockyer," said Luton manager Rob Edwards.

Lockyer had played his part when Luton had the ball in the net after just five minutes when Gabriel Osho was flagged offside as he forced the ball in from close range. But a bright start from Edwards' men was rewarded on 23 minutes when Elijah Adebayo's good work down the left teed up Jordan Clark to smash home at the near post. Adebayo had a second Luton goal ruled out before half-time for handball. Coventry looked like a side that had stage fright in front of 85,000 people in the first-half. But Mark Robins' side have grown used to thriving in adversity.

In their 22 years away from the top flight, Coventry have been forced out of their home city to Northampton and Birmingham due to financial issues in leasing their stadium. Even when restored to Coventry, they began the season at the

foot of the Championship table after being unable to host home games due to the state of their pitch which had been used for rugby at the Commonwealth Games. Coventry were much improved after the break and got their reward 24 minutes from time when Viktor Gyokeres teed up Gustavo Hamer to fire into the far corner.

The Sky Blues nearly turned the tie around fully within minutes when Matt Godden blazed a big chance over. Tired legs and tension took over in extra-time, but Coventry had a massive let off four minutes from time. Joe Taylor slotted home after charging down Jonathan Panzo's clearance, but the goal was ruled out as the ball struck the Luton man's hand. All of the first 11 penalties were then scored as the takers showed incredible poise under the most extreme pressure. But when Fankaty Dabo's effort sailed over the bar, Luton's dreams came true. — AFP

Bayern chairman backs Tuchel after sackings

MUNICH: Bayern Munich chairman Herbert Hainer on Sunday promised manager Thomas Tuchel's job is safe with the freshly-minted German champions, while confirming the return of former executive Karl-Heinz Rummenigge. Bayern on Saturday overcame a two-point deficit to leaders Borussia Dortmund to win their 11th straight German title, but announced the sacking of CEO Oliver Kahn and sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic at full-time.

In a specially convened press conference on Sunday, Hainer explained the duo were sacked because the club's "performance in the second-half of the season was not how we imagine FC Bayern to be," but said the club had "absolutely no thoughts" of firing Tuchel.

"We are absolutely convinced by Thomas Tuchel. He is one of the best managers in Europe and has shown that at several clubs. I don't know why Thomas Tuchel should not be our coach." Tuchel was appointed in March after Kahn and Salihamidzic sacked then manager Julian Nagelsmann. While Kahn was replaced by former CFO Jan-Christian Dreesen, a new sporting director has not yet been appointed.

Hainer however confirmed the return of Rummenigge, who played for the club for a decade and served as CEO until he was replaced by Kahn in 2021. The chairman said the club would lean heavily on Bayern's sporting expertise, including the returned Rummenigge as well as giving Tuchel a bigger role. Hainer also revealed that the Kahn and Salihamidzic had been told of the decision on Thursday, "early enough so that they would have time to deal with the situation" and "out of respect for these two icons of Bayern Munich."

While Salihamidzic made the trip to Cologne for Bayern's title-deciding match, the club prevented Kahn from attending because he was "too emotional". Hainer said Salihamidzic took the decision "very well" but "we had the same conversation with Oliver Kahn and unfortunately it did not go so well." "We were unable to end it amicably," said Hainer "and because of this, he couldn't go to Cologne on Saturday."

Kahn spoke out on Twitter on Saturday saying "I would love to celebrate with (the players), but unfortunately I can't because the club has prohibited me from doing so." On Sunday, Kahn hit back at reports he had reacted emotionally, saying "the claim that I freaked out when I was informed about the dismissal is definitely not true", with the former goalkeeper saying he "calmly accepted the decision" that he could not go to the game. Bayern will celebrate their 11th straight German title and their 32nd victory of the Bundesliga era on Sunday in Munich. — AFP

Classifieds

Change of Name

I, **AWA SINGH**, holder of Indian Passport No. U0747355 Indian permanent address Vill. Taluwal, PO Naushera, Tehsil Mukerian, Distt. Hoshiarpur-144211, Indian residing in Kuwait at present hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name AVAV and surname SINGH. (#3546) 29/05/2023

I, **MANSUR**, holder of Indian Passport No. T4007957, do hereby change my name to MANSUR (as given name)

LOKHANDWALA (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name MANSUR LOKHANDWALA and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (#3545) 29/05/2023

I, **KHOZEMA**, holder of Indian Passport No. Z5708356, do hereby change my name to KHOZEMA (as given name) MUKADAM (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name KHOZEMA MU-

KADAM and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (#3545) 29/05/2023

We, **Firoz Ahamed**, holder of Indian Passport No. M3188091, issued in Kuwait on 22/11/2014 and Fathima Khatoun, holder of Indian Passport No. S9923284, issued in Kuwait on 08/11/2018, permanent address, No. 4089, 2nd cross, 2nd stage, Kumarswamy Layout, Bangalore - 5960078, Karnataka, India, declare that we

have changed our minor son's name from Khidash Firoz Ahamed to Muhammad Omar, holding Indian Passport No. T6756273, issued in Kuwait on 20/08/2019 and Civil ID No.315012501706, presently residing in block 11, street Yatrib Bldg. No. 14, Al Salmiya, Kuwait and permanent address in India, No. 4089, 2nd cross, 2nd stage, Kumarswamy Layout, Bangalore - 5960078, Karnataka, India. In all his dealings and documents, he will be known by the name of Muham-

mad Omar. (#3543) 26/05/2023

I, **Md Forhad Hossain**, holder of valid Bangladeshi Passport No. EK0911221, do hereby change my son's name to Sajid (given name) Forhad (surname), holder of valid Bangladeshi Passport No. EL0446996 for all future purposes. He will henceforth be known in the name Sajid Forhad and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all his documents (#3544) 26/05/2023

PSG clinch record 11th title

Paris Saint-Germain dominate French football under Qatari ownership

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain clinched a French record 11th league title on Saturday as Lionel Messi scored in a 1-1 draw away at Strasbourg. Messi's opener was cancelled out by a Kevin Gameiro equalizer, but the result gave PSG an unassailable four-point lead over second-placed Lens with one match of the season remaining. PSG moved ahead of the previous record of 10 titles set by Saint-Etienne in 1981 and which they equaled a year ago under former coach Mauricio Pochettino.

It is PSG's ninth title in the last 11 seasons, a period in which they have dominated French football under Qatari ownership. "This afternoon I watched the last day of the season in the Bundesliga and you can see that it is very difficult to win the league, any league," PSG coach Christophe Galtier told broadcaster Canal Plus. "The reigning champions in all European leagues have often had problems this season, so we appreciate what this means."

"It is a title and we must not believe it is normal to win, even if we are Paris Saint-Germain." PSG started the penultimate weekend of the season six points clear of nearest rivals Lens with just six points to play for, and with a far better goal difference. A Lens slip-up would have seen the capital side crowned champions with a game to spare even in defeat, but in the end they needed the draw as their challengers eased to a 3-0 win over already-relegated Ajaccio.

Kylian Mbappe set up Messi to put PSG ahead just before the hour with his 16th Ligue 1 goal this season. Ex-Paris striker Gameiro equalized with 11 minutes left, bundling in the rebound after Gianluigi Donnarumma had saved from Morgan Sanson. The draw ultimately suited both teams as it enabled Strasbourg to guarantee their top-flight survival. PSG started the season superbly and did not lose a game in any competition before the World Cup.

However, they lost six of their first 17 league games in 2023 and were eliminated from the Champions League in the last 16 by Bayern Munich and in the French Cup at the same stage. Those results increased speculation that Galtier - who also won the title with Lille two years ago - will

be replaced in the close season. Messi is expected to depart when his contract expires at the end of the campaign, meaning next weekend's match at home to Clermont is likely to be his last in a PSG shirt.

Lens secured second place and a ticket for next season's Champions League (CL) group stage with their win against Ajaccio, which was sealed by first-half goals from Deiver Machado, Adrien Thomasson and Lois Openda. Belgian striker Openda netted a penalty for his 20th goal in Ligue 1 this season. Marseille, who lost 2-1 at home to Brest, must therefore settle for third place and will enter the Champions League in the third qualifying round. Be-

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neath them, Lille are in pole position to qualify for the Europa League after coming from behind to beat Nantes 2-1 and move up to fourth position.

Quentin Merlin put relegation-threatened Nantes in front in the far north, but two second-half penalties from Canada's Jonathan David gave Lille the victory. Lille are now a point above both Rennes and Monaco, who met on Saturday, with the Brittany side winning 2-0 thanks to second-half goals by Lovro Majer and Amine Gouiri. Rennes are fifth, above Monaco on goal difference. Fifth place goes into next season's Europa Conference League while sixth will not qualify for Europe at all.

Lyon's European hopes were effectively ended despite a 3-0 win over Reims in which Alexandre Lacazette scored his 27th Ligue 1 goal this season, leaving him just one behind Mbappe, the division's top marksman. Nantes will go into the final weekend having to win to stand a chance of avoiding relegation as they sit 17th, two points behind Auxerre, who drew 1-1 at Toulouse. Angers, Ajaccio and Troyes have already been relegated. Four teams go down and only two come up from Ligue 2 as the top flight is reduced from 20 clubs to 18 for next season. There were also wins on Saturday for Angers, Nice and Clermont. — AFP



STRASBOURG: Paris Saint-Germain's Argentine forward Lionel Messi (#30) celebrates with Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe (#7), Paris Saint-Germain's Portuguese midfielder Vitorinha (up) and teammates after scoring a goal during the French L1 football match between RC Strasbourg Alsace and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) on May 27, 2023. — AFP

Inter Milan secure Champions League qualification

MILAN: Inter Milan secured their place in next season's Champions League with a 3-2 win over Atalanta which showed some fine form heading into the final of Europe's top club competition next month. Simone Inzaghi's side rose to second in Serie A after winning the Italian Cup on Wednesday with an entertaining win over Atalanta after an early blitz from Romelu Lukaku and Nicolò Barella followed by Lautaro Martinez's simple finish in the 77th minute.

Inter are eight points ahead of fifth-placed Atalanta, whose top four hopes are now over for the season, and looked in fine fettle with English champions Manchester City awaiting them in Istanbul on June 10. Their win also means that fourth-placed AC Milan only need to avoid defeat at troubled Juventus on Sunday night to ensure their return to the Champions League after being knocked out in the semi-finals by their local rivals last week.

"I knew what this match meant for the club, I'm really happy... The boys somehow gave all that energy 48 hours after the cup," said Inzaghi to DAZN. "Together you win trophies and reach Champions League finals, when you're not together as a team you have difficulties." Lukaku put the hosts in the lead less than a minute into what might be his last match at the San Siro as an Inter player, with his loan from Chelsea finishing at the end of next month.

The Belgium forward, who is hoping a deal can be struck with Chelsea to stay in Milan, rounded Marco Sportiello and rolled in his seventh goal in 10 matches after being sent flying through by Martinez. Inter went two ahead in the third minute, Barella ramming home a volleyed finish after Sportiello denied Federico Dimarco. Mario Pasalic halved the deficit nine minutes before the break but Inter were the superior team and Martinez sealed the points with his 27th goal of the season in all competitions.

Lukaku's slide-rule pass for Marcelo Brozovic allowed the Croatia midfielder to roll across an unmissable chance to World Cup winner Martinez. Luis Muriel's beautiful stoppage-time strike was only a consolation for the away team. Atalanta are a point ahead of Roma, whose chances of getting into the top four ended with a 2-1 loss at Fiorentina in a battle of teams in European



MILAN: Atalanta's Italian defender Giorgio Scalvini (center) and Inter Milan's Belgian forward Romelu Lukaku go for a header during the Italian Serie A football match between Inter and Atalanta on May 27, 2023. — AFP

finals. Jose Mourinho's Roma are four points behind Milan and the only way they can now reach the Champions League is by beating Sevilla in Wednesday's Europa League final.

More Serie A racism

Torino coach Ivan Juric became the latest victim of racist abuse in Serie A during his team's 4-0 win at Spezia. Spezia's bid for survival was hit with Saturday's thrashing which left them at risk of falling into the drop zone, and after the match former Croatia midfielder Juric bemoaned being called 'gypsy' towards the end of the first half.

The Italian word for gypsy is often used by sections of football supporters as a racial slur for players from the Balkans and eastern Europe, regardless of their ethnicity. Dejan Stankovic was insulted in the same way by Roma fans last month, and on Saturday the abuse was such that the match was briefly stopped by referee Marco Guida. "We had the usual insults, after a while it really becomes unpleasant. It's not a nice thing for anyone," Juric told reporters.

"If that stuff happens you say 'I won't react, I won't react, leave it'. That's my idea to not cause problems but after a while it becomes really unpleasant. When the people react you have to understand because you feel really offended." Spezia will drop into the relegation zone if Verona beat already-safe Empoli in Sunday's early fixture. A straightforward win moved Torino up to eighth and was good news for Lecce who are two points above Spezia in 16th. Lecce are at Monza on Sunday afternoon but could start their fixture behind Verona if they beat Empoli. — AFP

Indian police detain protesting wrestlers

NEW DELHI: Indian police dragged away and detained on Sunday two Olympic wrestlers and dozens of others as they tried to march to parliament demanding the arrest of the sport's federation chief over allegations of sexual harassment

and intimidation. In an escalation of the month-old standoff, police also cleared the site in central New Delhi where the wrestlers have been camped out while calling for the arrest of Brij Bhushan Singh, an AFP journalist at the scene said.

The wrestlers attempted to march to India's new parliament on Sunday just as it was being inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but they were halted by some of the hundreds of police on duty for the event. Among those detained

by police and hauled away into buses were Olympic bronze medalists Sakshi Malik and Bajrang Punia. One video posted on social media by Malik showed police dragging away screaming protesters. "The goon who sexually exploits, Brij Bhushan, is sitting in Parliament and we are being dragged on the road. Sad day for Indian sports," Malik tweeted.

Broadcaster NDTV quoted a senior police official who said "all protesters were detained and forcefully boarded in

Jeers rain down as Kostyuk refuses to shake hands

PARIS: Aryna Sabalenka kept her cool to win a politically-charged French Open duel against Marta Kostyuk on Sunday as jeers rained down after the defeated Ukrainian refused to shake hands with her Belarusian opponent. World number two and Australian Open champion Sabalenka swept 10 of the last 12 games to win 6-3, 6-2 as she kick-started her push to reach the second week in Paris for the first time. Kostyuk honored her pledge not to shake hands with Sabalenka in protest at Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Belarus is a key military ally of Moscow.

"It was a very tough match, tough emotionally. I didn't know if the booing was against me but thank you so much for your support, it's really important," said Sabalenka who performed a theatrical bow to the sparse Court Philippe Chatrier crowd. Kostyuk, 20, famously refused to shake hands with Sabalenka's Belarusian compatriot and former world number one Victoria Azarenka at the US Open last year. She opted instead for a cursory touch of racquets at the net.

The 39th-ranked Kostyuk has been a vociferous critic of the decision to allow Russian and Belarusian players to keep competing on tour since the invasion of her country. "If she hates me, OK, I can't do anything about that," said 25-year-old Sabalenka on the eve of the match. "About the no shaking, I can kind of understand them. Like I imagine if they're going to shake hands with Russians and Belarusians, then they're gonna get so many messages from their home countries." "If they feel good with no shaking hands, I'm happy with that."

This year sees a new era at the French Open where for the first time since 2004 Rafael Nadal will not grace the famous red clay. Injured Nadal, the 14-time champion, sits out the 2023 edition of a tournament where he has lost just three of 115 matches. In his absence, Novak Djokovic, a two-time winner, and the man responsible for two of Nadal's three career losses in Paris, will look to edge ahead of the Span-



PARIS: Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk reacts after losing against Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka at the end of their women's singles match on day one of the Roland-Garros Open tennis tournament on May 28, 2023. — AFP

iard with a record-setting 23rd major.

However, he faces serious threats from the likes of Carlos Alcaraz and Daniil Medvedev, currently the world's top two players ahead of Djokovic. Stefanos Tsitsipas, the fifth seed and runner-up to Djokovic in the 2021 final after squandering a two-sets lead, begins his bid for a first Grand Slam later Sunday against Jiri Vesely of the Czech Republic. Tsitsipas has enjoyed a solid clay court season, finishing runner-up to Alcaraz in Barcelona and making the semi-finals in Rome last week.

Former top 40 player Vesely has plummeted to 452 in the world and has not played a match on the main ATP Tour all year. However, the 29-year-old Czech is not to be underestimated — he defeated Djokovic at the 2016 Monte Carlo Masters and again in Dubai last year. He and Marat Safin are the only players to beat Djokovic multiple times with no losses. Andrey Rublev, the seventh seed and Monte Carlo champion in April, begins against Laslo Djere of Serbia.

Rublev has made the quarter-finals in Paris on two occasions while 57th-ranked Djere has twice made the third round. Women's third seed Jessica Pegula and eighth-seeded Maria Sakkari were also in action on Sunday. Pegula, a quarter-finalist in 2022, tackles American compatriot Danielle Collins. Sakkari made the semi-finals in 2021 where she was defeated in a three-set epic by eventual champion Barbora Krejickova. — AFP

Security in the nation's capital was tightened ahead of the inauguration of the new parliament building by Modi. Personnel also stood guard on the borders of New Delhi after a group of farmers attempted to enter the city to support the protesting wrestlers. Earlier this month, dozens of farmers broke down police barricades in the city to join the protest. Wrestling federation chief Singh, who is from Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, has denied the accusations. — AFP