

R_{idesafe}
RIDE SAFE

BOOK YOUR RIDE NOW

DOWNLOAD THE APP NOW

@ridesafe.app

3 Enduring the scars: Effects of bullying linger in victims

6 Guatemala's Arevalo takes office, vows to fight graft

12 'Oppenheimer' wins big at Critics Choice Awards

16 Vinicius hat-trick as Real thrash Barca to win Spanish Super Cup

Gaza martyrs top 24,000

Deadly violence continues in West Bank, university students arrested



SAIR: Palestinian mourners carry the bodies of Ahmed and Jalal Jabarin, who were shot dead by Zionist troops near Hebron, during their funeral procession in this southern West Bank village on Jan 15, 2024. — AFP

GAZA: Health officials in Hamas-run Gaza reported on Monday more than 24,000 deaths in the war with the Zionist entity which has sent shockwaves across the region, as the fighting passed the grim 100-day milestone. Deadly violence in the Zionist-occupied West Bank and along the Zionist entity's border with Lebanon as well as strikes by US forces and Iran-backed Yemeni rebels in the Red Sea have raised fears of an escalation beyond the Gaza Strip.

The war has created a humanitarian catastrophe for the 2.4 million people in the besieged strip, the United Nations and aid groups warn, and reduced much of the territory to rubble. The health ministry in Gaza reported more than 60 martyrs overnight, in what the group's media office described as "intense" Zionist bombardment across Gaza.

The Hamas government media office said two hospitals, a girls' school and "dozens" of homes were hit. Hospitals in Gaza have been hit repeatedly since the war erupted, and the World Health Organization (WHO) says most of them are no longer functioning. AFP TV footage showed smoke billowing over Khan Yunis, southern Gaza's main city, as explosions could be heard from nearby Rafah, on the territory's southern border with Egypt. In the Zionist entity, a suspected car

ramming attack on Monday killed one woman and injured at least 12 other people, police said, announcing the arrest of two Palestinian men. The Zionist entity also arrested students at a university in the occupied West Bank in an early morning raid on Monday because of their alleged support for Hamas, sources on both sides said. The students attend An-Najah National University in Nablus, which called for their immediate release and labelled the army raid a "blatant (Zionist) aggression".

The university and the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, a campaign group, said 25 students had been arrested in the raid. A Palestinian security source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the arrests came after the students held prayers for Hamas and praised the Islamist militant group on social media. Violence has surged in the West Bank since Oct 7. Zionist army raids and attacks by settlers have killed at least 343 people in the West Bank since then, according to an AFP tally.

The Palestinian security source said it was clear "the occupation is launching a campaign against everything related to supporting the resistance in Gaza". More than 520 Palestinians were killed in the West Bank in 2023, according to the Palestinian health ministry. The Zionist entity has occupied the West Bank, home to about

Continued on Page 6

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israa and Miraj holiday on Feb 8

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Commission announced Monday that the Israa and Miraj holiday in the public sector will be on Thursday, February 8, 2024, with work resuming on Sunday, February 11, 2024.

Kuwait ready to host Gulf Cup

KUWAIT: Kuwait is well prepared to host the 26th Gulf Cup in December this year, the country's football body said on Monday, hailing the event as a gathering of Gulf Arab nations. Refuting rumors on social media over Kuwait's intention to step down as the host of the year-end tournament, Kuwait Football Association stressed the country is "capable and prepared" to organize an event of such magnitude. — KUNA

Austin released from hospital

WASHINGTON: US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has been released from Walter Reed hospital, he said Monday. Austin kept President Joe Biden and lawmakers in the dark about being diagnosed with prostate cancer for weeks, and did not inform them for days about his hospitalization on Jan 1 for complications from his treatment. Austin, a 70-year-old career soldier, underwent minor surgery to treat the cancer on Dec 22, returning home the following day. But he was readmitted due to complications including nausea and severe pain on Jan 1. — AFP

Curbs on sales of fruit and veg, livestock exports

KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Aiban issued a decision on Monday to prohibit the retail sale of vegetables and fruits at the Al-Farda wholesale market and cooperative societies in small packages, effective from Feb 1. The decision aims to control prices, reduce manipulation, combat fraud

related to the country of origin and weight and prevent the sale of substandard items in packages. The decision prohibits all sellers of vegetables and fruits from retailing in small packages in vegetable markets in designated areas, including Sulabiya, Ardiya and Andalus, cooperative societies and other markets specified by the ministry. It also bans auctions of small packages after being fragmented from large ones, as well as the sale and marketing of underdeveloped, damaged or rotten produce.

Moreover, the decision mandates clear labeling of weight, country of origin and supplier information on the packaging of vegetables and fruits sold in all markets of Kuwait. It prohibits any changes to the country of origin or source of goods received for

any reason. Retailers must use scales during sales, and the retail price per kilo should not exceed the price by package or box. Additionally, retailers are prohibited from artificially raising prices through methods such as hoarding, hiding quantities or spreading false news.

The ministry will prepare a fixed form displaying product details, auction results and consumer prices in cooperative societies on a daily basis. The sale of imported vegetables and fruits is allowed if they remain in their original condition, and legal measures will be taken against any violations of this decision. The decision aims to ensure transparency, prevent manipulation and protect consumers, with penalties for non-compliance.

Continued on Page 6

Houthi missile hits US-owned ship off Yemen

DUBAI: Yemen's Houthi rebels hit a US-owned cargo vessel with a missile on Monday, the US military said, heightening fears for the volatile region after repeated attacks on shipping triggered American and British strikes. The Marshall Islands-flagged

Gibraltar Eagle suffered a fire on board but no casualties and remained seaworthy, the US Central Command said, in the latest attack in recent days. "Iranian-backed Houthi militants fired an anti-ship ballistic missile from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen and struck the M/V Gibraltar Eagle," it posted on X, formerly Twitter. "The ship has reported no injuries or significant damage and is continuing its journey," added CENTCOM, which directs US military operations in the region.

Continued on Page 6



This US Navy handout photo shows the destroyer USS Laboon, which was targeted by a cruise missile from Houthi controlled areas of Yemen on Jan 14, 2024. — AFP

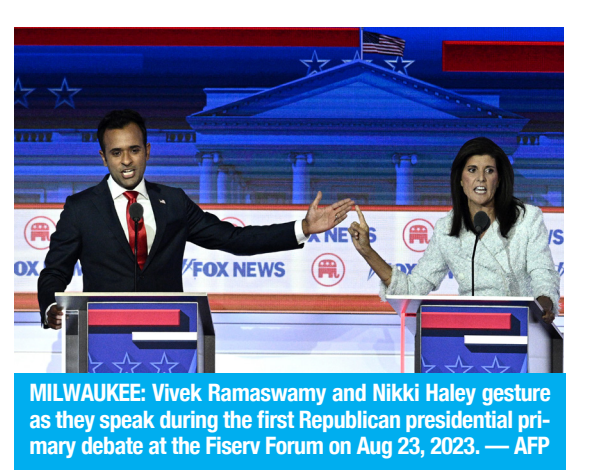
Indian Americans rise in US politics, navigate identity

WASHINGTON: Of the many attacks between this year's US presidential candidates, some of the harshest have pitted Vivek Ramaswamy against Nikki Haley. Ramaswamy went so far as to hold up a sign at a debate calling the South Carolina former governor and UN ambassador corrupt over her corporate work — and she has hit back hard, calling him untrustworthy and berating him for mentioning her children.

Personal attacks are routine in US politics, and both Haley and Ramaswamy, a 38-year-old entrepreneur who has never held elected office, are facing uphill climbs to wrest the Republican nomination from former president Donald Trump. But the two have something in common—they are children of Indian immigrants. Also expected on this year's ballot is Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris, whose mother came from India and whose father was born in Jamaica.

Indian Americans are split on whether the Ramaswamy versus Haley feud channels larger community tensions, but what is uncontested is that Indian Americans are more politically prominent than ever before — and increasingly wearing their identity proudly. It is another sign of success for the community, whose

Continued on Page 6



MILWAUKEE: Vivek Ramaswamy and Nikki Haley gesture as they speak during the first Republican presidential primary debate at the Fiserv Forum on Aug 23, 2023. — AFP

Violations won't be tolerated: Municipality issues warning

Inspection team removes 25 abandoned vehicles

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Municipality affirmed on Monday that the state's properties are a red line not to be violated in light of the existence of regulations and laws that facilitate individuals' and companies' ability to revise previous violations. Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous made these remarks during a lecture on the new advertising regulations. He stated that though they have been amended and new licensing programs are in development, they will not be the last step in their vision for developing and digitizing Kuwait's municipality.

He stressed the continuation of working to develop and update all regulations, indicating that developing agricultural regulations are under issuance, and the development will include a construction law and many other regulations. The organizational structure of the municipality will soon be modified in an effort to decentralize the work, explained Al-Dabbous. For his part, Minister of Municipality consultant Engineer Faisal Al-Jumaa, presented the articles of the regulations and the procedures, as he also explained the finer details, and responded to municipality employees' inquiries.

Inspection team

In another development, the third inspection campaign was carried out by the Department of

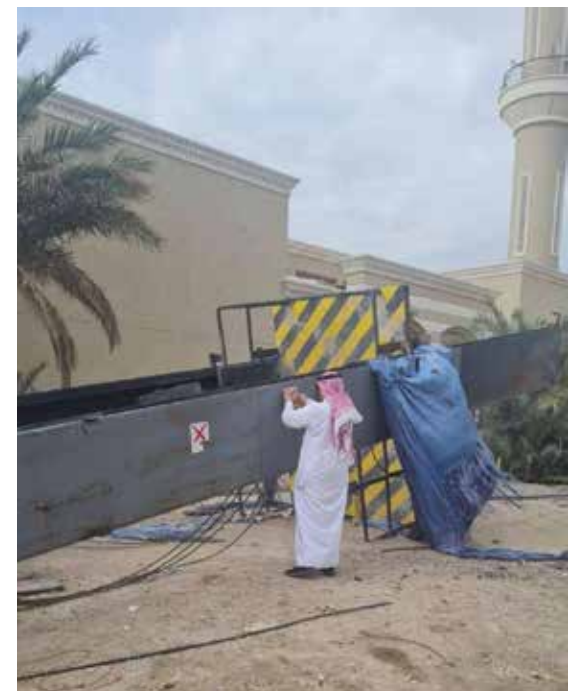


Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous

Public Hygiene and Road Works within the Capital Governorate. 25 neglected cars were removed, 30 violations were recorded, and 100 warning stickers were placed on abandoned cars. The Director of the Public Hygiene and Road Works Department at the Governorate Municipality Branch, Saad Al-Khuraaynig, explained that the aim of the intensive field inspection campaigns is to monitor negative phenomena and take down all illegal structures. The supervisory team pays great attention to raising the level of cleanliness in the areas under his responsibility, as well as lifting everything that distorts the aesthetic view in the areas. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Municipality team carried out inspection campaign. 25 neglected cars were removed, 30 violations were recorded.



In my view

Gaza bloodshed creates hope!

By Dr Khalid A Al-Saleh

Local@kuwaittimes.com

Extremism is a deadly industry, and modern history bears witness to the Zionist entity's acts of terrorism and violence against innocent civilians. This war machine is led by cruel, hard-hearted individuals devoid of empathy who wore out their welcome in the West, prompting their relocation to our homeland. The West persists in fostering this lethal fanaticism within our borders.

Leaders of the Zionist entity actively sow discord, displaying a relentless pursuit of killing innocents. Their unrelenting efforts have garnered support from some of the world's strongest nations, forming an undeclared regional alliance against the Arab nation. This alliance, with backing from certain regional countries and superpowers, ensures the separation and fragmentation of the Palestinian people and perpetuates weakness and instability within the Arab nation. This strategy aims to keep most of our countries from progressing in terms of construction and development.

Today, massacres continue unabated, with bodies buried and dignities violated. The tragedy intensifies as some individuals exploit these events to deepen divisions within our Arab nation, serving the true goal of the war: Securing victory for the Zionist entity and its allies, first by extinguishing the hopes of ambitious youth and then eradicating any prospects of a Palestinian state. The Zionist entity engages with extremist groups today, manipulating slogans and crafting narratives to garner support from some members of our nation. These individuals, moved by the shedding of innocent blood, unwittingly follow the agenda set by the alliance.

The Arab nation suffers today, grappling with countries fully occupied either by regional powers or armed factions. These nations are reduced to mere slogans, preoccupied with life's concerns and unable to focus on their development. The evil alliance perpetuates this state of affairs, intending to extinguish the Palestinians' hopes for a state and displace them from their homeland. Will the Gaza war achieve its aim of killing the aspirations of Palestinians for a state and maintaining an open wound in our Palestinian cause? The future will unveil the truth behind this new Gaza massacre.

We extend no condolences to the people of Gaza, as words fall short in the face of their greater-than-words martyrs and the recurring tragedy inflicted by the world's most significant terrorists. Only the blood of the martyrs will be the curse that befalls them and those who stand with them. The body parts scattered on the asphalt will stand as the sole witness to the terrorism of the Zionist entity and its alliance.

Today, a faint light appears at the end of the tunnel as some voices advocate for Palestinian unity and cooperation with the Arab nation to achieve peace, in line with UN Security Council resolutions and the establishment of the Palestinian state. These voices distinguish between mere slogans and the reality on the ground. As these voices grow louder, the dream of the martyrs to have a state among their Arab nation, free from alliance disputes that seek to weaken our collective progress, gains momentum.

LAPA unveils 'Colors of Music' competition

KUWAIT: The kickoff week of the "Colors of Music" competition, a groundbreaking collaboration between "LAPA" and Ooredoo in Kuwait, marked the beginning of an extraordinary artistic journey. Twenty-four talented artists engaged in a fusion of visual arts and music, showcasing their ability to intertwine the realms of art and melody. Launched by the LOYAC Academy of Arts, "LAPA," this competition united professional artists from Kuwait and beyond, engaging in group formations every Wednesday.

The "Colors of Music" competition, conceived by Hisham El-Hallak, Head of the Music Department at "LAPA," kicked off last week in collaboration with the Fine Arts Department, under the supervision of Amira Bahbahani, the department's director, and Zeina Dabbous, the department's head. This unique competition aimed to delve into the intersection of sound and color, exploring the psychological impact of different musical genres on individuals. The artists embarked on a four-hour creative journey, translating musical compositions into vibrant and diverse visual representations, expressing their emotions and perspectives on life, real events, joy, and pain.

El-Hallak emphasized that the primary goal of the competition was to translate sound into color, studying the psychological impact of each music genre on individuals. This distinctive experience brought together professional painters to illustrate diverse musical worlds and cultures, fostering a space for free expression collectively. Bahbahani highlighted the strong connection between music and art, revealing that each artist was assigned four carefully selected and unique musical hours as inspiration. The competition challenged participants to create within a limited timeframe, unaware of the type of music they would hear and paint, adding an extra layer of competition and innovation.

Dabbous described "Colors of Music" as a competition rich in innovation, creativity, and enthusiasm. The winning artworks will be featured in the Contemporary Art Platform (CAP) exhibition from January 29 to February 5. The unprecedented competition continues for a month in collaboration with Ooredoo, showcasing the commitment of the renowned telecommunication company and "Lapa" Academy to fostering communication and interaction through the universal language of art, music, culture, and knowledge, enriching society and elevating the status of the arts.

In this context, Zainab Al-Shammari, Senior Brand Manager at Ooredoo Kuwait, expressed the company's delight in sponsoring this distinctive competition, aligning seamlessly with Ooredoo's empower-



Hisham El-Hallak



Zeina Dabbous



ing slogan, "Upgrade Your World." The competition not only stands as an ideal opportunity to uplift the artistic realm but also serves as a platform to enhance the world of the participating artists by seamlessly integrating art with music.

In the inaugural group, artists actively engaged in the "Colors of Music" competition shared their insightful impressions, expressing genuine admiration for the unique event. The assignment of diverse musical genres to each artist not only prompted them to venture into uncharted territories but also inspired the creation of innovative and soulful artistic masterpieces. In conclusion, the "Colors of Music" competition stands as a testament to the successful collaboration between "LAPA" and Ooredoo, uniting artists in a celebration of creativity, diversity, and the transformative power of art and music.

of air strikes in Yemen last Friday.

It explained that the impact on the gold market also benefited from a possible decision to decrease interest rates by the US Federal Reserve as early as March as well as expectations of three more cuts this year. In the local market, it was reported that the price of a gram of 24 caliber gold was at KD 20.4 (about \$62), while the 22 caliber reached KD 18.7 (around \$57), while silver closed at KD 274 (around \$835) per kilogram.

Dollar stabilizes

In another development, the exchange rate of US Dollar stabilized on Monday against the Kuwaiti Dinar at KD 0.307, as did the Euro at 0.336 percent compared to yesterday's rates, said Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK). CBK indicated in its daily bulletin that the Pound Sterling stabilized at KD 0.391 and the Swiss Franc at KD 0.360, while the Japanese Yen remained at KD 0.002. — KUNA

(ACSAD), Dr. Nasreddin Al-Obaid, in the presence of experts from both sides.

Taqi stressed the keenness of the authority to implement what is required in order to implement all development plans so as to achieve Arab food security and activate Arab action. He said that the two sides discussed issues of joint cooperation and the implementation of applied projects, especially the implementation of new projects on water use.

During the meeting, the monitoring and stabilization of sand dunes were also discussed, in addition to the development of livestock and the implementation of the pasture and forestry resources project. He explained that the executive steps of the decision of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly of ACSAD on the opening of an office in Kuwait were also discussed.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Accident kills Bahraini man

KUWAIT: A Bahraini family of five people had a terrible traffic accident that caused the death of a man (father), Jaber Al-Taweel, who is in his 50s. The vehicle overturned on Abdali Road on Sunday. The Bahraini family was on their way to Abdali. Al-Taweel's wife and his three sons sustained injuries. The Embassy of Bahrain in Kuwait was notified, and necessary procedures were taken.

Interior launches 2 boats

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior, represented by the Coast Guard General Directorate, launched two locally-made boats, the first for multiple search and rescue missions and the other for reconnaissance and research for the Maritime Security Department. The General Department of Relations and Security Media at the ministry said in a press release that, under the auspices of the first deputy prime minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, this is within the security establishment's plan to strengthen maritime capabilities in order to achieve comprehensive security control. The two boats were made with national arms at the coast guard workshops. The statement explained that the boats have proven their worth because they meet international specifications and standards. The boats will play a vital role in protecting regional waters and in monitoring violators. The General Directorate of the Coast Guard always seeks to promote the Kuwaiti local industry in order to achieve self-sufficiency. — KUNA

Son accused of killing dad

KUWAIT: The Criminal Court, headed by Judge Fawzan Al-Anjari, postponed the murder case of a son who murdered his father. The defendant revealed in court that he had used drugs and that he did not know that he had killed his father until the second day. In the defendant's statements before the court, he stated, "On the day of the incident, I came home, and I was using different types of drugs given to me by a friend. According to what I learned later, there was a dispute between me and my father that developed into a fistfight because of the drug." "I took out a machine gun, fired two shots at him in the chest, and killed him. I did not know what happened at that moment," he said.

MoE indemnity by cheque

KUWAIT: The Finance Ministry gave the green light to the Education Ministry to pay indemnities of expatriate employees by cheque. A letter that was sent to the Education Ministry said, "There is no objection to making indemnity payments for non-Kuwaitis by cheque." The director of the financial department at the Education Ministry told the supervisor to make payments starting at the end of the current school year. Expat teachers whose contracts were terminated will get their indemnities by cheque after completing the usual procedures in this regard.



Fire engulfs apartment

KUWAIT: Fire brigades at Fahaheel and Ahmadi center on Monday controlled an apartment fire on the sixth floor of a building in Fahaheel area. Kuwait Fire Force evacuated the residents and extinguished the fire. There was no injury recorded.

Gold prices close at \$2,049 per ounce

KUWAIT: Gold prices closed high at \$2,049 per ounce at the end of last week's trading following the surge of geopolitical risks in the Red Sea region. A report by Dar-Asbaek said that gold prices rose to \$2,062 per ounce before closing at \$2,049, a clear indication of the concerns regarding the suspension of international navigation in the Red Sea and the Strait of Bab Al-Mandab.

It added that investors were currently looking to secure their financial positions by taking fewer risks in the stock and investment markets and investing more in precious metals, stressing that the demand for gold increased after US and British warplanes and ships launched dozens

Agriculture authority targets sustainable development goals

KUWAIT: The director general of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources, Eng Nasser Taqi, confirmed the Authority's readiness to implement all development plans that serve the state to meet its priorities and objectives and achieve food security and sustainable development goals. This came in a statement made by Taqi to the Kuwaiti news agency (KUNA) on Sunday after his meeting with the director general of the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands

Local

The effect of bullying

Enduring the scars: Bullying a critical concern

By Zainab Al-Mashoor

KUWAIT: The deliberate or unintentional repetition of words or actions that affect an individual mentally and physically constitutes bullying, a pervasive issue with far-reaching consequences. Bullying is a critical concern, often leading to trauma and jeopardizing the mental, physical, social and educational well-being of children and adolescents.

Kuwait Times spoke to individuals who have endured the hardships of bullying. "It started on my first day of school," said Sumayya, who was bullied for being dark skinned as a 4-year-old. It started with verbal abuse and proceeded to physical harm, where she was hurt with a blade by her classmate at the age of 7. The bullying, verbal (being called ugly, dark, dumb, etc), and physical (pushed, harmed, injured, etc), persisted until she graduated from school, leading her to feel isolated, unheard, unseen, undesired, unaccepted and insecure. This, in turn, led to self-harm and suicide attempts.

Sumayya couldn't talk about any of this with her friends and family, because in that phase, she didn't even realize it was bullying and thought it was normal. She learned about it when she turned 17 and distanced herself from the toxic environment. Sumayya then began to open up to close friends and family and sought therapy, which helped in her healing process.

Sumayya, 26 years old today, admits: "I haven't entirely healed from this trauma — it triggers from time to time. However, growing out of that agony, my healing process helped me in my personal growth, self-confidence, standing up for myself, being more mature for my age and being more conscious in my interactions and choice of words and actions."

Sumayya posits that individuals engaging in bullying behaviors may be grappling with problems at home, which is reflected in their actions, or they have insecurities they cannot accept. She firmly believes that no one is inherently a bully; rather, upbringing and the surrounding environment play pivotal roles, eventually influencing individuals to become bullies under the misguided notion that it is socially acceptable.



Sumayya emphasized on the role of parents in observing and rectifying behaviors that manifest in their children, advocating for both bullies and victims to seek assistance, urging victims not to suffer in silence.

Jaber, as an 8-year-old food lover, found himself a target of bullying due to being overweight. The repeated bullying from other kids left him feeling insecure and uncomfortable in his own skin, making him avoid any sort of interactions and steering him towards introversion. "Enduring mockery from kids, laughter from teachers, exclusion from activities and a constant preoccupation with my physical appearance affected my growth process," he recalled.

In an effort to gain acceptance, Jaber altered his lifestyle, engaging in weight-loss activities such as intermittent fasting and playing football, which not only boosted his confidence but also encouraged him to find his voice. "Losing weight did not put an end to the bullying; I simply learned how to cope with it." At 28, Jaber remains introverted and remembers the impact, yet has matured beyond those experiences. He advocates for awareness regarding bullying, emphasizing its enduring effects

that may shape an individual's future.

When she was 10, Faten was bullied for her long hair. Girls annoyed her and pulled her hair all the time, causing her to become an introvert and anxious with her physical appearance, leading her to despise her own hair. Like many children, Faten found it challenging to share her pain with parents or elders for a resolution, because she didn't understand why she was going through it.

The first time she had a short haircut was for her uncle's wedding at the age of 15, after indirectly convincing her mother. Since then, she has refrained from letting her hair grow long. "The thought of my hair growing long terrifies me: I still trim it before it reaches my shoulder." Faten, now 34 years old, continues to grapple with the trauma from her childhood, vividly recalling every detail.

"In my journey of maturation and overcoming trauma, I recognized that the children who bullied me were projecting their own low self-esteem that made them focus on damaging others." Faten underscores the importance for individuals, whether children or adults, to establish boundaries and focus on addressing their own low self-esteem rather than projecting it onto others.

Kuwait charity inaugurates residential village in Yemen

ADEN: The Kuwait International Islamic Charity Organization inaugurated the Al-Khair residential village to shelter the displaced in the coastal directorate of the Red Sea in Taiz governorate in Yemen with funding from the volunteer team as part of the 'Kuwait by Your Side' campaign. Nasser Al-Bassam, the head of the delegation of the Kuwaiti volunteer team visiting Yemen, said in a statement to the Kuwaiti news agency (KUNA) that the residential village project consists of 120 housing units, each of which includes two rooms, a kitchen, and a courtyard.

Each housing unit was provided with a solar system, a water tank, and a drainage network, in addition to shelter bags, bedding, and cooking tools. The residential village will house over 120 families who were living in tents. They will be transferred to safe houses that protect them from cold, heat, wind, rain, and storms and provide them with a decent life.

Al-Bassam expressed thanks and appreciation to the people who contributed to this great humanitarian charity project, and all those who donated assisted in arranging and equipping the project. He pointed to the laying of the foundation stone for the construction of a mosque, a school, a health center, a bakery, and a water tank tower, in addition to shops.

For his part, the second deputy chairman of the Political Bureau of the National Resistance, Abdul-Jabbar Al-Zahzouh, expressed thanks and appreciation to Kuwait, HH the Amir, the government and the people, the voluntary compassion team, the International Islamic charity organization, and the charity organizations in Kuwait for their humanitarian efforts. — KUNA



KHOKHA, Yemen: (File photo) Displaced Yemenis move into shelters provided by Kuwait in the Khokha area of the war-torn western province of Hodeidah. — AFP

PAM organizes training for female residents in shelter

KUWAIT: A specialized committee, responsible for linking and coordinating efforts between Public Authority of Manpower (PAM), civil society institutions and public benefit associations, organized a training course in flower arranging for residents of PAM's expatriate labor shelter. The initiative was carried out in collaboration with a flower arrangement company.

Aseel Al-Mazyad, Director of the Public Relations and Media Department and the official spokesperson of PAM, highlighted the purpose of the course. "This course aims to qualify residents and provide them with flower arrangement skills. Additionally, it seeks to enable female residents to integrate into their society and benefit upon their voluntary return to their countries after completing procedures in Kuwait."

Mazyad mentioned that the one-day course successfully trained 48 residents, covering the basics of flower arrangement and providing instruction on essential tools. She emphasized the competent committee would continue to collaborate in linking and coordinating efforts between the authority, civil society institutions, public benefit associations, private institutions and companies. The goal is to offer more rehabilitation and educational courses for residents.

This training initiative is part of the committee's broader efforts to foster collaboration between PAM, civil society institutions and public benefit associations. The aim is to provide educational and training opportunities specifically for female residents, empowering them and enhancing their capabilities for a better future upon their return to their home countries.



PAM organizes a training course in flower arranging for residents of expatriate labor shelter.



KUWAIT: The 12th edition of the HORECA Exhibition kicked off on Monday at the Kuwait International Fairground. Running until January 17, the event features seminars with over 20 industrial specialists, offering insights into hospitality and hotel service trends. — KUNA

In my view

The end of my love affair with the West



Dina Saud Algharabally

Local@kuwaittimes.com

Along with my brown skin, OCD and functioning anxiety, my father also passed on to me his unconditional love for America. This love affair began in the 60s, when my father left his home in Kuwait to finish high school in New Hampshire. As a young brown Arab man landing in the midst of a civil rights movement, he was surprised when he braced himself for racism and discrimination but didn't encounter any.

Instead, he was hosted by a lovely family, forged deep friendships at school, and fell in love with all things American. Twenty years after he moved back to Kuwait, the US-led war liberating Kuwait from Iraq cemented my family's blind, unapologetic love for America. My mom even kept a framed picture of President George H W Bush in their room! The love goggles were etched on for generations.

It was impossible not to drink the American Kool-Aid when I grew up drowning in it. After graduating high school in Kuwait, I went to the US for school. And just like my father, I loved all things American. The music, the landscapes, the way strangers greet you on the street...pecan pie!

But it was during my time at the University of Oregon that my irrational love for the US butted heads with reality. As part of a women's studies class, I learned of 20th century forced sterilizations performed by the US government on Puerto Rican women. Yet even more disturbing than the experiments was my inability to believe America could perform them, despite all the evidence my textbooks were showing me. The only way I could deal with such cognitive dissonance was to pretend I hadn't learned it and to move on.

This occurred once again when I watched Colin Powell give his speech to the UN Security Council, asserting that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). The logical side of my brain knew Iraq simply didn't have the capacity to create and harbor them. But could such a respected American secretary of state lie before the United Nations and the world? No way Jose. Another case of sweeping clear evidence under the rug for me and moving on.

In the months and years after Sept 11, my Arab friends would often complain that they were profiled at the airport and sent for additional security screenings. Always on the defense, my response was to tell them that I, a brown Arab woman, had never been sent for an additional pat down. I also told them about the older white lady I once saw receive a very thorough screening. I used that same story for years before it dawned on me that in order for it to be a valid counter argument, it would've had to occur more than once. But my rosy American goggles remained stronger than logic. Under the rug ethnic-profiling went.

Over the past couple of months, I've experienced an awakening. It was gradual but visceral. I, along with everyone around me, was appalled by Hamas' attack on Oct 7. I believe I had a normal human reaction to horrific aggressions carried out against civilians. Then the Zionist entity retaliated. And it kept on retaliating every day for over two months. The Zionist entity retaliated against people who had nothing to do with Oct 7, and who themselves blamed Hamas for nearly everything wrong in Gaza.

I woke up daily to footage of mothers cradling their dead children's bodies. As a mother of four, despite my best efforts, I couldn't help but glimpse my own children in those lifeless bodies. So I wept. I wept for weeks. And when I stopped long enough to look around, I noticed the blinding absence of outrage around me. The same people who were outraged on Oct 7, the same ones who were beside themselves when Russia invaded Ukraine two years earlier, were at best silent. At worst, they said things like, "Oh, well, they voted for Hamas," — as if that would ever justify the slaughter of generations.

Hard as it was, I gave them the benefit of the doubt. I blamed not them but the bias in Western media. But it continued. It continued even after I explained that the selective empathy I was witnessing was both disheartening and painful. That I couldn't help but take it personally. I found myself posting more images of dead children on Instagram, children missing limbs, children crying out for their mamas, something I had never done before.

But, the more deafening the silence, the more I posted. With every desperate post I thought, surely after seeing this one, they would feel something. And once they felt something, they would do something — like demand a ceasefire to stop what they could no longer stomach. But nothing happened. Those who were always empathetic continued to be, and those who weren't, remained silent or worse.

"Do you think it's because they're brown"? My sister-in-law asked. "No, they're Palestinian," I answered. "Most of them look white. It's probably all the hijabs in the pictures." We were genuinely trying to understand the clear double standard we were witnessing. Why the silence now? Why is it that, two years ago, my kid's schools in Boulder, Colorado encouraged them to write letters to Ukrainian kids, as well as spoke to them about the tragic events of Oct 7 — yet have not uttered a word about the human casualties since?

How did I find myself in a position where I was actually wishing for the victims in Gaza to be just a little bit whiter, just a little bit cleaner, just a little bit more appealing to a Western palate so that their humanity can finally come through? The dehumanization of Palestinians seems to have been so successful that any pleas for their freedom have become suspect. It's even become controversial to call for a ceasefire to end their massacre.

I was happy being a Western groupie. My love-goggles were comfortable. I was also content holding much higher standards for the West than I did my own people, because that way, I could avoid disappointment, or so I thought. The West, with all its values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law surely wouldn't let me down like my government had perpetually done in the past.

But the events of the last two months have shifted my entire worldview. I realize now just how indoctrinated I had been, and how little critical thought I had exercised in the process. I don't know when this war will end or how, but I know that it has already had a profound impact on me. It has fundamentally changed my view of the world. And if this war has caused me to question my view of the West, what has it done to the millions who have suffered because of it?

Kuwaiti academic underlines need for partnerships

ABU DHABI: The Deputy Director of Kuwait University for Academics, Dr. Sulaiman Al-Rafie, stressed on Monday the importance of building strategic partnerships with GCC universities in the fields of cybersecurity and artificial intelligence to meet the growing digital challenges. Kuwait participated in the 26th meeting of heads and directors of universities and higher education institutions in the GCC that was hosted by the United Arab Emirates University in Dubai. The meeting was a platform for the exchange of experiences and ideas between countries, Al-Rafie told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

The meeting touched on many important topics to meet the challenges and requirements of modern technologies in teaching and learning, including the importance of coordination between universities in the fields of research, e-learning, academic programs, professional and academic development, volunteer work, and student exchange.

He explained that during the meeting, several topics were approved, including the establishment of a website for the secretariats of Joint Work Committees, an amendment to the organizing list of awards, and preparation for the upcoming meetings of the committee, in addition to building alliances related to cybersecurity and artificial intelligence. He also applauded the adoption of the unified guide for integrated education prepared by Kuwait University and the Saudi Electronic University, stressing the importance of the meeting in supporting the process of joint cooperation between universities and higher education institutions to build an advanced Gulf society. — KUNA

Arab, Chinese FMs call for end to Gaza war, restarting peace talks

Arab League throws weight behind 'One China' principle

CAIRO: The foreign ministers of the Arab League member states and China have stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and effective implementation of the UN resolutions relating to the Palestinian-Zionist conflict. In a joint communiqué following their meeting on Sunday, both sides called for convening an expanded international conference on the conflict to chart a credible, legally binding roadmap for realizing the two-state solution within a specific timeframe.

The two-state vision remains a practical basis for any future arrangements for the destiny of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem; it materializes the Palestinians' right to self-determination and statehood, the statement underscored. Both sides urge doubling down on the international effort to find a fair, durable, and comprehensive solution to the Palestine question and back the Palestinian quest for full membership in the United Nations.

They renew their backing for the establishment of an independent, fully sovereign state of Palestine within the pre-June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital city, in keeping with the relevant UN resolutions, the land-for-peace principle, and the Arab peace initiative, according to the statement. Both sides highlighted the need to provide full protection to Palestinian civilians through the adoption of tangible steps, including immediate cessation of hostilities, respect for international humanitarian law, and rejection of any forcible displacement.

On the humanitarian disaster, the Arab and Chinese foreign ministers urged freeing all hostages immediately, setting up a mechanism for coordination of aid efforts, and ensuring safe and sustainable delivery of assistance to the residents trapped in the Gaza conflict. They called on the UN Security Council to pay heed to the appeals for halting the Zionist war against civilians in Gaza and shoulder its responsibility for protecting international peace and security.

They stressed the importance of reinitiating the Palestinian-Zionist peace talks as a means of restoring security and coexistence for both countries as well as the nations of the Middle East region. On inter-Palestinian reconciliation, the ministers called on the Palestinian factions to hold an all-inclusive national dialogue to restore unity and support the role of the National Authority in the coming stage.



Arab League assistant secretary general meets with Chinese Foreign Minister. - KUNA

Dealing with the escalating hostilities in the southern part of the Red Sea, the ministers underscored respect for the sovereignty and territorial unity of Yemen while calling for ensuring the safety of commercial maritime navigation.

Noting that the security of shipping routes is a top priority for international peace and security, they urged all parties to deescalate the conflict and put an end to the war on Gaza as early as possible, as the statement pointed out. The Chinese side appreciated the Arab efforts to prevent the spread of the conflict in Gaza to other parts of the Middle East, while the Arab side thanked China for backing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Both sides agreed to continue coordination of efforts to contain the serious humanitarian disaster being undergone by nearly two million Palestinians, restore calm to the region, and work toward ending the Zionist occupation, the statement added. Earlier today, the

Arab League's Secretary-General Ahmad Abul-Gheit held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on ways to end the war on Gaza as well as bilateral issues.

'One China' principle

The Arab League said it backs the "One China" principle maintained by Beijing's political leaders while also praising China's support for "Palestinian rights." The Cairo-based bloc's backing of the "One China" principle is a testament to the wider Arab region's "amicable and historic relations" with Beijing, Arab League assistant secretary general Houssam Zaki told the press after talks between the bloc's chief Ahmed AbulGheit and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The Chinese diplomat, amid the talks, underlined his country's "unwavering" support for the Palestinians, slamming the "criminal tendencies" of Zionist forces in their attacks across the Gaza Strip, added the official. — KUNA



Workers load up relief aid into the plane. — KUNA photos



The 40th Kuwait relief aid plane for the Gaza Strip on its way to Egypt.



Kuwait sends Gaza 40th relief planeload

KUWAIT: The 40th relief planeload to Gaza left for Al-Arish Airport on Monday carrying 40 tons of humanitarian aid and three ambulances organized by the Al-Salam Association for Humanitarian and Charitable Works in partnership with the International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO). Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Al-Salam Association and a member of the Board of Directors of the International Islamic Charity Organization, Dr. Nabil Al-Aoun, spoke of the coordination efforts to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), saying that it expedited aid delivery to Gaza.

Al-Aoun said that the 40th relief plane contains three fully equipped ambulances, 285 tents, and food, revealing that the weight of the total aid provided by the Association to Gaza amounted to some 380 tons. He added that the association's warehouses contain more than 200 tons of relief aid to meet the needs of the Palestinian people in light of the deteriorating situation. He also called on the official authorities to operate additional flights



to provide more aid to the Palestinians.

He pointed out that Al-Salam's humanitarian campaign, which started on December 15 last year and aimed to send 500 trucks to face winter in four different countries, allocated 58 truck loads for Gaza. Dr. Walid Al-Awadi, the representative of the IICO, asserted to KUNA that the increasing demand for necessary materials requires cooperation and coordination with the Palestinian Red Crescent to deliver them, as well as facilitation from the Kuwaiti Ministries of Defense, Social Affairs, and Foreign Affairs. — KUNA



Representatives of charitable societies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs take a photo prior to the departure of the flight.



Scan & Subscribe
KD 20 a year

For Individuals Only



Scan Now

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First English Daily in the Arabian Gulf



Tel: 24833199 Ext: 220



A year of homicide in London

Guatemala's Arevalo takes office after delays

Page 6

Page 7



RAFAH: Displaced Palestinian children play behind barbed wire on a sand dune overlooking a makeshift camp on the Egyptian border, west of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Jan 14, 2024. — AFP photos

Attack on Gaza 'crueler' than Nakba

Palestinians forcibly displaced in 1948 say they've seen nothing like current 'annihilation'

RAFAH: At age 89, Palestinian Liga Jabr remembers how the war to make way for the creation of the Zionist entity uprooted her family when she was a child. Now, 75 years later, she says the war raging in Gaza is even worse. "This war is harder than any of the displacements" brought by previous conflicts, Jabr told AFP in Rafah refugee camp, on the besieged Gaza Strip's southern border with Egypt.

Staying with relatives after her home in central Gaza's Deir el-Balah was hit by a strike, Jabr is among an estimated 1.9 million Palestinians forced from their homes since war erupted on Oct 7. Sitting by a small wooden table in a house crowded with family members, she said she has felt fear like never before as the war entered its 100th day. "To be honest ... I'm afraid," she said. "I have never seen a war like this one. This war is disgraceful."

The Zionist entity's relentless ground and air military campaign in Gaza has killed nearly 24,000 people, mostly women and children, according to the territory's health ministry. The entity claims the bombardment is aimed at destroying Hamas after the Palestinian resistance group attacked southern Zionist communities and military bases on Oct 7. Around 1,140 people, mostly civilians, died in the attack and subsequent Zionist military operation aimed at regaining control of communities targeted by Hamas. The violence has spurred concerns that the Zionist entity is trying to expel Palestinians, but Zionist officials deny this.

The scenario evokes dark historical memories of what the Arab world calls the "Nakba" or catastrophe



Palestinian elderly woman Rayqa Abu Aweideh, 86, answers AFP journalists' questions.

— the mass forced displacement of Palestinians during the war that made way for the Zionist entity's creation in 1948. The majority of Gaza's 2.4 million inhabitants are descendants of some of the 760,000 Palestinians driven out during that war. Some, like Jabr, have now lived through both conflicts.

'Destroying entire houses'

Zionist soldiers "did not kill us in the Nakba", she said, recalling how her family left on foot from the Palestinian village of Julis, now in the southern parts of the Zionist entity, just over 10 kilometers north of the Gaza Strip. "Now the Zionists are hitting people from the air and destroying entire houses," Jabr added as drones buzzed outside. She lost about a dozen relatives when

her house in Deir el-Balah was "demolished" in an air strike, she said. Rayqa Abu Aweideh, a relative of Jabr who like her had to leave her home in 1948 in what has now become the south of the Zionist entity, said the current war is "harder and crueler". Seventy-five years after fleeing Al-Majdal with her family and two cows, and eventually settling in southern Gaza's Khan Yunis, Abu Aweideh was displaced again, taking shelter at her daughter's home in Rafah.

Born in 1935, Abu Aweideh said the current Zionist attack on Gaza has extinguished any hope of ever returning to her hometown, and that now she wouldn't want to flee Gaza. "Even if they tell me, 'take all the money in the world', I will never leave for Sinai or anywhere else," she said, referring to the Egyptian peninsula bordering the Palestinian territory. "I want to stay here even if we die."

Always 'afraid'

Juma Abu Qamar, 80, said he wanted to return to the Palestinian village of Yibna where he was born, now in the center of the Zionist entity, but admitted he didn't believe it would ever happen. "We had a big house with a fig tree," he recalled.

During the 1948 war, "we didn't see the Jewish (soldiers). We walked along the shore until we reached Gaza". The fighting since early October is "like nothing we've seen before," he said. "We have never faced such a war, a war of annihilation". Abu Qamar said he had also never seen "so many tents" for displaced people.

Many families, fleeing the violence further in northern Gaza, have sheltered in makeshift tents in Rafah.



Palestinian elderly woman Liga Jabr, 89, answers AFP journalists' questions at a family house in Rafah refugee camp on the besieged Gaza Strip's southern border with Egypt on Jan 13, 2024.

Their already dire conditions have been exacerbated by the winter cold. "We've returned to living like our ancestors, but they lived in safety," said Umm Sharif Kuhail, displaced from Gaza City. "When we cook, we're afraid. We go out for shopping under bombardment. We do everything in fear."

The 48-year-old woman told AFP at a tent in Rafah: "We don't have any hope of returning to our homes." Next to her, 51-year-old Alaa Bakheet shared her desperation. "After 100 days (of war), our life has no soul left in it, we're waiting for martyrdom," said the man displaced from central Gaza's Nuseirat refugee camp. "There's nothing left on this land. No schools, no universities, no hospitals," he lamented. "The issue is not just the war, but what will follow it." — AFP

Hundreds protest British control of Cyprus army bases

LIMASSOL, Cyprus: About 300 peace protesters rallied on Sunday outside Britain's Akrotiri military base in Cyprus, charging it is fueling regional conflicts in Gaza and Yemen. The demonstrators demanded the closure of military bases that have been under British control since the eastern Mediterranean island nation's independence in 1960. They carried a banner demanding a "Ceasefire Now" in the Zionist war on Gaza while another read "Stop funding genocide".

Some online reports in Britain have pointed to UK and US military flights from Akrotiri to Tel Aviv and charged they were carrying military supplies for the Zionist entity.

"The demonstration against the British base at Akrotiri is being organized to condemn the transport of arms from the British bases to support the (Zionist) army's military operations in the Gaza Strip," Charis Pashias, head of the Cyprus Peace Council, told Al-Jazeera. Since the latest escalation of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict began on Oct 7, locals have seen a "daily" increase in the number of flights from Akrotiri, Pashias said. The base is about 40 minutes flying time from Tel Aviv. People have also "become aware of the illegal presence of thousands of American soldiers now stationed in Akrotiri," he added.

Defence Minister Grant Shapps told parliament on Dec 5 that the UK would provide "only defensive materiel, or material that might help with the recovery of hostages" during the conflict. Haaretz has reported a spike in the delivery of equipment and arms to Akrotiri. Some 40 heavy-transport aircraft operated by the United States Air Force landed there in the first 24 days of the war from US and NATO depots in Europe, according to Haaretz. Another 20 heavy-lift planes from Britain's Royal Air Force arrived at the base over the same period, the newspaper added.

Declassified UK, a news website focused on British foreign policy, revealed in November that RAF trans-



LIMASSOL, Cyprus: Protesters raise placards in front of the gates of the Royal Air Force Akrotiri base, a British overseas territory, as they rally against its alleged use to supply the Zionist war in Gaza on Jan 14, 2024. — AFP

port aircraft flew daily from Akrotiri to Tel Aviv between Oct 13 and 26. Over the two months prior to Oct 7, Declassified UK found no record of British military flights from Akrotiri to the Zionist entity.

A British defense ministry spokesperson told AFP that "British Forces Cyprus continue to support the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza and no RAF flights into (the Zionist entity) have transported any lethal cargo". The spokesperson also said that a British naval vessel "with the support of British Forces Cyprus, delivered 87 tons of UK and Cypriot aid to Egypt for the people of Gaza".

Commenting on an A400M military transport plane operated by the RAF landing at the Zionist entity's Nevatim airbase on Dec 4, Meral Hussein-Ece, a British Liberal Democrat peer of Turkish-Cypriot background, suggested the jet was "unlikely to be delivering humanitarian aid". "It's long overdue these British bases in Cyprus were handed back to the Cypriots," she posted on social media.

Meanwhile, there are also questions about the extent that the ethnic Greek Cypriot government, which controls the island's southern territory, is kept informed of how Akrotiri and Dhekelia, the British base housing a US-UK electronic intelligence station, are being used in the Gaza war. Armed Forces Minister James Heapey last month said Britain informs the Republic of Cyprus about flights to and from Akrotiri "where appropriate ... although there is no formal requirement to do so". Asked about Britain and the US supplying the Zionist entity from Akrotiri in November, Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides said: "There is no such information, our country cannot be used as a base for war operations." However, as the UK's "sovereign base areas" are technically outside Cyprus, his reply could be seen as not referring to them. Kenny MacAskill, a British MP who has raised questions in parliament about Akrotiri's alleged role in the Gaza war, said it was "disgraceful" that "both UK citizens and a sovereign state are denied information as to what is being done". —AFP

Turkish strikes deprive Syrian villages of power

QAMISHLI, Syria: Hundreds of northeast Syrian villages and towns have lost power after Turkish strikes pounded electricity stations and infrastructure, the region's semi-autonomous Kurdish administration said Monday. The Kurdish administration said Turkey launched a slew of strikes since Friday, mostly concentrated on infrastructure including power stations and oil refineries. Turkey said it has carried out airstrikes against Kurdish militants in northern Syria in response to the deaths of nine Turkish soldiers in clashes with suspected Kurdish militants in Iraq on Friday. The semi-autonomous Kurdish administration listed hundreds of villages and towns facing blackouts due to the Turkish strikes in a statement Monday, also reporting damage to oil facilities.

The administration condemned the "Turkish aggressions", which it said were "unjustified and disregarded customs and laws". The administration said Turkey struck six power plants, one of which was targeted twice on Monday in the city of Qamishli, where AFP reporters saw firefighters putting out a large fire.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said a seventh station had been targeted later on Monday. Syria's northeast has been suffering from long power cuts after more than a decade of war and economic woes. Even before the Turkish strikes, many of the targeted stations had only been providing about 10 hours of power daily. Kurdish official Yasser al-Sulaiman called for the US-led international anti-jihadist coalition and Russia to "stand by the Syrian people ... and stop the Turkish aggression against our regions".

Over the week-end, Turkey said it had hit dozens of targets in northern Syria and Iraq belonging to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the People's Protection Units (YPG). The YPG are the main component of the Syrian Democratic Forces, the de facto army of the Kurdish semi-autonomous administration that controls swathes of Syria's northeast. —AFP

International

Guatemala's Arevalo takes office after delays, protests

New president vows to fight corruption after wading attempts to delegitimize August election

GUATEMALA CITY: Guatemala's new President Bernardo Arevalo promised early on Monday to fight corruption and stand firm against global authoritarianism, in his first speech after being sworn in. "We will not allow our institutions to be bent by corruption and impunity," he said at the inauguration ceremony, held in Guatemala City more than nine hours late after a last-ditch effort by opponents to prevent the anti-corruption crusader from taking office.

The 65-year-old former lawmaker, diplomat and sociologist pulled off a major upset when he swept from obscurity to win elections last August, firing up voters weary of graft in one of Latin America's poorest nations. He took the oath of office after warding off a barrage of attempts to prevent him from taking power — notably by prosecutors who have been accused of graft and are closely aligned with the country's entrenched political and economic ruling class.

The prosecutors had tried to overturn the election results and strip Arevalo, who enjoys strong support from the international community, of immunity from prosecution. His Semilla (Seed) party had its registration suspended on fraud allegations widely seen as trumped-up.

The opposition-dominated Congress engaged in hours of tug-of-war Sunday over the status of 23 suspended Semilla lawmakers. They were finally accepted and the inauguration ceremony got underway around midnight.

With the presidential sash across his chest, Arevalo expressed hope in the face of "a wave of authoritarianism, the spread of intolerance, the restriction of dissent." "During these last months we have faced complex tensions and challenges that led many to believe that we were destined for an authoritarian setback," he said, adding that Guatemala was now turning the page on a "painful passage of uncertainty."

'Scoundrel governments'

The inauguration was attended by EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, Colombia's President Gustavo Petro and Spanish King Felipe VI. Chile's President Gabriel Boric had to leave before the cer-



Guatemala's new President Bernardo Arevalo swears in during his inauguration ceremony at the Miguel Angel Asturias Cultural Centre early on Jan 15, 2024.

emony, due to the lengthy delays.

US President Joe Biden sent congratulations from Washington, lauding Arevalo's inauguration as "testament to our shared commitment to democracy and the will of the people." "We applaud the Guatemalan people for advancing the cause of democracy under challenging circumstances," said US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in another statement.

In a nearby square, thousands of supporters had gathered to await the ceremony, waving flags in a festive atmosphere with music and dancing. Indigenous Mayans lit incense and danced along to the rhythm of drums, celebrating the pending change in government. Guatemala's Indigenous community has spearheaded roadblocks and protests against the efforts to keep Arevalo from power.

"We have had mediocre, corrupt, scoundrel governments that do not have the slightest love for their country, and I hope that this government does not fail the people," said Indigenous leader Alida Vicente, 43. "There is a lot of enthusiasm. There is a lot of hope from the population."

Arevalo takes over from Alejandro Giammattei, under whom several prosecutors fighting graft were arrested or forced into exile. Rights groups accused Giammattei of cracking down on critical journal-



GUATEMALA CITY: Supporters of Bernardo Arevalo clash with police during a demonstration against the suspension of the inauguration of the new legislature made by the Congress, shortly before Arevalo's inauguration. — AFP photos

ists. He was also accused of propping up Attorney General Consuelo Porras, who headed the prosecutors' campaign against Arevalo alongside senior prosecutor Rafael Curruchiche and Judge Fredy Orellana. All three are listed as corrupt and undemocratic by the US Justice Department.

'Rebuilding democracy'

Guatemala, routinely ranked among the most corrupt countries in the world, is also one of Latin America's most unequal countries — a reality that has, along with high rates of violent crime, compelled hundreds of thousands to risk the perilous migrant journey to the United States in hopes of a better life.

Arevalo is the son of reformist Juan Jose Arevalo, who in 1945 became Guatemala's first democratically elected president after decades of dictatorship. The chess-playing, jazz-loving polyglot faces a tricky task.

To start with, he inherits an attorney general who "attacked and criminalized" him and "threatened democracy to a degree we had not thought possible," said Edie Cux of Citizen Action, a local version of Transparency International. Arevalo himself has acknowledged there would be "difficulties, since these political-criminal elites, at least for a time, will continue to be entrenched in some branches of the state." — AFP

3 migrants drown after Texas guard blocks rescue: US

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration on Sunday denounced what it said was "dangerous" obstruction by Texas authorities, after three migrants drowned while attempting to cross the Rio Grande from Mexico in disputed circumstances.

"On Friday night, a woman and two children drowned near Eagle Pass, and Texas officials blocked US Border Patrol from attempting to provide emergency assistance," said a statement from White House spokesperson Angelo Fernandez Hernandez.

It continued: "While we continue to gather facts about the circumstances of these tragic deaths, one thing is clear: Governor Abbott's political stunts are cruel, inhumane, and dangerous. US Border Patrol must have access to the border to enforce our laws."

The Texas Military Department pushed back later Sunday, describing the accusation that TMD officers prevented federal agents from saving lives as "wholly inaccurate." The White

House has been locked in a legal struggle with Republican Governor Greg Abbott, a vocal supporter of Donald Trump and a fierce critic of the Biden administration's migration policies.

The US Justice Department has accused the governor of blocking federal agents from carrying out their traditional duties in policing a key section of the border, while Abbott says the federal government has failed in its responsibility to stem a record influx of migrants.

Abbott has supported tough border measures including the installation of barbed wire along the border and floating obstacles in the Rio Grande. Henry Cuellar, a congressional Democrat from Texas, on Saturday also accused the state's National Guard — which this week took exclusive control over a key border sector — of refusing to "grant access to Border Patrol agents to save the migrants" in the incident Friday. "This is a tragedy, and the State bears responsibility," Cuellar added in a statement.

A different version

The TMD, which oversees the Texas National Guard, offered a substantially different version of the events Friday. It confirmed that Border Patrol officials contacted it Friday night "in reference to a migrant distress situation," adding that one of its units "actively searched

the river with lights and night vision goggles" but found no migrants in distress, and no bodies.

On Sunday after reviewing circumstances of the fatalities, TMD vehemently denied the White House accusations and said the incident largely took place on the Mexican side of the river. "Claims that TMD prevented Border Patrol from saving the lives of drowning migrants are wholly inaccurate," it said in a statement. "At the time that Border Patrol requested access, the drownings had occurred, Mexican Authorities were recovering the bodies, and Border Patrol expressed these facts to the TMD personnel on site." In December, a federal appeals court blocked Border Patrol from removing or dismantling barbed wire installed by Texas near Eagle Pass, except in the case of emergencies. The Justice Department has appealed that ruling to the US Supreme Court.

This week, the Texas National Guard began installing new barriers which have prevented federal border police from gaining access to a key 2.5-mile (3.7-kilometer) border section, according to a filing by US Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar. In a response to the case before the Supreme Court, Texas officials acknowledged having taken control of a city park in Eagle Pass "for law-enforcement and disaster-relief purposes." — AFP



CIUDAD JUAREZ: Migrants cross the Rio Bravo river, known as Rio Grande in the United States, into the US through Mexico, on Jan 2, 2024. — AFP

Gaza martyrs top 24,000...

Continued from Page 1

three million Palestinians, since the Six-Day War of 1967. The Zionist entity's relentless military campaign has killed at least 24,100 people in Gaza, mostly women and children. The UN says more than three months of fighting have displaced roughly 85 percent of the territory's population, crowded into shelters and struggling to get food, water, fuel and medical care.

"My daughter can't sleep, she always tells me she's freezing," said Hanin Odwan, one of many displaced to makeshift camps in Rafah, where Palestinians huddled together around small fires to keep warm. Echoing earlier warnings of a fast-approaching famine, UN agencies said in a joint statement that "a fundamental step change in the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza is urgently needed."

The WHO, World Food Program (WFP) and UNICEF called for "safer, faster" supply routes to be opened, warning that the current levels of aid "fall far short of what is needed to prevent a deadly combination of hunger, malnutrition and disease". The

WFP said an aid convoy brought food to the territory's north on Thursday, the first such delivery since a one-week truce ended on Dec 1. Cindy McCain, the WFP's director, said: "People in Gaza risk dying of hunger just miles from trucks filled with food. Every hour puts countless lives at risk."

On Sunday, thousands of Palestinians swamped two aid trucks delivering flour and tinned food to warehouses in Gaza City, an AFP correspondent said. "We are only eating rice, but rice is not enough for a human being," said 53-year-old Omar Al-Shandogi. The Zionist entity has faced international pressure over surging civilian casualties in Gaza, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is under intense domestic pressure to account for political and security failings surrounding the Oct 7 attacks.

In Turkey, a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause, authorities accused Zionist footballer Sagiv Jehezkel of "incitement" after he celebrated a goal with a message written on a wrist bandage, which read "100 days, 07/10" along with a Star of David. A Turkish court on Monday released the player, who returned to the Zionist entity. In a testimony to the police, reported by private news agency DHA, 28-year-old Jehezkel — sacked by his Turkish team after Sunday's match — said he "believes that this 100-day period should end now. I want the war to end". — AFP

tacks on Red Sea shipping are in solidarity with Gaza, where Iran-backed Hamas fighters have been at war with the Zionist entity for more than three months. Around 12 percent of global trade normally passes through the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, the Red Sea's entrance between southwest Yemen and Djibouti, but the rebel attacks have affected trade flows.

In Monday's attack, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations security agency, run by Britain's Royal Navy, reported a "vessel hit from above by a missile". Ambrey, a British maritime risk company, "assessed the attack to have targeted US interests in response to US military strikes on Houthi military positions in Yemen", adding that the vessel was "assessed to not be (Zionist)-affiliated".

"The impact reportedly caused a fire in a hold. The bulker reportedly remained seaworthy, and no injuries were reported," Ambrey said in a report. The ship was transiting the International Recommended Transit Corridor, a passage of the Gulf of Aden that is patrolled for pirates, when it was struck, Ambrey added. — AFP

Curbs on sales of fruit and veg...

Continued from Page 1

On another note, Head of the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies Musab Al-Mulla announced a new initiative to empower citizens in monitoring prices at cooperative societies for essential goods, vegetables and fruits. This involves integrating the initiative into the Sahel app, allowing consumers to track and compare prices across different cooperative societies. The goal is to ensure consistency and uniformity in pricing.

Once implemented, consumers can access and compare prices at their respective cooperative societies through the app. The idea is rooted in the social responsibility of the union and aims to prioritize the well-being of contributing citizens. Mulla emphasized that this approach would eliminate price variations, making prices almost standardized. This initiative encourages private entities, including price monitors in the union, cooperative societies, and inspectors of social affairs, to monitor and ensure that prices are not raised.

He highlighted the union's commitment to presenting various ideas and proposals for the benefit of citizens. These suggestions will be submitted to relevant authorities for practical implementation, with the overarching goal of providing the best prices and

services for contributors and the general public.

Regarding minister Aiban's decision to ban the retail sale of vegetables and fruits in small packages in cooperative societies, Mulla clarified that there was a meeting involving officials from the ministries of commerce and social affairs and the union to discuss and support such proposals. He urged everyone to adhere to and implement the issued decisions.

Meanwhile, Aiban is set to issue a decision prohibiting the export of livestock from Kuwait to other countries. Citing responsible sources, the decision will apply to both imported and locally sourced livestock. This precautionary measure aims to stabilize the local market for this essential commodity in response to developments in the Red Sea region.

The sources suggest that the decision may not specify a fixed duration for the export ban. Instead, it is likely to be contingent upon the ministry's assessment of the livestock market's stability, price moderation and assurance that Kuwait's supply of this critical commodity remains unaffected by events in the Red Sea.

Highlighting the context, the sources noted that in December of the previous year, Kuwait imported approximately 95,000 head of live livestock. Notably, Kuwait's annual sheep requirements alone are around one million head, along with approximately 12,000 head of calves. While the current imported livestock is deemed sufficient to meet local demand and even allow for export, the decision to halt exports at present is motivated by a commitment to preserving food security. — Agencies

Houthi missile hits US-owned...

Continued from Page 1

There was no immediate statement from the rebels, but a Houthi military and a Yemeni government source told AFP that the insurgents fired three missiles on Monday.

An anti-ship ballistic missile launched towards shipping lanes in the southern Red Sea failed in flight, CENTCOM said. The incident in the Gulf of Aden, south of the Red Sea, comes a day after a Houthi cruise missile targeting a US destroyer was shot down. It also follows Friday's attack by the United States and Britain on scores of sites in rebel-held Yemen.

Attacks by and against the Houthis, part of the "axis of resistance" of Iran allies and proxies against the Zionist entity, have raised concerns about violence spreading in the region from the Gaza war. The Houthis say their at-

Indian Americans rise in US politics...

Continued from Page 1

average household income is the highest of any US ethnic group. Raj Goyle, a former state lawmaker in Kansas and co-founder of Indian American Impact, a South Asian American political group, said that ethnic groups in the United States historically have waited for a greater comfort level and critical mass before entering politics. "Indian Americans actually have had a

quicker journey than other immigrant communities in terms of political success," he said.

He noted that Indian Americans are unusual as an immigrant group in that many arrived as educated professionals, highly regarded by other Americans. "When the first wave of us were elected, we had to think about how voters would react to our ethnicity," Goyle said. While racism still exists, "Now, I think there's a very good argument to make that it's a huge plus."

While few give Ramaswamy much chance of winning the presidency, his candidacy marks a watershed in his embrace of his religion. Asked at a debate in Iowa about his religion, Ramaswamy said: "I am a Hindu. I won't fake my identity." — AFP

International

A year of homicide in London

21 out of 110 killed in 2023 were teenagers, marking a 50% jump compared to 2022



LONDON: This photo taken on Sept 28, 2023 shows floral tributes placed near the Whitgift Centre, in Croydon, south London, where 15-year-old Elianne Andam was stabbed to death on her way to school. — AFP photos

LONDON: Reminders of violent death and lives cut brutally short can be seen across the British capital, from its bleaker commuter hinterlands to even its most sought-after neighborhoods. Raindrops cover the cellophane of decaying flowers left outside a fried chicken shop in Camberwell. On Primrose Hill, half-empty bottles of wine from a tragic New Year's Eve party lie on the damp grass.

Elsewhere, yellowing bouquets can be found under trees, by a terraced house down a suburban side street and a supermarket store front. Tributes are left outside a school, on a canal towpath, near a nightclub, in a park and the graffiti-ed wall of a deserted industrial estate. Photos of the victims are often taped to the poles of street signs. Ink runs on scribbled notes of condolence.

At the more elaborate makeshift memorials, helium balloons, tealight candles, packets of sweets and a football shirt are left as offerings. The Metropolitan Police said there were 110 recorded homicides in 2023 in the 620-square-mile (1,605-square-kilometre) Greater London area for which it is responsible — one more than in 2022. Of the 110 victims, 91 were male and 19 female.

'Stop killing each other'

In the clinical accounting of crime statistics, 14 deaths were classed as domestic homicides, an

18-percent fall on the preceding 12 months. Twenty-one of those killed overall were teenagers — a 50-percent increase year on year — while 71 of the deaths involved a knife.

The young age of the victims and the manner of their deaths has not gone unnoticed in the UK, fueling public and political concern about knife crime and prompting calls to act. Among them are those trying to stop London Mayor Sadiq Khan from securing a third term of office at local elections in May, and their media backers, who have branded the capital "lawless London".

The criticism adds to that of Khan's expansion of a road-charging scheme for the most polluting vehicles, to cut damaging air pollution. "Sadiq Khan has simply not done enough, and we cannot afford another four years under his watch," said Conservative mayoral hopeful Susan Hall, in reference to her Labour party rival.

But Khan blames Tory central government cuts, saying they have effectively left police to fight crime with "one hand tied behind their backs". At a roadside shrine to a 15-year-old girl stabbed to death as she made her way to school in September, the message is clear. "Youth stop killing each other. No to stabbing. No to violence," one sign read. But as 2024 begins, there has been no let-up in the bloodshed. — AFP



This photo shows floral tributes placed in south west London, where on Aug 24, 2023, Theo Porteous, 32, was stabbed to death.



A photo shows floral tributes and pictures of the victim displayed on a makeshift memorial in west London, where on Nov 15, 2023, Simarjeet Singh Nangpal, 17, was stabbed to death.

Philippines to upgrade outposts in disputed sea

MANILA: The Philippines will upgrade outposts in waters off its coast and acquire more ships, its military chief said Monday, as the country seeks to push back against China's growing assertiveness in the disputed South China Sea.

Manila and Beijing have a long history of maritime territorial disputes in the waterway, but relations sharply deteriorated recently over a series of incidents involving vessels from both countries. Philippine military chief General Romeo Brawner said the country would develop "the islands and other features" it held.

The Philippines has outposts on nine reefs and islands in the Spratly Islands, located in the South China Sea. Brawner said Thitu and Nanshan islands were among those where facilities would be improved with the installation of desalination machines and communications equipment. "We are just trying to make it more livable, more habitable for our soldiers because they really have poor living conditions," he told reporters.

The plan, however, did not include "fortifying the Sierra Madre", Brawner said, referring to the crumbling World War II-vintage ship grounded on Second Thomas Shoal by the Philippine Navy in 1999 to assert the country's territorial claims. The Philippines would also acquire "more ships, more aircraft, radars", Brawner said, as part of a modest modernization program that began more than a decade ago.

Beijing claims almost the entire South China Sea and has ignored an international tribunal ruling that its assertions have no legal basis. This month, China held military drills in the South China Sea as the United States and the Philippines conducted their own joint exercises in the same waters.

The drills followed a month of tense stand-offs between China and the Philippines in disputed reefs in the area that saw a collision between vessels from the two countries and Chinese ships blasting water cannon at Philippine boats.

The Philippine Congress, meanwhile, has earmarked 800 million pesos (\$14.3 million) for the transport department to build a port facility on Nanshan where boats, including those for fishing, could seek shelter. Another 1.5 billion pesos had been allocated for the expansion of the airstrip on Thitu. Luis Campos, the vice chair of the House of Representatives' appropriations committee, said Sunday. — AFP

Campaigning starts in Pakistan's delayed national polls

ISLAMABAD: The frontrunner party for Pakistan's delayed elections began campaigning Monday, after a weekend court decision effectively sealed the opposition party of ex-prime minister Imran Khan out of the race.

Pakistan's vote next month has been marred by claims of pre-poll rigging, with analysts saying the army establishment is orchestrating Khan's exclusion whilst backing three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif. On Monday, Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) party kicked off campaigning in the eastern city of Okara, where thousands of supporters thronged for speeches by senior leaders. "Those who love this country can't vote for anyone else but Nawaz Sharif," said his daughter Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a vice-president of the PML-N party.

Meanwhile Khan — the nation's most popular politician — is languishing in jail and barred from standing as a result of cases he claims have been concocted by the establishment. On Saturday, the Supreme Court dealt a fresh blow to his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party by denying them their cricket bat election symbol on ballot papers.

The move effectively forces PTI candidates to run as independents and disallows them an icon vital for

Sudanese army strike kills seven south of Khartoum

AL-JAZIRA STATE: Bombardments by the Sudanese Armed Forces killed seven civilians on Sunday in the White Nile state village of Al-Qutaynah, activists said. Sudan, in northeast Africa, has been devastated by a war between feuding generals since April last year, and the strike in White Nile state is the latest indication of fighting spreading southwards from the capital Khartoum.

As it does, more people are forced to flee in a

Iran lodges hijab case against freed journalists

TEHRAN: Iran's judiciary said Monday it had launched new proceedings against two journalists for posing without the mandatory headscarf upon their release after more than a year in prison. Niloufar Hamed and Elaheh Mohammadi were released Sunday from Tehran's Evin prison, where they had been held for their coverage of the September 2022 death in custody of a young woman which sparked nationwide protests.

Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian Kurd, had been arrested for an alleged breach of strict dress rules for women. Images of the two journalists smiling and holding hands outside the prison circulated on social

media following their release. The judiciary's Mizan Online website noted the photos showed "the women without hijab", which has been made obligatory for women in public spaces since shortly after Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution. Mizan said "a new case was filed against the defendants" as a result.

'Acceptable to the establishment'

The poll will take place amid increasing militant attacks and an economic nosedive that has ravaged the rupee and sent the cost-of-living soaring. Originally due in November, the election commission delayed the vote in order to redraw constituencies after a new census.

Analysts suggest the hold-up has benefitted the powerful army establishment seen as the chief architects of an ongoing crackdown denting the prospects of Khan and PTI. "It's going to be a controversial election: one party sees it as a complete negation of democracy," Tufts University history professor Ayesha Jalal told AFP.

Nawaz Sharif did not appear at Monday's rally and has been largely absent from the public eye since returning from self-imposed exile in Britain late last year. Since then the 74-year-old — last ousted in 2017 — has seen the myriad corruption cases plaguing him dissolve in the courts, an apparent sign of his reformed relationship with the army establishment.

The military has directly ruled Pakistan for decades of its history and continues to wield huge influence behind the scenes. Onetime cricket star Khan blames the

country which has the world's largest number of displaced, at more than 7.4 million, according to the United Nations. The attack, 75 kilometers (47 miles) south of Khartoum, was reported by a local group known as a resistance committee, which said the fatalities came "in bombardments by the air force."

Such resistance committees once organized pro-democracy protests but now provide aid during the war, which has left more than half the population in need of humanitarian assistance, according to the UN. Fighting erupted on April 15 between the head of the armed forces Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who leads the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, an analyst group, puts the death toll at more than 13,000. In adjacent Al-Jazira state, hundreds of

thousands of refugees have been displaced again — after earlier seeking safety from battles in Khartoum — as the RSF move south from the capital.

"The expansion of fighting between the SAF and the RSF into parts of central and eastern Sudan — the country's most important regions for crop production — has driven a significant increase in humanitarian needs during the harvesting season," the UN said in a report on Sunday.

White SAF controls the skies, the RSF has the streets of the capital Khartoum, nearly all of the western Darfur region and, with its push into Al-Jazira state, shattered one of the country's few remaining sanctuaries. Diplomatic efforts to secure a negotiated peace, notably by the United States, Saudi Arabia and, most recently, the IGAD regional bloc, have so far failed. — AFP



LAHORE: People walk past flags of Pakistan's political parties displayed for sale at a market in Lahore on Jan 13, 2024 ahead of the country's general elections. — AFP

army for an avalanche of court cases burying him since he was ousted by a no-confidence vote in 2022 — saying they were triggered to prevent his return to power.

He is currently jailed and has separately been barred from standing for election on the basis of a graft conviction. Despite a narrowing margin, a Gallup Pakistan poll taken in December showed 71-year-old Khan still has a five-point lead over Sharif in approval ratings. "Khan thinks that just because he's 'popular' he deserves the key to the helm of state authority," said history professor Jalal. "Unfortunately in Pakistan it's not just popularity that counts, it's your acceptability to a security-conscious establishment." — AFP



TEHRAN: This picture by the Sharq News Online shows Iranian journalists Niloufar Hamed (right) and Elaheh Mohammadi (left) flashing the sign of victory after they were released from prison on bail. — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024

Zain Omantel International, Telecom Egypt forge new digital corridor

Bridging the Mediterranean and Arabian Seas

- New route design will provide ZOI and Telecom Egypt's partners and customers best resiliency and reliability for its end-to-end solution from Indian Ocean to Europe
- Spanning Egypt, Oman and Saudi Arabia, the infrastructure will be extended to include Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq and Jordan

KUWAIT: Telecom Egypt, Egypt's first integrated telecom operator and one of the largest subsea cable operators in the region, and Zain Omantel International (ZOI), the Middle East's premier international wholesale powerhouse with access to more than 20 international subsea cables in the region, are joining forces to establish a unique digital corridor. This corridor will seamlessly connect the Mediterranean Sea to the Arabian Sea and Arabian Gulf, creating an unprecedented Eurasian data highway.

The innovative infrastructure will extend from Oman's Arabian Sea and Gulf shores to Egypt's Mediterranean coastline, employing a high fiber count, cutting-edge blend of terrestrial and subsea segments. The terrestrial segments, spanning Oman, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, promise unparalleled reliability and protection. On the other hand, the subsea section, directly linking Saudi Arabia and Egypt through the Red Sea, will feature a high-capacity, repeaterless cable system.

This route design will provide Telecom Egypt and ZOI's partners and customers with the best resiliency and reliability for their end-to-end solution. Furthermore, the infrastructure will be extended to Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq and Jordan through ZOI's network and collaboration with the licensed cable landing parties in each country.

This collaboration also offers a revolutionary opportunity for subsea cable owners. By connecting to this open access system, they can significantly reduce their construction costs and greatly enhance latency, resilience, and market response times. Tele-

com Egypt will develop new infrastructure across Egypt from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean and onwards to Europe, complemented by ZOI's robust infrastructure across the Middle East. This new network route will have the shortest, enhanced latency profile, giving hyperscalers, subsea cable providers, carriers and telecom operators improved connectivity options from the Indian Ocean to Europe.

Mohamed Nasr, Managing Director and CEO at Telecom Egypt, commented: "We are excited to collaborate with ZOI on this strategic project: it's a game-changer in the Eurasia route connectivity landscape. As we look for innovative ways to better serve our customers, we will consistently strive to provide a seamless international connectivity network and increase our diversity layers, without compromising quality, cost or speed. We will do this by leveraging on both Telecom Egypt's established history in the subsea cables arena and its experienced and competent team."

Sohail Qadir, CEO at ZOI, commented: "We are delighted to partner with Telecom Egypt on such a groundbreaking project. ZOI was created to revolutionize the wholesale telecom scene and this is an example of what the future holds. We are facilitating the landing of subsea connections through our shareholders such as Omantel and Zain KSA being the licensees in those jurisdictions. This one-of-a-kind infrastructure will be expanded to most of ZOI's network footprint to maximize the benefit to our group operations across the region. The value that this digital corridor will create is enormous and it will



be widely realized in the region and beyond not only from a connectivity point of view, but also on technological, commercial and social levels."

Zain Omantel International (ZOI) is the Middle East's premier wholesale powerhouse serving regional operators, international carriers, global hyperscalers and cloud providers seeking services within the region and beyond. The first-of-its-kind joint venture signifies a substantial advancement in the telecommunications industry and is poised to become a global powerhouse due to Zain's extensive regional presence and success in the retail and digital arenas, combined with Omantel's exceptional wholesale capabilities and comprehensive international subsea and terrestrial networks. ZOI manages

all international wholesale requirements of Zain and Omantel operations in eight countries, serving over 55 million customers.

Telecom Egypt is the first integrated telecom operator in Egypt providing all telecom services to its customers including fixed and mobile voice and data services. Telecom Egypt has a long history serving Egyptian customers for over 160 years maintaining a leadership position in the Egyptian telecom market by offering its enterprise and consumer customers the most advanced technology, reliable infrastructure solutions and the widest network of submarine cables. Aside from its mobile operation "WE", the company owns a 45 percent stake in Vodafone Egypt.

Shares dive in IT group Atos after CEO change

PARIS: Shares in French IT consultancy Atos plunged on Monday after the group announced it was appointing a new chief executive to handle its debt crisis.

Atos said it was appointing its finance director Paul Saleh as group chief executive to "primarily focus on refinancing the Group's financial debts".

Atos said 67-year-old Saleh will replace Yves Bernaert in the role with immediate effect. Bernaert -- who had joined Atos in October to oversee the group's turnaround—said he was leaving due to a "difference of opinion on the governance to adjust and execute the strategy."

The group saw shares drop by 15.4 percent when the Paris stock exchange opened up Monday morning. The value of the group's stock has already fallen by more than 40 percent since the start of the year. Saleh will also take responsibility for handling negotiations around the sale of Atos's big data and cybersecurity business to Airbus and its Tech Foundations business to Czech billionaire Daniel Kretinsky's EPEL.

Small shareholders and some politicians have criticised the planned restructuring and sale, including Kretinsky taking a stake in the Eviden unit that includes cybersecurity, supercomputers and cloud services operations. Heavily indebted Atos has to repay or refinance 3.65 billion euros (\$4 billion) of loans and bonds maturing by the end of 2025.

The group said it was set to meet its financial targets for the year in terms of sales and operating margin, but warned its free cash flow was expected to be below target for the second half of 2023 by around 100 million euros. Atos Chairman Jean-Pierre Mustier said Saleh was "the right person to lead Atos during this period of transformation as we take decisive and disciplined action to secure the long-term sustainability of our business." — AFP

German economy shrank in 2023 on energy woes

FRANKFURT: The German economy shrank slightly in 2023, official data showed Monday, as costly energy, high interest rates and cooling foreign demand took their toll on Europe's export giant.

Output contracted by 0.3 percent year-on-year, federal statistics agency Destatis said in preliminary figures. "Overall economic development faltered in Germany in 2023 in an environment that continues to be marked by multiple crises," the agency's Ruth

German farmers round off week of angry protests in Berlin

BERLIN: Thousands of angry farmers descended on Berlin with their tractors and loudly booed a government minister on Monday, rounding off a week of nationwide protests against plans to cut tax breaks for agriculture.

More than 5,000 tractors were already blocking the streets and honking their horns by mid-morning, a police spokeswoman told AFP. Finance Minister Christian Lindner put up a robust defense of the government's plans at the protest, insisting they were about "how we can get out of a difficult situation together". But he was met with boos and whistles when he took to the podium, with protesters chanting "liar" and calling for the government to be ousted.

"For me, the government must resign. They are no longer capable of leading us," Paul Brzezinski, 73, a dairy farmer based south-east of Berlin, told AFP. Farmers began a week of protests on January 8 over plans to axe certain subsidies for agriculture, after a court ruling forced the government to find savings in the 2024 budget. The rallies prompted the government to partially walk back on the cuts, promising to reinstate a discount on vehicle tax and to phase out a diesel subsidy over several years instead of immediately.

But farmers say the moves did not go far enough and are urging Berlin to completely reverse the plans. "It's not just about the most recent cuts. That was simply the straw that broke the camel's back," said Hendrik Pferdenges, 45, a crop farmer from Hanover.

"We have lost too many subsidies in recent years, and there is so much regulation and bureaucracy that at some point we will no longer be able to cope," he said. "If I had to describe in one word why I am here, then it would be 'future'," said Henrike Boerstling, 26, a crop farmer from Lower Saxony.

"I want my children to be able to become farmers one day. I want to be able to take over the farm from my father. I want to be able to run it properly and

invest in my business," she said.

The farmers' demos have come at a time when approval ratings for Chancellor Olaf Scholz's uneasy three-way coalition government are at an all-time low. In a recent poll for the Bild daily, 64 percent of Germans said they would like to see a change of government. Workers from various sectors, from metallurgy and transport to education, have staged protests in recent weeks amid struggling economic growth and rising prices.

Strikes by railway workers brought transport to a standstill last week, while metal workers and public sector employees staged walkouts in December. Official data on Monday showed the German economy shrank by 0.3 percent in 2023 as costly energy, high interest rates and cooling foreign demand took their toll. The farmers' rallies have also attracted far-right demonstrators, sparking fears that extremists are

Brand told a Berlin press conference. Europe's largest economy likely saw a 0.3-percent drop in gross domestic output in the final quarter of the year, the agency calculated, again in preliminary figures. It also revised the data for the third quarter from a 0.1-percent contraction to a stagnation, meaning Germany avoided a year-end technical recession of two successive quarters of negative growth. The German economy has faced severe headwinds since Russia's war in Ukraine sent inflation, particularly the cost of energy, soaring. The price spikes contributed to a steep downturn in Germany's energy-hungry manufacturing sector, while the construction sector also took a hit. Increasing competition from China, once a reliable destination for "made in Germany" goods, as well as aggressive eurozone rate hikes to tame inflation further added to Germany's



BERLIN: Tractors and trucks stand close to Berlin's landmark the Victory Column in the Tiergarten park during a protest of farmers and truck drivers, on January 15, 2024 in Berlin. — AFP

invest in my business," she said.

The farmers' demos have come at a time when approval ratings for Chancellor Olaf Scholz's uneasy three-way coalition government are at an all-time low. In a recent poll for the Bild daily, 64 percent of Germans said they would like to see a change of government. Workers from various sectors, from metallurgy and transport to education, have staged protests in recent weeks amid struggling economic growth and rising prices.

Strikes by railway workers brought transport to a standstill last week, while metal workers and public sector employees staged walkouts in December. Official data on Monday showed the German economy shrank by 0.3 percent in 2023 as costly energy, high interest rates and cooling foreign demand took their toll. The farmers' rallies have also attracted far-right demonstrators, sparking fears that extremists are

seeking to exploit the protest movement. They are accused of being behind controversial stunts such as setting up gallows on the side of motorways and stopping Economy Minister Robert Habeck from disembarking from a ferry. The far-right AfD party is enjoying a surge in popularity, scoring between 21 and 23 percent nationally in terms of voting intentions and more than 30 percent in some parts of the former East Germany.

Pferdenges said far-right protesters represented only a "very small number" of people at the farmers' protests. "We're not right-wing extremists in any way. It's just fear-mongering by the politicians," he said. Berlin announced plans to cut subsidies and tax breaks on diesel and agricultural vehicles after a court ruling in November tore a multi-billion-euro hole in the government's budget, forcing Scholz's coalition to find savings. — AFP

woes. The limp economic performance was widely expected, with the International Monetary Fund predicting that Germany would be the only major advanced economy not to grow in 2023.

If confirmed in the final figures, the 2023 contraction makes it Germany's weakest year since the coronavirus pandemic battered the economy in 2020. "Despite recent price declines, prices remained high at all stages in the economic process and put a damper on economic growth" in 2023, said Brand.

"Unfavorable financing conditions due to rising interest rates and weaker domestic and foreign demand also took their toll."

A modest recovery is expected to get under way in 2024, with Germany's Bundesbank central bank recently forecasting growth of 0.4 percent. "We see a silver lining for the economy in 2024," said

KfW chief economist Fritzi Koehler-Geib. "Thanks to strong real wage growth, private consumption in particular is likely to pick up again. Together with an expected recovery in export demand, gross domestic product is likely to grow," she added.

But ING bank economist Carsten Brzeski was less optimistic, pointing to fresh uncertainty stemming from the German government's recent budget upset and shipping delays in the Suez Canal as a result of conflict in the Middle East. "Looking ahead, at least in the first months of 2024, many of the recent drags on growth will still be around and will, in some cases, have an even stronger impact than in 2023," Brzeski said. He predicted that gross domestic product would shrink again this year, in what would "be the first time since the early 2000s that Germany has gone through a two-year recession, even though it could prove to be a shallow one". — AFP

Business

IMF chief: AI holds risks, 'tremendous opportunity' for global economy

AI to impact 60% of advanced economy jobs, says Georgieva

WASHINGTON: Artificial intelligence poses risks to job security around the world but also offers a "tremendous opportunity" to boost flagging productivity levels and fuel global growth, the IMF chief told AFP. AI will affect 60 percent of jobs in advanced economies, the International Monetary Fund's managing director, Kristalina Georgieva, said in an interview in Washington, shortly before departing for the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

With AI expected to have less effect in developing countries, around "40 percent of jobs globally are likely to be impacted," she said, citing a new IMF report. "And the more you have higher skilled jobs, the higher the impact," she added. However, the IMF report published Sunday evening notes that only half of the jobs impacted by AI will be negatively affected; the rest may actually benefit from enhanced productivity gains due to AI.

"Your job may disappear altogether—not good—or artificial intelligence may enhance your job, so you actually will be more productive and your income level may go up," Georgieva said.

The IMF report predicted that, while labor mar-



WASHINGTON: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva speaks during an interview with AFP at IMF Headquarters in Washington, DC. — AFP

kets in emerging markets and developing economies will see a smaller initial impact from AI, they are also less likely to benefit from the enhanced productivity that will arise through its integration in the work-

organization seeking to shape the EU's climate stance, says current Green Deal legislation won't achieve the targets set, noting that many of the already-agreed transitions are backloaded to 2030.

Calls for a pause

Several EU governments and conservative EU lawmakers are also putting up resistance, calling for a pause in environmental legislation. Part of that is because of blowback from the bloc's powerful farming lobby, whose voice is being increasingly heard as parties vie for European Parliament seats.

But Hoekstra, arriving for the EU ministers' meeting, said there was no alternative to rising to meet the climate challenge given the growing impact of global warming. "They're not my red lines, they're not the red lines of the Commission, they are not the red lines of any individual minister—it is simply what the planet tells us to do," he said.

The detail of what reaching the targets would entail is where much of the friction lies. Dozens of climate non-governmental organizations, think-tanks and research groups have called for overall emission cuts, more carbon sinks like forests that absorb gases, and carbon capture and storage technologies. "This is a crucial moment to shape the climate policy architecture," said Fabiola de Simone, of Carbon Market Watch.

Aiming for a "net" carbon reduction—meaning using offsets to bring down overall emission figures rather than an across-the-board cut -- "can lead us to slow down the efforts to reduce emissions first, which is our priority," she said. "This kind of approach... is wrong scientifically, it's also very risky," she said.

But Canfin said "all solutions" needed to be adopted because "there are residual emissions that we aren't able to get rid of". Adolfo Aiello, deputy head of the European Steel Association, said that a 90-percent target in any case "entails almost a full decarbonization of energy-intensive industries such as steel". "The EU steel industry's decarbonization alone would require the equivalent of today's German electricity consumption," he said. — AFP

to work with smaller parties including the Kuomintang—seen as more favorable to Beijing—leading to more compromises. Lai's "modest winning margin and the legislative impasse suggest limitations on pursuing radical agendas, especially regarding Taiwan's independence", said Saxo Markets' Redmond Wong.

"A pragmatic approach may see him endeavoring to maintain the status quo and even facilitate de-escalation. While mainland China has expressed dissatisfaction, measured reactions may ease immediate concerns of heightened cross-strait tensions." Oil prices dropped, having surged Friday over supply concerns as tensions mount in the Middle East. The United States and Britain have in recent days launched strikes against

place. "We must focus on helping low income countries in particular to move faster to be able to catch the opportunities that artificial intelligence will present," Georgieva told AFP.

"So artificial intelligence, yes, a little scary. But it is also a tremendous opportunity for everyone," she said. The IMF is due to publish updated economic forecasts later this month which will show the global economy is broadly on track to meet its previous forecasts, she said. It is "poised for a soft landing," she said, adding that "monetary policy is doing a good job, inflation is going down, but the job is not quite done."

"So we are in this trickiest place of not easing too fast or too slow," she said. The global economy could use an AI-related productivity boost, as the IMF predicts it will continue growing at historically muted levels over the medium term. "God, how much we need it," Georgieva said. "Unless we figure out a way to unlock productivity, we as the world are not for a great story."

Georgieva said 2024 is likely to be "a very tough year" for fiscal policy worldwide, as countries look to tackle debt burdens accumulated during the

COVID-19 pandemic, and rebuild depleted buffers. Billions of people are also due to go to the polls this year, putting additional pressure on governments to either raise spending or cut taxes to win popular support. "About 80 countries are going to have elections, and we know what happens with pressure on spending during election cycles," she added.

The concern at the IMF, Georgieva said, is that governments around the world spend big this year and undermine the hard-won progress they have made in the fight against high inflation.

"If monetary policy tightens and fiscal policy expands, going against the objective of bringing inflation down, we might be for a longer ride," she added.

Georgieva, whose five-year term at the IMF's helm is set to end this year, refused to be drawn on whether she intends to run for a second stint leading the international financial institution. "I have a job to do right now and my concentration is on doing that job," she said. "It has been a tremendous privilege to be the head of the IMF during a very turbulent time, and I can tell you I'm quite proud of how the institution coped," she continued. "But let me do what is in front of me right now." —AFP

EU debates 2040 milestone towards carbon-neutral future

BRUSSELS: The EU plans to be carbon neutral by 2050, but to get there it needs to pass two decadal milestones—each implying massive adaptation by industry and consumers. The first of those has already been set: achieving at least a 55 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, compared with a 1990 baseline. Now, the 27-country European Union is tackling the next transition stage: its climate-fighting ambitions for 2040. The bloc's environment ministers on Monday launched the debate on that goal, ahead of the European Commission early next month presenting its impact assessment reports of different climate target scenarios.

Those developments will inform positions that will be crystallized in the next European Commission and European Parliament that will result from EU elections taking place in June this year, with a formal EU proposition to be formulated in late 2024.

The current EU climate commissioner, Wopke Hoekstra, has vowed a net emissions reduction of "at least 90 percent" by 2040. The chair of the European Parliament's environment committee, Pascal Canfin, said that 90-percent goal "would allow the same level of ambition and the same rate of reduction" as for the 2020-2030 period.

"Going beyond that seems complicated," he said. The EU's European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change in a June report urged a reduction of 90-95 percent for the bloc to stay on its carbon-neutral trajectory. To get there, it said there would have to be practically no carbon emissions from electricity production, an acceleration of renewable energy sources, at least a halving of oil imports and drastically reduced energy consumption.

Carbon Market Watch, a not-for-profit research



Now, the 27-country European Union is tackling the next transition stage: its climate-fighting ambitions for 2040.

European stock markets, oil prices retreat

LONDON: European stock markets fell Monday with focus on data showing Germany's economy shrank last year, while oil prices cooled despite fresh US-UK strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen. "European stock markets were softer... as the week got off to a relatively quiet, risk-averse start," noted Neil Wilson, chief market analyst at Finalto trading group. Europe's biggest economy Germany shrank slightly in 2023, official data showed, as costly energy, high interest rates and cooling foreign demand took their toll. Output contracted by 0.3 percent year-on-year, federal statistics agency Destatis said in preliminary figures.

In Asia, Tokyo rose for a sixth successive day to build on last week's advances, which saw the Nikkei break above 35,000 points for the first time since 1990 thanks to a revival of Japanese inflation and a weaker yen that helps exporters. Shanghai also enjoyed a rare gain, after China's central bank decided not to cut short-term interest rates but pumped billions of dollars into financial markets. Taipei gained after pro-sovereignty candidate Lai Ching-te won Taiwan's presidential election, but his Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) lost its majority in the legislature. The result would likely see the DPP having



TOKYO: A woman walks past an electronic board showing a share price of the Tokyo Stock Exchange along a street in Tokyo. — AFP



KEHRSATZ, Switzerland: Swiss Federal Minister Guy Parmelin (front right), and Wang Shouwen, Chinese Vice Minister of the Ministry of Commerce, shake hands after signing a joint statement of the free trade agreement during an official visit to Kehrsatz on Jan 15, 2024. — AFP

China-Swiss talks touch on visa-free travel, free trade

GENEVA: China and Switzerland agreed Monday to speed up talks to upgrade their free trade agreement and to simplify visa procedures for travel between the two countries, Chinese state media reported. Bern and Beijing agreed to an early launch of formal negotiations to expand a free trade agreement in place since 2013, state news agency Xinhua reported.

China also agreed to provide visa-free entry for Swiss citizens, it said. The agreements were reached during the first high-level meeting between the two countries since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Heading the Chinese delegation was Premier Li Qiang, who was met by Swiss President and Defense Minister Viola Amherd when he arrived at Zurich airport on Sunday. And he was granted military honors as Monday's meeting kicked off at the Lohn Estate near Bern—a rare, high-level welcome rolled out for the highest-ranking Chinese representative to visit Switzerland since President Xi Jinping's visit in 2017. Swiss Economy Minister Guy Parmelin also took part in Monday's talks, as did Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao, the governor of the People's Bank of China and high-ranking representatives from other ministries including Deputy Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu.

The Swiss government said in a statement that the

two sides "discussed the deep and wide-ranging bilateral relations characterized by dialogue on around 30 issues, as well as a range of current international affairs". The two countries also discussed the planned resumption this year of dialogue between their foreign ministries, due to touch on issues including development cooperation and human rights. China has been Switzerland's most important trading partner in Asia since 2010 and is its third most important trading partner globally, after the European Union and the United States.

The two sides signed a joint declaration following a study on how to further develop their free trade agreement, Bern said, hailing this as "an important step towards the start of possible negotiations".

Xinhua said before the end of the year, the two countries would hold a new round of strategic talks on "on finance and energy, education policy dialogue, as well as consultations on UN Security Council affairs". The Swiss government said another topic discussed was whether Switzerland "would be included on the list of countries whose residents benefit from visa-free entry to China for stays up to 15 days". It did not provide more details, but Xinhua reported that China had agreed to apply a "unilateral visa-free policy to Switzerland".

The Swiss meanwhile would "provide more visa facilitation for Chinese citizens as well as Chinese enterprises investing in Switzerland", it said. Li's visit took place amid heightened security in the Swiss capital, with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky also visiting. The two men were due to go on from Bern to the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos. — AFP

Passenger traffic at Spain's airports hits record high

MADRID: Passenger traffic at Spain's airports hit a record high in 2023, official figures showed Monday, the latest sign the key tourism sector has rebounded strongly from the pandemic. A total of 283.2 million people travelled through the country's airports last year, a 16.2 percent increase over 2022, state-run airport operator Aena said in a statement.

The figure was 2.9 percent higher than in 2019 -- the last full year before global travel restrictions imposed to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic grounded the tourism sector. "These record figures in air transport are fundamental for the economic and social development of Spain. We should all congratulate ourselves for these results," Aena's chief executive officer, Maurici Lucena, said in the statement. Madrid airport was Spain's busiest with 60 million passengers, followed by Barcelona, Palma de Mallorca in the Balearic Islands and Malaga on the southern coast.

Spain is the world's second-most visited country after France and tourism is crucial for the domestic economy, making up nearly 12 percent of gross domestic product. International travel restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic brought Spain's vital tourism sector to its knees in 2020. —AFP

China's 2023 economic growth tipped to be weakest in decades

Economy battered by property crisis and sluggish consumption

BEIJING: China's economy likely grew at its weakest annual rate for more than three decades in 2023, data is expected to show Wednesday, as it was battered by a crippling property crisis, sluggish consumption and global uncertainties.

A group of ten experts interviewed by AFP forecast China's gross domestic product (GDP) to have expanded 5.2 percent, which would represent the lowest rate since 1990, outside of the COVID-19 pandemic. The reading would be an improvement on the three percent seen in 2022, though that year saw business activity hammered by tight health curbs designed to contain the virus.

After lifting the measures, Beijing set itself a growth target of "around five percent" for 2023.

The return of normal life initially sparked a recovery at the start of last year but the long-awaited rebound soon ran out of steam as a lack of confidence among households and businesses battered consumption. An intractable real estate crisis, record youth unemployment and a global slowdown are also gumming the gears of the Chinese growth engine.

"The main challenge for China's economic recovery still stems from the property sector," said Jing Liu, chief economist for Greater China at HSBC. The property sector has long accounted for around a quarter of China's economy. It experienced dazzling growth for two decades, but financial woes at major firms such as Evergrande and Country Garden are now fuelling buyer mistrust, against a

backdrop of unfinished housing developments and falling prices.

Purchasing property has long been seen by many Chinese as a safe haven for parking savings, but the price drop has hit their wallets hard.

"Real estate investment, dwelling prices and new dwelling sales are set to fall throughout 2024 before returning as a modest driver of growth in 2025," said Harry Murphy Cruise, an economist at Moody's ratings agency. That crisis, alongside "sluggish labor market conditions", are dampening consumer confidence, said Helen Qiao, head of Asia Economic Research at Bank of America.

A record of more than one in five people aged 16 to 24 in China were unemployed in May, according to officials, the monthly publication of which has since been suspended.

The uneven recovery has largely benefitted services, as customers have returned to restaurants, transport and tourist sites. But the level of spending is often lower than 2019, before the pandemic took hold. A rare bright spark is the state-subsidized auto sector, where a wave of electrification has buttressed domestic manufacturers such as BYD, which dethroned Elon Musk's Tesla as the world's best-selling EV maker in the fourth quarter.

However, other areas are struggling, notably industry, which has been weakened by ailing demand at home and abroad. Chinese exports—historically a key growth lever—fell last year for the first time since 2016, according to figures published by the country's customs agency on Friday.



This photo taken on January 14, 2024 shows new energy vehicles parked at a distribution center of Changan Automobile Company in China's southwestern Chongqing municipality. — AFP

The decline is partly explained by geopolitical tensions with the United States and efforts by some Western nations to reduce dependence on Beijing or diversify their supply chains.

"More (Western) companies (are) reducing or maintaining current levels of in-

vestments" in China but diversifying elsewhere, said Teeuwe Mevissen, an analyst at Rabobank.

"China saw significant capital outflows" as a result, but also due to increasing its own investments abroad, he said. All of these challenges "will continue to play an

important role in 2024", Mevissen warned. This year, China's growth is expected to slow to 4.5 percent, according to World Bank forecasts. The average prediction by AFP's pool of experts was 4.7 percent. Beijing is expected to announce its new growth target in March. — AFP

Ghana secures debt deal as part of IMF loan

ACCRA, Ghana: Ghana has reached an agreement with external creditors for a debt restructuring that was key to its \$3 billion credit line with the IMF, the government and the lender said. Facing its worst economic crisis in decades, Ghana agreed to a loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to help shore up its public finances and better manage its heavy debt load.

Ghana's economic outlook will be a major part of campaigning for the presidential election in December when President Nana Akufo-Addo's New Patriotic Party will seek an unprecedented third term in office. Ghana received its first \$600 million tranche of the IMF loan in May last year.

The external debt deal helps clear the way for approval of another \$600 million payment. "This development constitutes a significant positive step towards restoring Ghana's long-term debt sustainability," a Finance Ministry statement said late Friday. Last year Ghana successfully carried out a restructuring of its domestic debt.

Ghana suspended payments on the majority of its external debt, essentially defaulting due to challenges in addressing its substantial balance of payments deficit. The restructuring parameters encompass both bilateral and commercial debt, including Eurobonds. IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva welcomed Ghana reaching "an agreement in principle with their official creditors on a debt treatment, consistent with the objectives of the IMF-supported program, which aims to restore macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability".

She said the deal "clears the path for IMF Executive Board consideration" of the first review of Ghana's three-year agreement "in the next few days". The Ghanaian government expects approval from the IMF Board will also prompt the World Bank Board to review \$300 million in development financing for the country. — AFP

Senegal's Hann Bay, a paradise turned sewer, awaits clean up

DAKAR: On Dakar's long Hann Bay beach, a lone figure with a shovel and wheelbarrow tirelessly picks up mounds of rubbish in such quantities that the task takes on an almost mythological air. The smell is acrid. A few meters from the man, a pipe carries a black mixture of household and factory wastewater into the Atlantic. Once considered one of the most beautiful coves in all Africa, the former idyllic stretch of fine sand around twenty kilometers long, adjacent to the port of Dakar, has become the dumping ground for an increasing population and ever-expanding industry.

Most of Senegal's manufacturing industry is located along the bay and discharges its waste directly into it. Ocean pollution is at worrying levels. The government has been promising to clean up the area for over twenty years. But a clean-up project launched in 2018 with financial support from the French Development Agency, Invest International, the Chinese Development Bank and the European Union has stalled.

The National Sanitation Agency (ONAS) has just announced the resumption of the work that has been suspended for months. Locals have long been begging for real change. "We've been told for years that there's a project, but nothing changes. I don't believe in it any more," said Daouda Kane, 45, sitting on the seafloor. A few meters away, a woman is pouring the remains of her lunch pot onto the shore, which is teeming with insects.

"Here, you cast your nets and bring in rubbish, and you get sick," complains 53-year-old fisherman Modou Ndong. In some places, it is almost impossible to see the sand beneath the rubbish.

Every few hundred meters a sewage pipe discharges into the sea, turning the water blood-red at the end of the slaughterhouse pipe and pitch black from the chemical industry and the local tannery. Anyone who gets too close will feel a burning in their throat.

Amidou Sonko, a marine specialist with the French research and development institute (IRD), has confirmed the "high toxicity" of the area. His analyses revealed concentrations of E. coli bacteria 13 to 100 times higher than the permitted limit,

in everyday language. "If you discuss today what you will do at CES...in a week's time, it will ask you 'how was CES?'" Sedoshkin said. Enthusiasts can adopt a talking head on a subscription basis, for \$200 a month.

"Did it feel real? No," said Alan Pierce, a retired professor attending the tech show, calling it a cleverly designed "talking head." A cross between a helicopter and a plane, the electric powered S-A2 is pitted to become the transport of choice for cities paralyzed by traffic jams. Its real name is eVTOL - electric vertical take-off and landing vehicle. It has a pilot and up to four passengers on board. "It's urban aerial mobility," Jaiwon Shin, head of Supernal, a subsidiary of South Korea's Hyundai Group, told AFP. "The biggest market is the United States—cities like Las Vegas or Los Angeles."

An hour-long car journey due to traffic jams can be replaced by a flight of just 10 minutes, departing from so-called vertiports that would be dotted around a city. The aim is to make the flight less expensive than a helicopter flight. After landing, a robot scans to check the integrity of the aircraft—whose propellers are attached to a single long wing and rotate for take-off and landing.

Jaiwon hopes to launch in 2028, but the regulatory hurdles are considerable.

"It has never been done before in aviation... It's really a revolution and the battery is a technological challenge," he said. Installing a door hatch to let cats and dogs roam freely in and out of the house also leaves the home open



DAKAR, Senegal: Men pile waste collected from the beach during a beach clean up along Hann Bay in Dakar on November 11, 2023. — AFP

and the presence of salmonella.

He also observed quantities of enterococci, microplastics, aluminium, chromium and zinc that far exceeded standards. Such levels pose a threat to human skin, lungs and eyes, but also to biodiversity, he said. The development of certain species is also impacted in this natural breeding ground for fish.

Nonetheless, Seyni Badiane, a young father, swims with his daughters aged two and five about thirty metres from a canal that discharges green water. "This is the only beach in the neighborhood, so we come here," he said. "We're Africans, so we're used to it."

"No one can stop children from bathing here," lamented Mbacke Seck, who has been campaigning for over 25 years to clean up the beach and nearby waters. "We can't understand this delay. The need is there, the money is there. The negative impact on our daily lives is there. What is preventing this project from going ahead?"

The French group Suez is building a wastewater treatment plant on the coast to treat 26,000 cubic

metres per day for 500,000 inhabitants. It was due to start operating in early 2025, according to the French development agency AFD, one of the main donors.

But part of the work has been suspended for over a year and a half after the company responsible for laying the main pipe linking the port area to the treatment plant went bankrupt, said Alassane Dieng, project coordinator at the ONAS sanitation agency. "The big difficulty is convincing industry to participate," said Dieng, despite the fact that they occupy 63 percent of the urban area according to a 2018 impact study. Under the plan, the various industries will be connected to the network on condition that they install pre-treatment units, and pay an industrial charge.

If they do not comply with the rules, a "very dissuasive" pollution tax is planned, much higher than the one in force today, warned Dieng, who said the entire project would be completed by the end of next year. In the meantime, beachgoers use Hann Bay at their peril. — AFP

Talking heads, airlifts and checkpoints for pets

LAS VEGAS: Whether dreaming of an artificial friend available around the clock, lifting off from traffic jams or doing without your cat's dead bird "gifts," CES inventors have no shortage of imagination. Here are a few highlights from the Consumer Electronics Show, the world's biggest tech and consumer electronics trade fair.

"I'm designed to be a supportive and nonjudgmental presence in your life," assured Wehead, a sort of computer creature made of a set of screens, mounted on a robotic head, projecting a human face and that uses artificial intelligence. The US startup of the same name developed this strange object that can be placed on your desk like a paperweight or small sculpture and engage in human-like chat.

"Sometimes you just need somebody to talk to and create your own solutions," said Wehead founder Ilya Sedoshkin. "You can do that with ChatGPT, but you will not have this natural feeling that somebody's listening to you," said Sedoshkin.

Wehead runs on ChatGPT, has real-time internet access and more memory than the famous OpenAI chatbot that produces text, sound or images from a simple query



A woman pets a dog staying with her in a booth at the Eureka Park exhibition in the Venetian Expo Center during the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas. — AFP

to wildlife. For Martin Diamond, a resident of the desert state of Arizona, unwelcome visitors could include coyotes, venomous snakes and raccoons. Not eager to meet one of these in his living room, Diamond invented Pawport, a hermetically sealed door that opens with a badge worn by the pet.

Pawport can be installed on an existing hatch, is available in several sizes and finishes, and can be powered by a rechargeable battery, a solar panel or connected to the electrical grid. — AFP

Uber, Kia sign electric vehicle partnership

LAS VEGAS: US ride-hailing platform Uber and South Korean automaker Kia announced Wednesday the signing of an agreement on producing electric vehicles, during the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. In a joint press release, the two companies said they are committed to "collaborate on Kia's planned development and deployment" of its new series of electric vehicles.

On Monday, Kia introduced the new automobiles—which consist of one standard base model with interchangeable components and upper bodies that can be swapped out to create a variety of vehicle types.

It's calling the concept "Platform Beyond Vehicle" (PBV). "While all variants will be based on the same modular versatility of the base model, each will offer a unique set of characteristics, with further Uber-specific optimizations tailored for the ride hailing market," the companies said in a joint statement. The partnership is aimed at "enhancing electric vehicle offerings available on Uber's mobility platform," they said.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024



Asaf Ali explains the craft to Sheikha Paula Al-Sabah.



Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika with the guests.

Kashmir textile exhibition Where tradition meets the contemporary

By Sajeev K Peter

India's Kashmir Loom, in collaboration with Sadu House, opened a unique textile exhibition at Sadu House on Sunday featuring exquisite textiles, heirloom Kani weave and Sozni embroidered pashmina shawls from Kashmir. For the first time in Kuwait, the exhibition showcases Kashmir Loom's vintage-style coats with hand embroidery and Ikat-dyed pashmina, along with a curated collection of hand-embroidered cushions and home objects in the traditional craft of Papier Mache.

The inaugural event held at Sadu House was attended by resident ambassadors and diplomats in Kuwait, Kuwaiti dignitaries and media representatives. In his opening remarks, Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika commended Kashmir Loom and Sadu House for joining hands to hold the exhibition that introduces the exquisite weaving tradition from Kashmir to the Kuwaiti society. He said Kashmir is a small piece of paradise on earth and is often referred to as 'the Switzerland of Asia' because of its stunning natural beauty. It is a famous tourist destination both domestically and internationally, he said calling upon the guests present to visit Kashmir.

Founded by Jenny Housego and Asaf Ali, together with his brothers in Srinagar, Kashmir Loom endeavors to sustain and infuse a modern soul into the woven and embroidered shawls from

Kashmir valley. The exhibition features a collection of contemporary shawls, stoles, and scarves from Kashmir Loom.

Kashmir Loom founder Asaf Ali gave an illustrated talk following the inauguration of the exhibition providing insights into Kashmir and the intricate processes involved in the creation of the age-old art of shawl-making. He took the guests on



Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika delivers his opening remarks.

a virtual tour of Kashmir valley showing the snow-capped mountains, lush valleys and serene lakes in addition to the traditional craft of weaving.

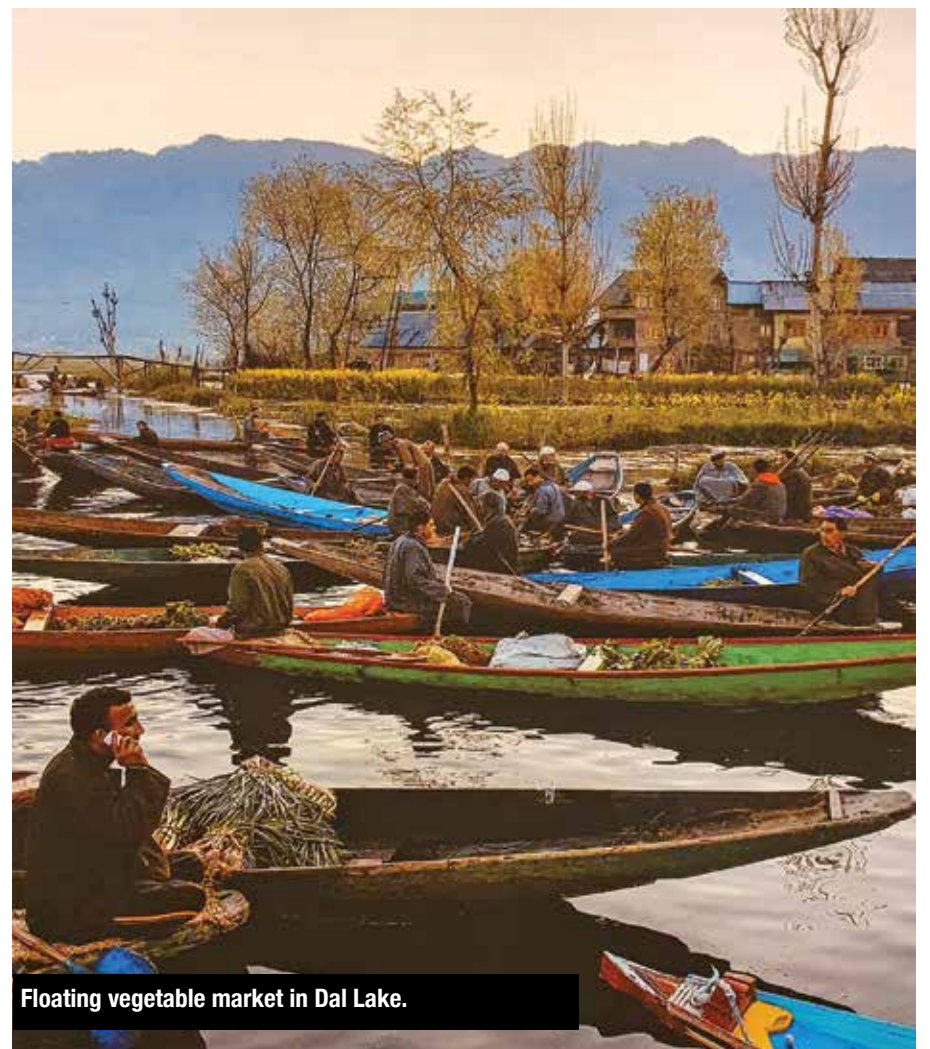
"At the exhibition at Al-Sadu House, we are showcasing one of the finest weaving traditions in India both embroidery and contemporary weaving. Here, we are trying to showcase the legacy of our age-old craft. It is part of our effort to

revive the traditional craft," Ali told Kuwait Times.

The exhibition also includes a live demonstration of Kani weaving, a craft unique to the Kashmir valley. During the five-day exhibition, Kashmir Loom will be holding workshops on Sozni embroidery, offering a rare opportunity for participants to witness the meticulous craftsmanship behind the renowned Kashmir shawls.

"The Kashmir Textile Exhibition is showing absolutely the best of Kashmir handloom that has been done for centuries. It is still being done by hand. It is quite incredible and the designs are exquisite. In fact, these are pieces that go for generations and generations," commented Sheikha Paula Al-Sabah. "I'm quite fortunate to have attended the exhibition. And I encourage everybody to come and see the beautiful works on display," she said.

"Handicrafts are exceptional and beautiful. We really enjoyed the evening," commented Virginia Van Hest-Bestaki, College of Arts, Kuwait University, on the sidelines of the exhibition. "Obviously, it takes a lot of time and talent to create these lovely pieces. Today's exhibition reflects the incredible heritage of India where it merges the tradition with the modern. It reflects the Indian society and India's emergence as a global economic power," she added.



Floating vegetable market in Dal Lake.



Pashmina fiber hand-carding.



Hand-weaving by a traditional craftsman at the exhibition.



Audience during the inauguration of the textile exhibition.



Vintage-style shawls and coats from Kashmir Loom are on display.

Lifestyle



(From left) US producer Charles Roven, British producer Emma Thomas and British director Christopher Nolan, winners of the Best Picture award for "Oppenheimer," pose in the press room during the 29th Annual Critics Choice Awards at the Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, California.--AFP photos



(From left) Joaquim Dos Santos, Amy Pascal, Christina Steinberg, Phil Lord, Christopher Miller and Justin K. Thompson, winners of the Best Animated Feature award for "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse."

'OPPENHEIMER' WINS BIG AT CRITICS CHOICE AWARDS



US actress Da'Vine Joy Randolph, winner of the Best Supporting Actress award for "The Holdovers."



US actor Paul Giamatti, winner of the Best Actor award for "The Holdovers."



US actor Dominic Sessa, winner of the Best Young Actor/Actress Award for "The Holdovers".

Oppenheimer," Christopher Nolan's epic movie about the creation of the atomic bomb, cleaned up at the Critics Choice Awards on Sunday, winning best picture and seven other prizes over its rivals as the Oscars race heats up. The \$1 billion-grossing movie, now the clear frontrunner for the Academy Awards in March, also won for best director, supporting actor, cinematography, score, ensemble, editing, and visual effects.

Collecting his prize for directing, Nolan thanked the critics who "helped with convincing mainstream audiences that a film about quantum physics and apocalypse could be worth their time." Robert Downey Jr. thanked his fellow "Oppenhomies" as he followed up his Golden Globe win with another best supporting actor prize.

Despite the dominance of "Oppenheimer," the remaining acting categories rewarded other films at the gala—one of a raft of major awards shows in the run-up to the Academy Awards, which take place this year on March 10. Emma Stone won best actress for "Poor Things," a surreal dark comedy in which she plays a Victorian reanimated corpse with the brain of an infant, who gradually learns about the world but refuses to pander to its social mores and hierarchies.

"Playing Bella was one of the greatest joys of my life. I got to unlearn a lot of things in playing her—unlearn parts of shame, and societal stuff that gets put on us," she said. "I'm very grateful to the critics... but I'm just learning not to care what you think," Stone joked.

The award is her latest after she



(From left) Producer Jen D'Angelo, US actress Awkwafina, US filmmaker Jessica Yu, Sandra US-Canadian actress Sandra Oh, pose with the Best Movie Made for Television award for "Quiz Lady."

won at last weekend's Globes—as did Paul Giamatti, who famously celebrated his victory by taking a late-night trip with his trophy to California's popular fast-food chain In-N-Out Burger. "I didn't think my week could get any better than going viral for eating a cheeseburger," joked Giamatti as he won the best actor trophy for 1970s-set prep school comedy "The Holdovers." "It's a good story about people connecting in divisive times. So thank you for helping get it out to audiences."

The win puts the veteran actor, known for hits like "Sideways," head-to-head with Cillian Murphy, who por-

trays J. Robert Oppenheimer in Nolan's biopic, for the Oscars race. Fellow "Holdovers" star Da'Vine Joy Randolph consolidated her position as this year's best supporting actress with her latest win for her portrayal of the school's grieving cook.

The Critics Choice Awards—chosen by almost 600 members of North America's largest critics organization—laid out a red carpet and lavish gala at a former airport hangar in Los Angeles for Hollywood A-listers.

Although "Barbie"—the other half of last summer's "Barbenheimer" box office phenomenon—has so far failed

to capture top prizes this awards season, it was showered with honors in a range of other categories. The film won for best comedy, original screenplay, song, production design, costume, and hair and makeup.

French courtroom drama "Anatomy of a Fall" won for best foreign-language film, and "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse" was named best animated movie. "American Fiction" won best adapted screenplay, while Harrison Ford accepted a career achievement award at the gala, hosted by comedian Chelsea Handler.—AFP



US actor Harrison Ford poses in the press room with the Career Achievement Award.



US editor Jennifer Lame, winner of the Best Editing award for "Oppenheimer."



Special Effects Supervisor Scott Fisher, winner of the Best Visual Effects Award for "Oppenheimer."



US actress Emma Stone, winner of the Best Actress award for "Poor Things."



British producer Mark Ronson (right) and US musician Andrew Wyatt pose in the press room with the Best Song award for "I'm Just Ken" from the movie "Barbie".



Canadian cartoonist Bryan Lee O'Malley (left) and US filmmaker BenDavid Grabinski pose in the press room with the Best Animated Series award for "Scott Pilgrim Takes Off".



Elizabeth Debicki poses in the press room with the Best Supporting Actress in a Drama Series award for "The Crown".



(From left) Korean-US actor Joseph Lee, South Korean director Lee Sung Jin, and US director Jake Schreier, winners of the Best Limited Series award for "Beef."



Australian actress Sarah Snook (left), winner of the Best Actress in a Drama Series award for "Succession," and US actor Kieran Culkin, winner of the Best Actor in a Drama Series award for "Succession."

Lifestyle

British supermodel **Kate Moss** turns 50



Kate Moss presents a creation by French designer Yves Saint Laurent, March 9, 1994 in Paris, during the Autumn-Winter 1994/1995 ready to wear collections.

British supermodel Kate Moss, whose looks embodied "Cool Britannia" in the 1990s, turns 50 on Tuesday, and still fascinates the country. In September last year, the catwalk star told The Times newspaper that she was "in denial" about hitting her half century. "I'm not turning 50," she said in an interview. "No, I'm not thinking about it. I do not feel 50."

Newspapers, however, have taken it upon themselves to remind her, with a slew of articles commemorating her landmark birthday. The Guardian spoke to photographers behind the most famous images of Moss, who appeared on the cover of hundreds of magazines and major ad campaigns. "You could not take a bad photo of her," recalled Kate Garner. "She's so British."

"Of all the pictures I've taken of celebrities, the ones of Kate just keep selling," she added. Moss, who grew up in Croydon, south Lon-



British model Kate Moss poses on the red carpet upon arrival for The 2023 Fashion Awards at the Royal Albert Hall, in London. — AFP photos

don, was talent-spotted by a modeling agency at the age of 14. She hit it big three years later, becoming known for her girlish looks, and for modeling Calvin Klein underwear in suggestive poses.

In 2022, Moss told the BBC she felt "objectified and vulnerable and scared." "They played on my vulnerability." Moss's slight frame—used in "heroin chic" style campaigns—was in stark contrast to other supermodels such as Cindy Crawford, Claudia Schiffer and Naomi Campbell.

Golden statue
Fashion brands fought over her and

she set trends, helping to popularize the Hunter brand of rubber Wellington boots when she wore them with hot-pants at the Glastonbury music festival. With her well-documented excesses and glamorous life, Moss became a staple of the gossip columns. Tabloids followed her relationships with Hollywood actor Johnny Depp and Libertines frontman Pete Doherty.

In 2005, Moss was accused of taking cocaine, leading to the loss of contracts. But despite predictions that her career was over, she bounced back and became even more popular. In

2011, she married The Kills guitarist Jamie Hince but the couple separated five years later. Beyond fashion, she captivated the painter Lucian Freud, who painted her portrait, and, it was later revealed, inked a tattoo of two tiny swallows on her lower back.

An 18-carat gold statue "Siren", by sculptor Marc Quinn, depicting Moss in a yoga pose, was shown at the British Museum in 2008. Quinn called her "a media icon for our age" and "an idealized figure who is more of a cultural hallucination than an actual person of flesh and blood".

At the National Portrait Gallery in central London there are eight of Moss. Since giving up the catwalk, Moss's life seems less hectic: in The Times interview, she said she now goes to bed early and leaves parties around midnight. She has launched her own range of beauty and well-being products and says she sometimes goes "moonbathing"—an ayurvedic practice of lying under moonlight to absorb lunar energy.

According to London's Evening Standard newspaper, which on Friday published a run-down of Moss's "most iconic birthday parties", she will celebrate her 50th on the Caribbean island of Mustique. "There is no bigger poster girl for British party culture," the newspaper wrote. "Kate was born to party."—AFP



Sober and sleek elegance for Dolce & Gabbana's black-clad men

Black flowed once again down the runway for Dolce & Gabbana's men's show in Milan on Saturday, in an homage to both meticulous tailoring and noble Italian materials and heritage. "It's important to tell the story of genuine elegance of hand-made, of sartorial art—they are facts, not words," Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana said at the Metropoli, a former cinema that is now the house's headquarters. Among the front-row guests were Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and his fiancée Lauren Sanchez, whose son Nikko Gonzalez was one of the models. A far cry from former elaborate presentations with explosions of colors, this show was stripped down to a monochrome runway punctuated by a single raised platform which the models ascended and descended by stairs. It was all about riffs on the classics—deep black tuxedos adorned with silk Lavalier ties, or creamy white versions with jackets cut short to reveal perfectly pleated cummerbunds.

Several razor-sharp jackets and billowing shirts favored plunging necklines, others gave up on sleeves entirely. Other modern twists included sheer lace shirts or knee-high patent leather boots, with many of the designs topped off with the house's signature gavroche caps. "Today, everything comes from the art of tailoring, but there is good wine and there is cheap wine. For us, it's important to distinguish the quality," the designers said.

"Young people are turning to this style, they are looking for elegant clothes," added the duo, who just a few years ago created a menswear collection aimed squarely at generation TikTok that embraced the screaming colors of street style. "If you want the next generation to be better than us, you have to give them a beautiful film, a beautiful story."—AFP



Models walk the runway at the Dolce & Gabbana collection show during the Milan Fashion Week Menswear Autumn/Winter. — AFP photos

Sports

Murray's playoff birdie delivers emotional Hawaii PGA victory

But it did change my career a little bit and I'm excited: Murray

HONOLULU: Grayson Murray sank a 38-foot birdie putt on the first extra hole to win a three-man playoff on Sunday at the US PGA Tour Sony Open, completing a stunning personal comeback. The 30-year-old American, who battled back from alcohol abuse and mental issues, beat countryman Keegan Bradley and South Korean An Byeong-hun to capture his second career tour title.

Murray, who claimed his only prior PGA Tour title at the 2017 Barbasol Championship as a tour rookie, made his fightback after a 2022 motor scooter accident in Bermuda. "A lot of hard work pays off," he said moments after the victory. "It's not easy. I wanted to give up a lot of times—give up on myself, give up on the game of golf, give up on life at times."

His advice to others facing hardships was simple. "Just persevere," Murray said. "And when you get tired of fighting, let someone else fight for you. And that's what happened." An, Murray and Bradley all ended a back-nine shootout on 17-under 263 after 72 holes at Waialae in Honolulu, Hawaii.

"I hate it for Keegan and Ben. They played awesome golf," Murray said. "Sometimes it's just tough to be in a playoff when it's sudden death and only one person can win." China's Carl Yuan fired a 63 to share fourth on 264 with American Russell Henley and American J.T. Poston was sixth on 265 after a closing 61.

Murray qualified for PGA signature events and his first trip to the Masters. "Today wasn't going to change my life," Murray said. "But it did change my career a little bit and I'm excited."

The life changes got him into the position for the victory, Murray said. "I hope everyone at home watching can get a little inspiration from me. If I can help one person that's all it takes."

Murray cited the courage he found to risk making changes in his life. "Change is difficult because it's unknown. You don't know what's going to happen. You don't know if it's going to pay off," he said. "I hope people can see the change I've made in my personal life. I want to be known as a good person going forward."

After multiple five-way ties for the lead down the stretch, Bradley seized the lead alone by sinking a 21-foot birdie putt at the par-4 15th to reach 17-under. At the par-5 18th, An missed an eagle putt from just beyond 13 feet but tapped in for birdie to match Bradley for the lead.

Murray dropped his approach at 18 within three feet and tapped in for birdie to reach the playoff while Henley missed a 23-foot birdie putt at 18 for the victory.

'A perfect stroke'

The playoff was a return to 18, where Bradley hit a 5-wood into the left grandstands with his second shot. An was in greenside rough to the right and Murray was short in the fairway. After Murray left himself a 38-foot birdie putt and Bradley left himself 17 feet for birdie, An pitched to just outside four feet and seemed to have the advantage.

But Murray rolled in his amazing putt, his rivals missed and Murray had an emotional triumph. "That was just a perfect stroke," Murray



HONOLULU: Grayson Murray of the United States and fiancée, Christiana, pose for a photo with the trophy after winning the Sony Open on the first playoff hole in Hawaii at Waialae Country Club on January 14, 2024 in Honolulu, Hawaii. — AFP

said. "Sometimes you just get lucky." Bradley, the 2011 PGA Championship winner, missed out on his seventh PGA title while An, still seeking his first PGA title after 182 starts, settled for a fifth career runner-up spot.

"I hung in there, finished up pretty good at the end," An said. "It feels pretty disappointing. It came down to the last putt. Overall, I had a solid week. It's very disappointing how I finished but it's looking good so far." — AFP

Cowboys crash out with shock loss to Packers, Lions win

MIAMI: The Dallas Cowboys crashed out of the NFL playoffs with a humiliating 48-32 defeat to the seventh-seeded Green Bay Packers in the wildcard round on Sunday while the Detroit Lions advanced with a 24-23 win over the Los Angeles Rams.

The Packers, the youngest team in the NFL who snuck into the playoffs on the final day of the regular season with a 9-8 record, totally dominated the Cowboys before allowing two late touchdowns. The Lions won a playoff game for the first time in 32 years with quarterback Jared Goff leading Detroit to a tight victory against his former team.

Packers quarterback Jordan Love, who took over in Green Bay this season after the departure of Aaron Rodgers, threw for 272 yards and three touchdowns in a stunning playoff debut. Running-back Aaron Jones had three rushing touchdowns and put up 118 yards on the ground and the Packers earned a clash with the top-seeded San Francisco 49ers.

Dallas gave up the most points in a playoff game in franchise history while quarterback Dak Prescott threw two costly interceptions in a nightmare first half which saw the home side fall 27-0 down in the second quarter.

The manner and scale of the defeat are likely to raise questions over the future of Cowboys head coach Mike McCarthy, a former Super Bowl winner with the Packers who was hired to end the wait for another Cowboys NFL championship, which has now stretched to 28 years.

Green Bay's confidence was evident from the outset as they elected to receive and scored a touchdown on their first drive - Jones rushing in from three yards.

Miserable Day

Prescott's miserable day began with an interception — cornerback Jaire Alexander picking him off and the Packers taking over 19-yards out and Jones scoring from three-yards on the third play. Green Bay's offense was meeting no resistance as Love delivered a 20-yard touchdown pass to Dontayvion Wicks who had escaped Dallas corner Stephon Gilmore.

It got worse for the Cowboys when Prescott's pass was grabbed by Packers safety Darnell Savage who returned it 64-yards to make it 27-0. That was the largest deficit the Cowboys had ever faced at home in the post-season but they kept a glimmer of hope for the second half with Prescott finding Jake Ferguson with a one-yard pass in the final seconds of the second quarter.

After a Cowboys field goal though, Jones ran in his third touchdown, his nine-yard rush making it 34-10. Tony Pollard ran in a touchdown for Dallas but again the Cowboys defense couldn't stop Green Bay as Love found a wide open Luke Musgrave with a 38-yard touchdown pass.

The unflappable Love found Romeo Doubs with a three-yard touchdown pass to give the visitors a 32 point lead with 10:23 left in the fourth quarter. The Packers finally eased off, allowing two touchdowns for Dallas - both from Prescott passes to Ferguson but it was too late for any miracle comeback.

The Lions were hosting a playoff game for the first time since 1993 and they will be at their Ford Field again next week to face the winner of Monday's game between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. — AFP

Button sets new sights on 'emotional' Le Mans

PARIS: It is 15 years since Jenson Button claimed the Formula One drivers championship but as the World Endurance Championship (WEC) prepares to get underway at the end of February, the Briton told AFP he is eyeing new peaks, not least the iconic Le Mans 24 Hour race.

Button, who turns 44 on Friday, has remained busy in motor sport since stepping away from F1 at the end of the 2016 season but he is now making a full-time return to racing at the wheel of a Porsche with Hertz Team JOTA.

"I am not just a Formula One driver, I'm a racing driver," Button told AFP. "I have always loved endurance racing, first because the cars look super cool. In the eighties I used to sit down and watch F1 and Le Mans with my dad."

"I can't believe I've only raced there twice but I am going to be adding to that hopefully over the next couple of years." Button won 15 grand prix in Formula One, six of them in his 2009 title-winning season with Brawn. He later moved to McLaren, teaming up with Lewis Hamilton. He has been no slouch, though, since he quit F1.

"I have raced in all sorts of things since then," he says. "SuperGT in Japan, British GT, trophy trucks, rally cross cars. I have done everything. I have raced in NASCAR which was amazing." Button is no newcomer to the world of endurance racing.

In 1999, the season before he stepped up to Formula One with Williams, he made his endurance debut in the 24 Hours of Spa although he had to retire after 22 laps. He drove at Le Mans in 2018 - he was at the wheel when his car dropped out with electronic problems - and 39th last year.

"The word I would use to describe Le Mans is 'emotional'," he says. "Whether you win or you lose, whether you crash or you finish, you just want to cry. 'You've been through so much with your teammates that you're celebrating the end of the race, whatever's happened, whether it was good or bad. 'That's what I love about it. It's a really tough race for driver and machine."

Eddie Jones wants Japan to be 'fastest in world'

TOKYO: Japan need to obey the rules of physics and become the "fastest team in the world" in order to compensate for their relatively small size, new rugby coach Eddie Jones said Monday. "The game is about momentum. And one of key laws of life is Newton's second law, which is momentum equals mass times velocity," Jones said in Tokyo.

Japan "are always going to be on the small size of teams. But the thing we can change is the velocity," the 63-year-old told a news conference. "Running fast hurts, it hurts, particularly when you get out from the scrum. We have got to change the players' minds to enjoy pain, push themselves past where they think they can go," he said.

Jones was re-appointed in December in Japan—a job he held before from 2012-15 -- six weeks following his departure from coaching Australia after a dire showing at the Rugby World Cup. Jones's first game in charge of Japan will be a home Test in June against England, the team he led to the World Cup final in 2019 before being sacked in 2022 after a dismal run of form.

Returning to Japan is a "big project," Jones said on Monday. "But I firmly believe that if we go about our business, we are 100-percent focused on being the fastest rugby team in the world, there is no reason why we can't go to the top of the world," he said. Jones also said that he wants to use artificial



SUZUKA: (FILES) McLaren Honda's British driver Jenson Button (L) jokes with his teammate Fernando Alonso of Spain (R) during the team's photo session at the Formula One Japanese Grand Prix in Suzuka on October 7, 2016. — AFP

'24 hours of madness'

Beyond the on-track experience is the preamble to the race and the camaraderie and rivalry that has made it such a legendary event on the racing calendar. "It's everything from the build-up to the chequered flag," says Button. "I think because there are so many teams, so many drivers, it's like a village having that many people in Le Mans for the race. "Three drivers per car, 60 cars, that's 180 racing drivers. Then you've got the extra drivers, all the crews... Everyone arrives and you are in your own little bubble for 10 days. "It's a great build-up and then the race starts and it's 24 hours of madness. "Everyone drives flat out for 24 hours. Everyone's been awake for 36, 42 hours... you don't just wake up and go racing. So it's a really emotional moment."

As Button clicks 44 on the age counter, there are inevitably questions about whether he is now too old to compete at the highest level in motor sport. But

he just shakes his head and smiles. "I haven't seen it as an issue yet with drivers in their forties," he says. "Fernando Alonso is 42 and I would say he's one of the best drivers in the world, still in F1."

"If you have the fitness, which I do, I train more now than when I was racing in F1, if you keep your reactions there, if the want is still there, then there is no reason why you can't still go racing. "I know people in their 50s that are still very competitive."

"Also this is endurance racing. You have to be fast but it's more about being consistent through your stints. And that's key. That's something I have always been very good at through my career. "I don't think age is a factor. In a way I am ready to prove people wrong if they think it is, just like Fernando has in F1."

The World Endurance Championship comprises eight races, the first of which takes place at the Losail Circuit in Qatar on March 2. — AFP



TOKYO: Japan's new rugby head coach Eddie Jones (R) jokes with the translator as he takes part in a press conference at a hotel in Tokyo on January 15, 2024. — AFP

intelligence to train his players to communicate with their eyes. "Gorillas don't have white in their eyes. So gorillas never know what each other are thinking. That's the difference with humans; we have white in our eyes," he said. "The really good players in the world are those who make quick decisions and are able to read movement through eyes. We have got to be able to train that skill. I have some ideas of how we are going to do it which might involve some artificial intelligence training," Jones added.

"But we need a way to fast-track that. Because we see too many players with their heads down," Jones is still revered in Japan for his first stint in charge, when he led the Brave Blossoms to a historic win over South Africa at the 2015 World Cup. Fans want to see "a Japanese team that excites the world. And that's the team we want to create," he said on Monday. — AFP

England can thrive in India despite late arrival: Duckett

LONDON: Ben Duckett insists England can thrive in their forthcoming Test series in India despite criticism of the decision to arrive in the country at the last minute. Ben Stokes's side are currently training in Abu Dhabi and are scheduled to travel to Hyderabad just three days before the first of the five Test series begins on January 25.

Pundits have said that is not enough time to acclimatise to Indian conditions, Stokes and head coach Brendon McCullum have opted against warm-up matches for much of their reign. And with the series already spanning seven weeks and no guarantees over the quality of the players they would come up against in warm-ups, England batsman Duckett is confident the decision will prove wise.

"There's training every day and we're hitting thousands of balls, with the bowlers bowling to us," he told the Sky Sports Cricket podcast. "There probably is loads of spinners in India but none of them are (Ravindra) Jadeja, Axar Patel and (Ravichandran) Ashwin."

"You might face a 15-year-old off-spinner in the nets but that's not really going to equip you for the first Test match. "We've got quite a big squad with us and there will be hours of training every day. In India you are pretty hotel-bound, the luxury of being in Abu Dhabi is you can get out and about for an extra 10 days."

"India can be a really tough place to tour, everyone knows that. "The mental side of the game is just as important and I don't think there's too many complaints from that squad who are having 10 days in Abu Dhabi rather than 10 days stuck in a hotel." — AFP

Sports

Palestine lose to Iran at Asian Cup as Japan survive scare

Hong Kong's first Asian Cup match ends in a 3-1 defeat to UAE

DOHA: Palestine conceded a goal after just 64 seconds in a 4-1 opening loss to Iran at the Asian Cup on Sunday, while tournament favourites Japan survived a scare before beating Vietnam 4-2. Hong Kong's first Asian Cup match in more than 55 years ended in a 3-1 defeat to the United Arab Emirates.

Palestine's first match of the tournament coincided with the 100th day of the Zionist entity-Hamas war, the grim milestone adding extra significance to an occasion that went beyond football.

Palestinian flags were scattered among the crowd of nearly 28,000 at Education City Stadium, and their goal just before half-time got the biggest cheer of the night. Despite seeing his side well beaten, Palestine's coach Makram Daboub said: "We will regain our confidence and achieve our goal of reaching the last 16."

The Tunisian blamed "a lack of concentration" and "overexcitement" for their poor start to the game. Loud cries went up for the Palestinian anthem before the game and the team's players put their arms around each other's shoulders.

A brief moment's silence was held before kick-off, the quiet punctuated by cries of "free Palestine". But Palestine were behind after little over one minute, attacker Karim Ansarifard rattling the ball into the bottom corner for an Iran team who are among the favourites in Qatar. Iran, who are pursuing a record-equalling fourth continental crown, made it 2-0 on 12 minutes when Shojae Khalilzadeh swept home

unmarked from close range following a free kick.

Iran looked like scoring every time they went forward and they made it 3-0 seven minutes before the break. Feyenoord winger Alireza Jahanbakhsh playing in Mehdi Ghayedi to side-foot into the bottom corner.

But the biggest roar of the night came right on the stroke of half-time when Tamer Seyam headed in from close range, the Palestinian pointing skyward in a muted celebration. Iran scored a fourth soon after the break through Roma's Sardar Azmoun.

Japan survive scare

Japan are looking for a record-extending fifth Asian title and looked set for a comfortable start to their campaign when Takumi Minamino gave them an 11th-minute lead against Vietnam. But Vietnam, coached by Japan's 2000 Asian Cup-winning boss Philippe Troussier, turned the game on its head with two goals midway through the first half.

Japan came roaring back before half-time, Minamino scoring a second and Keito Nakamura curling home a sublime effort to send them into the break with the lead. The second half was a far more sedate affair until Japan substitute Ayase Ueda made the win safe with a fourth goal in the 86th minute.

"I've been playing against Vietnam since I was young so I know how good a team they can be," said former Liverpool forward Minamino.

"But it wasn't just in defence—they were really good in attack as well. I was surprised by how good



AL-RAYYAN: Palestine's defender #05 Mohammed Saleh tackles Iran's forward #20 Sardar Azmoun during the Qatar 2023 AFC Asian Cup Group C football match between Iran and Palestine at the Education City Stadium in Al-Rayyan. — AFP

they were." Hong Kong were on the wrong end of three big VAR calls in their defeat to the UAE.

Two of the UAE's goals came from VAR-ruled penalties, while a late Hong Kong goal was chalked off after the referee checked the screen. Coach Jorn Ander-

sen warned his players before the game that the "gap is very big" between themselves and the continent's footballing elite. But there was no yawning gulf in class as the tournament's lowest-ranked side kicked off their first Asian Cup campaign since 1968. — AFP

Salah rescues Egypt as Nigeria draw at Cup of Nations

ABIDJAN: Mohamed Salah saved Egypt from an embarrassing defeat in their opening game at the Africa Cup of Nations on Sunday, while Nigeria were held by Equatorial Guinea despite Victor Osimhen getting on the scoresheet. Ghana were also in action in Abidjan and suffered a shock 2-1 loss to Cape Verde as three nations with 14 AFCON titles between them all failed to get off to winning starts at this year's tournament. There was drama at the Felix Houphouet Boigny Stadium in Ivory Coast's economic capital as Egypt needed a Salah penalty seven minutes into injury time to snatch a 2-2 draw with Mozambique in Group B. The penalty was awarded following a VAR check for a foul on Mostafa Mohamed, and Salah's strike denied Mozambique a historic first ever AFCON win.

"I was sad seeing my players devastated at the end because we deserved the win," said Mozambique coach Chiquinho Conde. His nation had not won a game in four past appearances at the AFCON, and their winless record now spans 13 matches in total. Mohamed had given record seven-time African champions Egypt the ideal start when he scored inside two minutes, but the sapping heat and humidity seemed to get the better of the Pharaohs. Mozambique equalised through a Witness Quembo header on 55 minutes and completed the turnaround when substitute Clesio Bauque burst through to make it 2-1 three minutes later.

Salah saved Egypt, but it was not a convincing start to their campaign in Ivory Coast where they are attempting to win a record-extending eighth AFCON crown and a first since 2010, before the Liverpool superstar had made his international debut. "I want to win every match I play and when we don't I am sad, but there are no easy games," said Egypt coach Rui Vitoria. "We were not the best team before the draw was made and we are not the worst now."

Cape Verde stun Ghana

Suddenly Egypt's next game on Thursday against Ghana could be make or break for both, with the Black Stars reeling after conceding in injury time to lose 2-1 to Cape Verde. The Black Stars looked set to come away with a draw after Alexander Djiku headed home on 56 minutes to cancel out Jamiro Monteiro's first-half opener.

But Cape Verde pounced on poor defending to grab all three points in the 92nd minute, with substitute Garry Rodrigues tucking the ball into a gaping goal to the shock of Ghana fans in the crowd of just under 12,000. "We want to show the world what we can do, that we are small but we can compete on footballing terms with all teams in Africa," said Cape Verde coach Pedro 'Bubista' Brito.—AFP

Kuwait shooting is the pride of every Arab nation

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The trap mix team competition of the Asian Shotgun Championship 2024 will take place on Tuesday, as the trap competition for men, women and juniors took place on Monday. Meanwhile, President of Jordan Shooting Federation Hussein Basha Al-Majali said Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex is the best in Asia, adding that Kuwait shooting is now the pride of every Arab, as Kuwait's hosting of the Asian Championship at this great level and providing all facilities to the organizing committee is an honorable matter.

Al-Majali toured the shooting ranges of the Olympic Complex, in the presence of the President of Asian Shooting Confederation Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Khalaf Al-Otaibi and ASF and KSSF Secretary General, Tournament Director Obaid Munahi Al-Osaimi.

He said things do not rely on facilities only, but also the Kuwaiti human resources who deserve respect and appreciation, and Kuwait shooters compete with great countries such as China and South Korea and other advanced countries.

He said Kuwait shooting under the leadership of Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi continued to be excellent in competitions and organization.

Meanwhile, president of Syria's Shooting Federation Ali Al-Salem said he is happy to participate in the Asian Championship in Kuwait, specially that it



KUWAIT: (From left) Obaid Al-Osaimi, Javid Ludhi, Nizar Madhi, Hussein Basha Al-Majali, Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud and Khalid Naghawi with two Jordanian shooters.

leads to qualification for the Paris 2024 Olympics. He also appreciated the efforts of Kuwait Shooting Sport Federation under the leadership of Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi.

President of Iraq's Shooting Federation Sabeeh Murad lauded the Asian Championship, especially that all is going well in regards to organization which has become a model for others.

Results of trap competition:

Men:

- First: Mohammad Beyranvand from Iran
- Second: Yuhao Guo from China
- Third: Lakshay Lakshay

Women:

- First: Wan-Yu Liu from Chinese Taipei
- Second: Xinqiu Zhang from China
- Third: Mariya Dmitriyenko from Kazakhstan

Teams Men:

- First: China
- Second: Qatar
- Third: Kuwait

Teams Women:

- First: China
- Second: India
- Third: Kazakhstan

Team Juniors:

- First: Kazakhstan
- Second: China
- Third: Uzbekistan

Juniors Trap:

- First: Ghassam Baakini from Lebanon
- Second: Salah Al-Rashidi from Kuwait
- Third: Yanzhen Lyu from China

Kuwait Paralympics to establish special disabilities committee

KUWAIT: The President of the Kuwait Paralympic Committee, Mansour Al-Sarheed, announced that the Board of Directors decided to establish a special committee for disabilities and activate the societal role towards these disabilities through coordination and direct linkage with the Public Authority for People with Disabilities, the Ministry of Affairs and the Ministry of Health. There is also coordination with public benefit associations and the General Authority for Sports to hold technical workshops and external participations according to what is required by the public interest of this category dear to our hearts.



Mansour Al-Sarheed

Al-Sarheed expressed his sincere thanks to the Director of the General Sports Authority, Yousef Al-Baidan, for his continuous follow-up and unlimited support for intellectual disabilities by overcoming all difficulties and his support for disabled sports in general and intellectual disabilities in particular. — KUNA

Milan hand Roma a French lesson to secure third spot

MILAN: A trio of French goals helped AC Milan strengthen their place in Serie A's Champions League positions in Sunday's 3-1 win over feeble Roma. Yacine Adli's first Milan goal early on, an Olivier Giroud header 10 minutes after the break and Theo Hernandez's thumping strike late on earned the points for the seven-time European champions, whose win had a distinctly French flavour at a freezing San Siro.

Milan sit nine points behind league leaders Inter Milan, and took advantage of other top four contenders dropping points to consolidate third place in Italy's top flight. Stefano Pioli's side are nine points ahead of Lazio who moved up to fifth by beating Lecce 1-0 in Sunday's early match, while fourth-placed Fiorentina are eight back after only drawing 2-2 with lowly Udinese.

"We wanted to bounce back after being knocked out of the cup by Atalanta... we don't ever give up and I'm very proud of the team spirit I saw today," said Giroud, who also set up Hernandez's goal with a brilliant backheel. "Theo and I know each other well and I knew he was going to burst in behind me. I was a bit lucky because I think I nutmegged the defender but I'm very happy for him." —AFP

Classifieds

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088

Change of Name

I HUSSAINA (current name in passport) , holder of Indian Passport No. U0610247 having permanent address in India, Burhani Mohalla, Mohammadiya Colony, Galiyakot, Durgapur, Pin - 314026 , Rajasthan, India. residing in Kuwait at address: Yusuf al bader street , Block 10, Salmiya, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as HUSSAINA (given name) CHIKHLI (sur-

name)(#4592) 15/1/2024

I, Kalpana Lama, holder of Indian Passport No. Z3680248 having permanent address, Shalak Vita, New Rangia, Darjeeling, Pin - 734013, West Bengal, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as Kalpana (Given Name) Rai (Surname). (#4591) 14/1/2024

I, Pramsewar Reddy, holder of Indian Passport No. X5356390 having permanent address of Reddipalle (V), Pullampet Mandal, Annamayya District, Andhrapradesh (AP) Pin-516107 residing in Kuwait present, hereby declare that henceforth my son name will be read as Parameswar Reddy (given name) and Mannuru. (surname) (#4590) 14/1/2024

I, Meena Parvat Ambalal, holder of Indian Passport No. M2309188, having permanent address M F Dillima house, Bamanwada, Shar, P.O. Andheri, Mumbai, Pin - 400099, Maharashtra, India, residing in Kuwait hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as Maria (given name) Santan Francis D'souza (surname). (#4589) 14/1/2024

Vinicius hat-trick as Real Madrid thrash Barcelona to win Spanish Super Cup

Vinicius imitates Ronaldo's classic jump in homage to Madrid's all-time top goalscorer



RIYADH: Real Madrid's Spanish defender and captain #06 Nacho Fernandez lifts the trophy as he celebrates with his teammates after winning the Spanish Super Cup final football match against Barcelona at Al-Awwal Park Stadium in Riyadh, on January 14, 2024. — AFP

RIYADH: Vinicius Junior struck a first-half hat-trick to fire Real Madrid to Spanish Super Cup glory in a thumping 4-1 win over rivals Barcelona on Sunday in Saudi Arabia. Robert Lewandowski scored for Barcelona, who had defender Ronald Araujo sent off in the second half on what coach Xavi Hernandez described as the team's "worst" night.

Rodrygo rounded off Real Madrid's rout as they won the competition for the 13th time, avenging last year's final defeat by record 14-time winners Barcelona. "Vinicius needed two or three games to get back to his best level, and he's back to it," said Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti.

The Italian has now gone level with Zinedine Zidane on 11 trophies won at the helm of Los Blancos, behind only Miguel Munoz

on 14. "I'm happy, but now we've got to go for the 12th," Ancelotti told Real Madrid TV. Spanish champions Barcelona were hoping a victory could kick-start their season, as it did last year, but were left soundly beaten, after Vinicius netted two early goals.

"(I'm) disappointed, sad ... this is football and today we have to deal with the bitter side of the game," Xavi told Movistar. "We had a lot of hope and excitement going into the final and we've had our worst game of all of them." Xavi turned to a four-man midfield to try and keep the ball to reduce Madrid's opportunities to counter attack with flying wingers Vinicius and Rodrygo—it didn't work.

Spain international Pedri started in place of winger Raphinha, who suffered a hamstring injury in the semi-final win over

Osasuna. Ancelotti brought in midfielder Toni Kroos, who like in the thrilling semi-final derby win over Atletico Madrid, was jeered by spectators at the Al-Awwal Park stadium in Riyadh, for criticising players moving to the Saudi league from Europe.

One of the first was Cristiano Ronaldo and Vinicius' celebration brought him to mind after opening the scoring in the seventh minute. The Brazilian, recently back after injury, was sent through by a perfect pass by Jude Bellingham and he slickly rounded Inaki Pena before slotting home.

Vinicius imitated Ronaldo's classic jump and spin celebration in homage to Madrid's all-time top goalscorer. Three minutes later, Vinicius pounced again, this time set up by Rodrygo who exploited Barcelona's high

line and cut the ball across for his compatriot to slide in.

'Reset'

Xavi's side scrambled furiously for a response and Ferran Torres hit the crossbar before Andriy Lunin tipped Lewandowski's follow up over. The Ukrainian goalkeeper could do nothing, however, to keep Lewandowski's vicious volley out in the 33rd minute, hammered in hard and low from the edge of the box.

However instead of fighting back, Araujo swiftly gifted Vinicius a chance to complete his hat-trick from the penalty spot by tugging back the forward in the box. Vinicius drilled his penalty into the bottom left corner for his first Clasico hat-trick to double his

goal tally against Barcelona—he had previously scored only three in 15 games.

Xavi rolled the dice in the second half with an attacking triple substitution but Madrid soon had their fourth. Araujo completed a dismal night by earning a red card as he hacked Vinicius in frustration.

Rodrygo was in the right place at the right time to convert after Jules Kounde blocked a Vinicius cut-back searching for Bellingham. Kounde cleared a low effort from England international Bellingham off the line as Madrid sought another to rub salt in their rivals' wounds late on. "We need to reset ourselves and fight for the three trophies we have left," added Xavi. "Football is a game of errors and we did not minimise ours and we maximised Madrid's strengths." — AFP

Osaka crashes out as Medvedev, Gauff win at Australian Open

MELBOURNE: Two-time Australian Open champion Naomi Osaka's Grand Slam comeback ended abruptly Monday, crashing out to Caroline Garcia, but US Open winner Coco Gauff and men's third seed Daniil Medvedev surged on in Melbourne.

On a baking-hot day at Melbourne Park, men's seventh seed Stefanos Tsitsipas and women's sixth seed Ons Jabeur also tasted first-round victory. But Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova and veteran Andy Murray made early exits.

Japanese star Osaka, 26, stepped away from the sport in September 2022, citing mental health concerns. After giving birth to a baby girl in July, she decided to return for the new season and was back at the scene of her title-winning exploits in 2019 and 2021.

But she was unable to rediscover her championship-winning form against 16th-seeded Frenchwoman Garcia after just two competitive games in Brisbane since returning. "She's been through a lot but I'm just very glad to see her back and I hope she can enjoy the tennis now and have fun out there. She's a great girl," said Garcia.

"I mean, six months after giving birth she is playing quite amazing already, so we have to watch out." Medvedev battled tough conditions on Margaret Court Arena against French qualifier Terence Atmane, who smashed his racquet, served underarm and retired in tears after suffering bad cramping that forced him off court while losing 5-7, 6-2, 6-4, 1-0.

"When I started to feel tough physically he started cramping, so it was brutal conditions," said Russia's Medvedev, a finalist in 2021 and 2022. "I was getting tired but many times in these situations the other guy is get-



MELBOURNE: Japan's Naomi Osaka serves against France's Caroline Garcia during their women's singles match on day two of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on January 15, 2024. — AFP

ting tired too and it's about who manages it better."

The Russian will face Finland's unseeded Emil Ruusuvuori in the next round. Tsitsipas, who lost last year's final to Novak Djokovic, was stunned by Belgian lucky loser Zizou Bergs in the first set, but woke up to seize complete control and win 5-7, 6-1, 6-1, 6-3.

But the tournament is over for five-time finalist Murray, possibly for the last time. The 36-year-old British player crashed out to Argentine 30th seed Tomas Martin Etcheverry in three sets, admitting that "not much went right". "It's a definite possibility that will be the last time I play here," he said. Women's fourth seed Gauff said ahead of the opening Grand Slam of the year that she wanted to win "multiple" major titles after her breakthrough at the US Open in 2023.

The 19-year-old put the plan into motion with a 6-3, 6-0 rout of Slovakia's 68th-ranked Anna Karolina Schmiedlova on centre court. "I was a little bit nervous coming in today. Probably could tell. I was able to just calm down and then play good, not my best, but good tennis," said Gauff, who successfully defended her Auckland title in the lead-up. — AFP

Lillard buzzer-beater lifts Bucks over Kings, Nuggets cool off Pacers

LOS ANGELES: Damian Lillard drilled a buzzer-beating three-pointer to lift the Milwaukee Bucks to a stunning 143-142 NBA overtime victory over the Sacramento Kings on Sunday. The Kings led by as many as six in the extra session, but Brook Lopez's three-pointer with 11.5 seconds left pulled Milwaukee within one, and after Sacramento's De'Aaron Fox missed one of two free throws Lillard unleashed the game winner from the top of the arc.

"I shot my best shot on the last shot of the game," said Lillard, who connected on just nine of his 23 attempts from the floor on the way to 29 points. Giannis Antetokounmpo added a triple-double of 27 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for the Bucks.

Domantas Sabonis notched a triple-double of 21 points 15 assists and 13 rebounds and Fox scored a game-high 32 points for Sacramento, whose coach Mike Brown was ejected early in the fourth quarter after confronting an official over a non-call when he thought Fox had been fouled. Brown was still yelling as Kings guard Malik Monk wrapped his arms around him and shepherded him from the court with Sacramento trailing 105-95.

Sacramento responded and Fox tied it up at 128-128 with a driving layup with one second left in regulation. The Kings were up by four with 33.9 seconds left in overtime. "The team kept fighting," Lillard said. "I thought the biggest shot of the night was Brook's three in the corner just to open up that opportunity."

"Once I saw that open space I was like, this is the space that I live in." In Denver, Nikola Jokic was just one of three Nuggets players to score 25 points as the reigning NBA champions beat the Indiana Pacers 117-109.

Jokic added 12 rebounds and nine assists, Michael Porter Jr. and Jamal Murray scored 25 points apiece and Aaron Gordon added 20 points and 10 rebounds for the

Nuggets. They shot a season-high 64.8% from the field and held the NBA's top-scoring offense to its fifth-fewest points this season.

Nuggets coach Michael Malone was disappointed by his team's season-worst 21 turnovers, but full of praise for Porter, who drilled seven three-pointers in what Malone called "a complete basketball game."

"It was easy looks," Porter said. "My teammates were finding me so I didn't have to work too hard for my shots." Porter said the Nuggets were focused on cooling off the Pacers' red-hot offense. "We knew they wanted to push the pace," he said, joking that the Nuggets had a little extra motivation to prevent former teammate Bruce Brown from getting a win in his return to Denver. Brown, who played a key role off the bench in the Nuggets' title run last season and then signed with the Pacers as a free agent, was awarded his championship ring in a ceremony before the game.

Timberwolves down Clippers

"He won a championship with us so he's our brother for life," Porter said of Brown, who led Indiana with 18 points, 10 rebounds and six assists. The Nuggets improved to 28-13, third in a Western Conference led by the Minnesota Timberwolves—who inched half a game ahead of the Oklahoma City Thunder with a 109-105 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.

The Timberwolves used a big third quarter to break open a close game, pushing their lead to as many as 17 then holding off a late Clippers charge. Anthony Edwards scored 33 points and Rudy Gobert added 15 points and 18 rebounds for the Timberwolves.

Kawhi Leonard scored 26 points to pace the Clippers, who sliced the deficit to three points with just over a minute to play—only for Gobert to drain four free throws to help the Timberwolves hold on. In Miami, Bam Adebayo scored 24 points, grabbed 10 rebounds and handed out seven assists in the Heat's 104-87 rout of the Charlotte Hornets.

The Heat, playing without injured Jimmy Butler and Kevin Love, led by as many as 24 in the second quarter, the only downside on their night being the early exit of rookie guard Jaime Jaquez Jr. with a groin injury. — AFP