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2 Burgan Bank concludes sponsorship of Graish show ahead of Ramadan



7 Portugal: Europe's last open door for immigrants



10 Artificial glaciers staving off drought in Kyrgyzstan



16 Foden double inspires Man City to derby day fightback over Man Utd



Zionists kill babies with impunity

Gazan mother mourns twins • 8 killed in Kuwait aid truck strike • GCC slams ethnic cleansing



GAZA: As men searched for survivors beneath a Gaza home pummeled by an air strike, Rania Abu Anza gazed down on Sunday at two children who did not survive: Her infant twins. The Palestinian woman said she had gone through multiple rounds of fertility treatment to achieve her dream of becoming a mother, only to have it taken away by the carnage in the Gaza Strip. "Who will call me mother from now on? Who will call me mother?" she said through tears on Sunday as she clutched her lifeless babies, the face of one still spattered with blood.

The health ministry in Gaza said Wissam and Naeem, not yet six months old, were among 14 people killed in the overnight strike in the southern Gaza city of Rafah by the Zionist entity. All of the dead were members of the Abu Anza family. They joined the 30,410 fatalities, most of them women and children, killed by the Zionist entity since October. Another 90 Palestinians were killed within 24 hours, mostly women and children. Eight Palestinians were killed in a Zionist military strike on a truck carrying aid from the Kuwaiti Takween Society in Gaza on Sunday.

While Rania Abu Anza waited to bury her son and daughter, back at the rubble of the family home men shouted the names of those they hoped had survived: "Yasser! Ahmed! Sajjar!" The Zionist entity claims its campaign is intended to eliminate Hamas fighters, but Shehda Abu Anza, who said the home belonged to his uncle, said it housed only civilians. "They were sleeping at eleven o'clock at night. All of them children. Honestly there was no military presence in the house, only civilians," he

said. "No soldiers, only civilians." Another relative, Arafat Abu Anza, bemoaned the lack of equipment to extract possible survivors. "There are 15 people in the house... I'm cleaning the area. We are trying to extract people, to see where they are. Four floors fell." Nearly 1.5 million Palestinians have sought refuge in Rafah, raising fears of mass casualties should the Zionist entity go ahead with a planned invasion of the city.

Mediators are trying to lock in a truce that would at least temporarily halt the fighting before the holy month of Ramadan. A senior Hamas official told AFP the group had sent a delegation to Cairo, and Egyptian state-linked media said envoys from the United States and Qatar had also arrived for talks on Sunday.

Any deal will come too late for Rania Abu Anza, who recounted the chaos of the strike and how she was told her children were gone. "I started shouting, 'My children, my children,'" she said. "I asked the rescuers to search for my kids in the rubble. They pulled them. They told me, 'Your children are dead.'" The Gulf Cooperation Council supports a permanent, comprehensive solution that guarantees the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi, addressing a joint ministerial-level talks in Riyadh, lamented the "catastrophic scenes" in the Gaza Strip, deploring the ongoing violence committed by Zionist forces against the Palestinian people, saying such moves are tantamount to ethnic cleansing and forced displacement.

Continued on Page 6

NEWS IN BRIEF

MoI denies visas open to all

KUWAIT: The interior ministry released a statement denying rumors circulating on social media Sunday claiming that the ministry has opened visit and family visas for applicants of all nationalities without any restrictions or prior approvals. Currently, citizens of seven countries Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen — are required to obtain prior approval or exemption from the minister to apply for visit or family visas.

Ramadan likely from March 11

KUWAIT: The Space Museum at the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center announced Ramadan is expected to begin on Monday, March 11. According to calculations and simulations by the museum's planetarium, the crescent moon is anticipated to be visible 11 minutes after sunset on Sunday, March 10. Khalid Al-Jumaan, the museum supervisor, highlighted the advanced capabilities of the planetarium in simulating celestial events and predicted that the middle of Ramadan would fall on Monday, March 25, with the first day of Shawwal (Eid Al-Fitr) falling on Wednesday, April 10. — KUNA

Kuwait to extend oil cuts till June

KUWAIT: Kuwait will extend its voluntary oil production cut of 135,000 barrels per day till the second quarter of 2024, Deputy Prime Minister and Oil Minister Dr Emad Al-Atiqi said Sunday. In a press statement, the minister affirmed that this decision comes in coordination with countries participating in the OPEC+ agreement. He added Kuwait's production will continue at 2.413 million barrels per day until the end of June 2024. — Agencies



Zain Vice Chairman & Zain Group CEO and Zain KSA Vice Chairman Bader Al-Kharafi

Zain KSA achieves record annual revenue of SAR 9.9bn

RIYADH: Zain Group announced its operation in Saudi Arabia (Zain KSA) recorded all-time high financial results for the year 2023, reporting an annual revenue of SAR 9.9 billion, an impressive annual 9 percent growth. This revenue surge propelled Zain KSA to achieve its highest-ever annual profit, reaching SAR 1.3 billion, a remarkable annual increase of 131 percent.

For the second consecutive year, the company also announced the board of directors' recommendation to

distribute cash dividends to shareholders for the year 2023 at a rate of 5 percent of the nominal share value. This record net profit for the year was driven by the total net gain from the sale and leaseback transaction of all 8,069 towers which was fully recognized during 2023, for a total of \$303 million.

Commenting on the financial results, Zain Vice Chairman & Zain Group CEO and Zain KSA Vice Chairman Bader Al-Kharafi said: "These record results reflect the Zain Group and Zain KSA teams' joint efforts in implementing the operator's profitable operational and efficiency optimization strategy, driven by innovation and growth of digital services. Moreover the Zain KSA board's decision to distribute dividends for the second consecutive year reflects the improved financial solvency of the company and its focus on sustainable growth powered by its robust 5G network empowering the community and lucrative enterprise sector." (See Page 8)

Candidate registration opens, most ex-MPs bidding for re-election

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Registration for the April 4 snap parliamentary polls will start on Monday for 10 days, the interior ministry announced following the publication of

an Amiri decree inviting voters to elect a new National Assembly in the official gazette Kuwait Al-Youm. As many as 49 out of the 50 members of the dissolved National Assembly have announced they are bidding for re-election, according to announcements made by them on social media. Only Osama Al-Shaheen has dropped out of the race for personal reasons.

Dozens of ex-MPs from previous assemblies have also announced their candidacies for the Assembly polls. Eligible candidates must be Kuwaiti citizens by birth, the interior ministry said, as naturalized Kuwaitis are barred for life from contesting parliamentary polls. Candidates must be at least 30

years old, have a clean criminal record and must not have been convicted of a serious crime unless they have been rehabilitated. The last day for registration of candidates is March 13, the interior ministry said, but withdrawals will remain open until March 28.

The National Assembly was dissolved by HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Feb 15 over remarks made by some MPs deemed offensive to HH the Amir. It was the third assembly to be dissolved since August 2020 and the ninth since 2006 due to non-stop political disputes between the government and opposition MPs.

Continued on Page 6

Shehbaz Sharif elected Pak PM for second time

ISLAMABAD: Shehbaz Sharif was voted in on Sunday as Pakistan's prime minister for a second time, presiding over a shaky alliance that has shut out followers of jailed opposition leader Imran Khan. Newly sworn-in lawmakers in Pakistan's National Assembly elected Sharif with 201 votes, more than three weeks after national elections marred by widespread allegations of rigging.

"No one has won a majority. It's

a split mandate. And it is the democratic way that if it's a split mandate, then the like-minded parties may form a coalition government," Sharif told parliament, referring to the February 8 election. The Sharif family's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party allied with their historic rivals the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), as well as several smaller factions, to keep Khan's candidates out.

In return, the PPP — a dynastic party ruled by the family of slain ex-premier Benazir Bhutto — has been promised the office of president for Bhutto's widow, Asif Ali Zardari. Ex-prime minister Khan was jailed in the run-up to the election and barred from running, while his Pakistan

Continued on Page 6



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's former prime minister Nawaz Sharif (left) greets his younger brother and newly-elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at Parliament House on March 3, 2024. — AFP



'Kuwait Sports Day' aims to create a healthy lifestyle

Fostering sports awareness and participation in the society

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Youth Affairs, and Communications Affairs Dawood Maarafi underscored the significance of the upcoming "Kuwait Sports Day" event to be held under the auspices and attendance of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. This community sporting event, organized by the Kuwait Sports For All Federation, supervised by the Public Authority for Sport, and set to be held on March 9, is the first of its kind and is open to all groups and ages in Kuwait, said Maarafi in a press conference held Sunday at the Public Sports Authority HQ.

The sporting initiative aims to create a healthy life, he added, calling on everyone to participate in it. He thanked state institutions, the public sector, the Public Authority for Sport, sports federations, and the private sector institutes participating in this event.

In turn, Deputy Director General for Competitive Sports Affairs at the Public Authority for Sports Bashar Abdullah said that the event will be at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway and will include a 5-kilometer walking race and a 15-kilometer cycling race, in addition to sports activities, exhibitions, and group competitions. Abdullah explained the importance of holding this event, which will be held every year, noting that it helps increase sports awareness in society. He thanked His Highness the Prime Minister and Minister Maarafi for their support, as well as the sponsors of this event.

During a press conference on Sunday, Maarafi emphasized that the event marks

a pivotal step towards fortifying Kuwait's sports infrastructure and elevating its sporting landscape, aiming to transform athletes into ambassadors and foster both domestic and international interest in sports, ultimately contributing to the betterment of present and future generations. Maarafi affirmed the government's commitment to nurturing a vibrant sports culture and positioning Kuwait as a beacon of civilization in the region, dedicated to adopting a healthy lifestyle and a thriving society for all its inhabitants.

Expressing gratitude towards state institutions, ministries, sports federations, and the private sector for their collaboration and support, he called for continued solidarity in integrating sports events into their agendas and operationalizing them to advance societal well-being. He urged participants to view their involvement in "Kuwait Sports Day" as a testament to their commitment to promoting health awareness and nurturing societal resilience, emphasizing the positive correlation between sports engagement and enhanced physical, psychological, and social well-being as evidenced by scientific research.

Maarafi concluded by urging collective efforts towards making this year's "Kuwait Sports Day" a transformative opportunity for promoting health consciousness and holistic recovery, calling upon all to unite in realizing this shared vision for a healthier and more prosperous Kuwaiti society. Deputy Director General of the Public Authority for Sports for the Competitive Sports Sector Bashar Abdullah Al-Salem reflected on the significance of "Kuwait Sports Day" as a realization of a longstanding aspira-



KUWAIT: (From left to right) Yousef Al-Ruwaieh, Bashar Al-Salem, Dawood Maarafi, Walid Al-Saqabi, and Ahmed Al-Majed are pictured during the press conference.

tion within Kuwait's sporting community.

He emphasized the importance of fostering sports awareness and participation in Kuwaiti society, outlining the authority's commitment to enhancing this awareness through the establishment of an annual sports day, accompanied by various events and the creation of a vibrant sports village, and expressing optimism for the future growth and success of "Kuwait Sports Day" as a catalyst for promoting health, well-being, and unity among its citizens.

Yousef Al-Ruwaieh, Deputy General Manager for Public Relations and Media at Kuwait Finance House, lauded the

commendable efforts and dedication exhibited by Kuwaiti youth towards ensuring the success of the upcoming sports day. Highlighting the bank's commitment to social responsibility, Ruwaieh emphasized the institution's unique role in supporting Kuwaiti achievers and their endeavors on both national and international platforms.

Ahmed Al-Majed, General Manager of Suffix Sports, expressed gratitude for the extraordinary opportunity presented by the collaboration between the private and public sectors in the realm of sports, marking today as a historic and momentous occasion, under-

scoring the multifaceted significance of sports, and recognizing it not merely as an activity but as a culture, an economic driver, and a foundational element essential for any society harboring aspirations for the future.

Majed detailed the schedule for the event, slated to kick off at 8:00 a.m. and featuring a 5-km walking race alongside a 15-km bicycle race. Additionally, he highlighted the presence of a dynamic sports village boasting over 15 different athletic activities, promising a vibrant atmosphere conducive to fostering camaraderie and sportsmanship among participants.

News in Brief

Accident kills student

KUWAIT: A student from Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh High School in Farwaniya Educational Zone died on Sunday after he was hit by a vehicle while on his way to school. Educational sources revealed that a driver dropped the student off near Al-Shadadiya University. While he was crossing the street, another driver unknowingly hit him with his car. The student later died. The Ministry of Education stated through its website: "The Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, mourns Shai Nawaf Shai Al-Mutairi, from Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh High School of the Farwaniya Educational Zone. The Ministry of Education asks God Almighty to bless the deceased with His mercy and to bless his family."

KPC announces gas prices

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) announced on Sunday the new prices of liquefied petroleum gases (propane) and butane for March. KPC, in a statement to KUNA, revealed that one metric ton of propane gas would be \$630, while one metric ton of butane would be \$640. Liquefied petroleum gases, propane and butane, are used in the petrochemical industry, in addition to other uses such as cooking and heating. — KUNA

Iraq court frees Kuwaiti

KUWAIT: An Iraqi court has issued a decision to release Kuwaiti citizen Badr Eid Al-Mutairi and hand him his passport, car, and birds. The Iraqi authorities detained him and later released him on bail.

'Speed up Kuwaitization'

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef inspected work during his visit to the Department of Nationality and instructed officials to speed up the full Kuwaitization of its employees. The minister urged the management to replace the expatriates with Kuwaitis.

Ministry inaugurates committee to combat human trafficking

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Justice announced on Sunday that it had inaugurated the National Com-



Burgan Bank sponsors immersive 'Graish' show ahead of Ramadan

KUWAIT: In celebration of the holy month of Ramadan, Burgan Bank concluded its sponsorship of "Graish", an original musical performance by Free Jabriya Productions. The show, which took place at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Cultural Centre (JACC) between February 28 and March 2, was a huge success with sold out performances and almost 7,000 people in attendance. The Bank's sponsorship of the show comes as part of its comprehensive social responsibility program and continued support of community events and collaborations, as well as its year-long sponsorship of Free Jabriya Productions.

"We are proud and delighted to be partnering with Free Jabriya yet again, for the second year in a row now," said Hessa Hussain Al-Najadah, Senior Manager - Corporate and CSR Communications at Burgan Bank, commenting on the Bank's sponsorship and the show's notable success. "This group has proven itself to be a changemaker in the local cultural scene, producing high-level art pieces with each one of their productions."

Our collaboration with Free Jabriya is set to include several remarkable shows throughout the year, with 'Graish' leading the way. This event is an evening of engaging musical theatre that captures the most iconic Ramadan traditions and values of our society, and the four performances were met with warmth and enthusiasm from the audience, especially during the entertainment segments that captured the nostalgic memories of Ramadan.

Many members of the audience also exhibited other forms of engagement with the show, such as choosing to come dressed in traditional Kuwaiti attire, which includes darra'as and dishdashas, to match the traditional 'Graish' theme. Through our sponsorships and collaborations, we aim to uphold our support for the young and aspiring talents, whom we believe have a special and unique mark to leave on our community through their original artwork. We also aim to continue actively supporting and reinforcing the entertainment sector in

mittee on the Implementation of the Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants and that it had created social media accounts on X, Instagram, and Facebook. In a press release, the ministry mentioned that the committee was created after the Cabinet's resolution on February 5, 2018, which was chaired by Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Faisal Al-Ghareeb.

On its social media accounts, the com-



Kuwait, which is an essential part of our expansive social responsibility program."

"We are delighted to announce the establishment of a robust partnership with Burgan Bank, originating from our unprecedented collaboration on 'Feykom Tarab: A Night with Miami,'" said Ali Al-Nusif, Executive Producer and Co-Founder at Free Jabriya. "'Graish' marks the commencement of our joint endeavors this year, with Burgan Bank's participation extending to further production throughout the year. We trust that this collaboration will yield significant benefits for all stakeholders involved."

Together, we stand poised to embark on an exciting journey characterized by creativity, innovation, and shared success." The "Graish" show captures the iconic Kuwaiti Ramadan traditions in amazing detail, beginning with the unique idea that the show's director, Fahad Al-Rahmani, presented, all the way to the costume design and the representation of media icons whom the audience have regarded as symbols of Kuwait.

Throughout the two-hour show, the audience were immersed in the authentic Kuwaiti Ramadan atmosphere, as well as enjoyed numerous surprises and comedic segments that reenact some staple TV shows, songs, and situations that capture the Ramadan traditions throughout the past decades. The audience were also very engaged with the orchestra, led by the maestro Ahmad Aloud. "Graish" left a positive and memorable impact through its

mittee mentioned that its vision focuses on achieving a Kuwait that is free of and against trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, and a society aware of the dangers of this phenomenon in order to eliminate it. It noted that its objectives are to identify the victims and those affected by the crimes of trafficking in persons and provide protection and support to them.

In addition, specialized training and qualifica-



Hessa Hussain Al-Najadah



Ali Al-Nusif

cultural and social richness.

The wide success of "Graish" follows the echoing success of "Feykom Tarab: Five Nights in the World of Miami", which was also produced by Free Jabriya and sponsored by Burgan Bank in September 2023. It serves to note that Burgan Bank's unyielding commitment to the development of the arts, culture and entertainment sectors in Kuwait begins with supporting young and aspiring national talents and extends to supporting, sponsoring, and collaborating with leading entities that continue to center their efforts on preserving the cultural heritage of Kuwait and paving the path for a more vibrant national art scene.

tion of personnel by the authorities concerned with combating trafficking in persons. Moreover, spreading awareness among all groups of society, employers, and employment derived from religious and moral values. Also strengthening regional and international cooperation frameworks in the field of combating human trafficking. The committee urged citizens and residents to report any trafficking crimes on the hotline at 2558-9696 or by email: ATH@MOI.GOV.KW. — KUNA

Local



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah on Sunday received Chairwoman of the Founding Board of Abdullah Al-Salem University (AASU) Dr Moudhi Abdulaziz Al-Humoud. His Highness the Prime Minister also received at Seif Palace the Acting President of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) Yusef Ibrahim Al Mazrouei. — KUNA photos

Chronic diseases on top world health challenges

‘Your Health First’ campaign promotes awareness of colon cancer



Dr Khalid Al-Saleh



By Abdellatif Sharaa & Agencies

KUWAIT: National Campaign for Cancer Awareness (CAN) launched its “Your Health First” campaign for colon cancer awareness on Sunday. Chronic diseases come on top of health challenges at the global level due to their health, social, and economic burdens on individuals, families, and societies, an official of the Ministry of Health said.

Chairman of the Board Dr Khalid Al-Saleh emphasized the necessity to adopt a lifestyle that includes balanced nutrition that is rich in fruits and vegetables in addition to maintaining physical fitness during Ramadan. He said it is highly important to refrain from all types of smoking. It reduces immunity and makes the body to be prone to diseases including tumors. He said awareness is the cornerstone in the prevention as well as early detection of cancers.

These diseases cause two-thirds of mortalities across the world, said Dr. Humoud Al-Zu’bi, Director of the Department of Prevention and Response to Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases, at the inauguration of the campaign “Your Health First” for

promoting awareness of colon cancer, launched by the Cancer Aware Nation (CAN).

Cancer cases come second after those of the heart and blood vessels’ illnesses; thus, there must be a comprehensive strategy and social partnerships to combat these diseases, he said. He has expressed his belief that the number of colon cancer cases can be alleviated with a national strategy by 30 percent by 2030. Meanwhile, CAN chairperson Dr. Khalid Al-Saleh said the campaign aims at persuading people to change their lifestyles with food intakes rich in fruits and vegetables.

Awareness is the cornerstone for protection and early detection of cancerous diseases, he said, adding that CAN had succeeded in cutting misconceptions about cancer, wrongly viewed as a disease that leads to death for sure, from 93 percent to 52 percent at the local level. CAN has also raised the proportion of people who believe in the necessity of early examinations from 50 percent to 70 percent. Number of colon and colorectal cancer cases reached 283 in 2020, according to records of Kuwait Cancer Control Center, Dr. Al-Saleh said.



KUWAIT: National Campaign for Cancer Awareness launches its “Your Health First” campaign for Colon cancer awareness on Sunday.

GCC chief backs Egypt, Sudan’s rights to Nile

RIYADH: The Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Al-Budaiwi, stressed on Sunday that water security for Egypt and Sudan is an integral part of Arab national security and refused any actions that might affect their rights to Nile water. Al-Budaiwi affirmed during a Gulf-Egyptian ministerial meeting in Riyadh that the GCC contributes to finding a solution for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in a way that meets the interests of all parties, stressing the need to reach an agreement by international law.

Al-Budaiwi said that the GCC is keen on enhancing historical ties with Egypt and supporting the two sides in many fields, stating, “Egypt is an important Arab dimension and an indispensable strategic fraternal partner for the GCC States.” The meeting is significant to discuss the ideal means to confront the challenges in the area and to strengthen cooperation according to strategic foundations to achieve security, stability, and international peace, Al-Budaiwi stated. Al-Budaiwi confirmed that the GCC stands with Palestine, especially in the Gaza Strip, where crimes are being committed daily by Zionist occupation forces against Palestinians. Al-Budaiwi called for a ceasefire, ensuring humanitarian aid be delivered to Palestinians, and for international law to take serious action in providing safety for civilians in Gaza.

Al-Budaiwi pointed out the importance of the initiative launched by Saudi Arabia in September 2023 in partnership with Egypt, the League of Arab States (LAS), Jordan, and the European Union. Al-Budaiwi added that the initiative’s aim is to revive peace and establish an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and international resolutions.

Morocco’s territorial integrity

Also, GCC Secretary-General renewed the Council’s firm stance and decisions in support of the Moroccan Sahara and preserving the foundations and stability of Morocco and its territorial integrity. Al-Budaiwi made the remark during the Moroccan-Gulf ministerial meeting, held in Riyadh on the sidelines of the 159th ministerial meeting of foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

In his speech, Al-Budaiwi welcomed Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation, and Moroccans Residing Abroad in the Kingdom of Morocco, Nasser Bourita, expressing his hope to strengthen the distinguished historic bilateral relations between the Gulf States and Morocco and to support the existing strategic partnership between the two sides and develop it in various fields. He also referred to the historic summit, which brought together the Gulf States’ leaders and His Majesty King Mohammed VI and was held on April 20, 2015, in Riyadh to strengthen the strategic partnership between the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and the Kingdom of Morocco. — KUNA

Cooperating with IAEA shows advancement of nuclear medicine

KUWAIT: Kuwait has been engaged in fruitful cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in technical projects and training courses, a ranking official has affirmed. The affirmation was made by the Chairman of the Nuclear Medicine Department and Head of the Nuclear Medicine Department at the Kuwait Cancer Control Center, Dr. Abdulreda Ismael.

Ismael said in his opening speech at a regional training course organized by the center on monitoring and ensuring the quality of nuclear tomography in cooperation with the IAEA. The hosting of this course comes from its selection as a regional training center for Arab countries in the Asian region. He added that this step also comes to demonstrate the scientific and technical confidence possessed by Kuwaiti competencies and the distinguished position of the Kuwait Cancer Control Center.

This reflects positively on the medical services and aims to enhance capabilities in nuclear medicine, radiation oncology, and the production of radiopharmaceuticals for the diagnosis and treatment of tumors and non-communicable diseases.

Medical laboratory services ‘backbone of health system’

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadi stressed that medical laboratory services form the backbone of the health system in Kuwait and contribute a lot to accurate diagnosis and effective treatment of patients, so supporting and developing this sector is one of the main priorities of the ministry.

Minister Al-Awadi said, during his opening speech of the third conference of medical laboratories (Clinical Progress in Biochemistry) on Sunday, that biochemistry laboratories have a prominent role in the success of the health system and are the main source of many necessary information that contributes to the early diagnosis of diseases, providing appropriate therapeutic solutions, and following up on the patient’s health status.

He pointed to the Ministry’s keenness to support medical laboratories. The state-of-the-art laboratory equipment, advanced technological equipment, and techniques strive to improve the



Dr Mishari Al-Naimi



KUWAIT: The center for monitoring and ensuring the quality of nuclear tomography in cooperation with the IAEA regional organizes a training course.

protocols of work in them, develop and train medical and technical personnel, and promote scientific research in this vital field. He pointed to the development of several services recently, the most important of which is the electronic linking system for patient results with the Sahel application, which allows the patient’s results to reach the patient immediately and facilitates the follow-up of his health condition. The completion of the electronic linking service for laboratory material requests between hospitals facilitated the process of ordering consumables quickly and effectively.

He stated that the Ministry has provided modern technologies that keep pace with global development and allow specialized analyses and services. This is an important segment of patients, most notably mass spectrometry devices, which are used with multiple technologies in some hospitals, such as Amiri Hospital, the Addiction Center, and the Yacoub Behbehani Center.

He noted the participation of 15 specialists in the conference from inside and outside Kuwait, highlighting the latest discoveries and developments in the field of medical laboratories and reviewing the latest technologies in the field of advanced devices and the latest artificial intelligence applications and their role in improving the analytical quality and effective management of medical

The head of the Radiation Nature Department at the Kuwait Center, Dr. Mishari Al-Naimi, said in his speech that the program includes a comprehensive curriculum for training medical physicists on the basic rules and advanced methods for monitoring and ensuring the quality, accuracy, and efficiency of nuclear tomography devices through practical applications and training on Monte Carlo simulation programs. This allows participants to analyze the performance of nuclear imaging devices through virtual reality. — KUNA

The Health Minister pointed out that the conference focuses on toxicology analyses, addictive drugs, and analyses that serve obesity surgery patients and oncology patients.

For her part, the chairman of the conference and chairman of the board of medical laboratories departments at the Ministry, Dr. Ebtisam Al-Juma, said that the conference will discuss a number of topics ranging from effective management of medical laboratories to policies in medical analyzes to ensure the quality of analyzes by continuous auditing and monitoring the performance of devices. She added that the conference is concerned with reviewing modern trends in clinical biochemistry analyses and modern technologies such as mechanization and the use of artificial intelligence, which contribute significantly to improving the quality of medical work and services.

She pointed out that the biochemistry laboratories in our health facilities have a great responsibility for providing vital data, stating that biochemistry laboratories are the third eye that sees what is not seen with the naked eye, as they receive blood, urine, and body fluid samples for analysis with extreme accuracy, and not only that, but these laboratories provide comprehensive analysis of physiological indicators and hormone screening. — KUNA

Local

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National Robotics competition starts

KUWAIT: The Kuwait National Robotics Competition kicked off on Sunday at Sabah Al-Salem University City, organized by the department of computer science at Kuwait University (KU). Many student groups from the Ministry of Education participated, along with groups from KU and private universities. KU's Vice President, Dr. Meshari Al-Harbi, expressed in the opening statement how glad he was that people were taking an interest in information technology, software, and artificial intelligence, especially during the current time.

Dr. Al-Harbi reaffirmed that the KU aims to teach as many students as possible throughout the competition, since it is considered an accomplishment for the university. It also supports creativity and progress, according to him. He added that it is the perfect opportunity for students to practice the skills they learned academically and expressed how proud he was of them for participating in the competition. The Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education, Hessa Al-Mutawa, affirmed that this was the Ministry of Education's second participation in such a competition. — KUNA



Photo of the day



KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry has placed vehicles damaged in traffic accidents on several roundabouts across Kuwait to spread awareness on the harmful effects of driving while using the phone during the GCC Traffic Week, which started on Sunday, March 3, 2024. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KISR organizes walkathon for people with different abilities

By Ghadeer Ghloom

KUWAIT: As part of the Gulf Week for differently abled people, the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) organized a walkathon event for individuals with different abilities on March 3, 2024, at Al-Assima Mall in Kuwait City. The event is aimed at raising awareness and shedding light on the social responsibility towards this category of people, believing in their abilities and potential, and reinforcing KISR's message of integrating differently abled people into the society and overcoming all obstacles that may hinder them to ensure their equality with their peers.

During the event, Kuwait Times spoke to Nourah Al-Gurair, Department Manager of Software and System Development in KISR, who said:



Nourah Al-Gurair

"We have a program that is specialized for providing people with technical support for differently abled people. This program started in 1985 and we are continuing to execute projects that assist and help these people to overcome their challenges. Differently abled people face challenges at different fields in their life such as education, employment, their daily life, and so on.



KUWAIT: Differently abled kids participate in the Walkathon event. - Photos by Yasser A-Al-Zayyat

Therefore, we try to use technology to facilitate their adaptation to the environment." She further elaborated: "As for today, we are holding a walkathon, which is a walking-sport activity for differently abled people. We do this yearly, except during the

COVID pandemic. Today marks our sixth walkathon, which we tend to hold at different places. This year, it took place in Al-Assima Mall in Kuwait City." This aligns with Kuwait being a leading country in integrating people with different abilities.

Envoy lauds UK's heroic role in liberating Kuwait

LONDON: Kuwait's Ambassador to the UK, Bader Al-Awadhi, said Britain has played a heroic role in liberating Kuwait from the brutal Iraqi invasion. Al-Awadhi made the statement during the annual gala dinner held by the Royal Irish battalion "Desert Rats", which was launched on February 28, 1994, to keep bonds of friendship between the Irish soldiers who participated in the liberation of Kuwait in 1991.

The ceremony featured former British premier John Major, as Ambassador Al-Awadhi said His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has always stressed Britain's pivotal role in liberating Kuwait and protecting its sovereignty. He expressed delight at attending this ceremony that coincides with the celebrations of Kuwait's 63rd National Day and 33rd Liberation Day, in addition to the 125th anniversary of the Kuwaiti-British partnership. Meanwhile, Major General Patrick Cordingley, Commander of Desert Rats during the liberation war, told KUNA that participating in liberating Kuwait makes "us" feel that a huge achievement has been made. The forces' members who took part in liberation felt proud and happy as they helped the Kuwaiti people, he noted. When Cordingley visited Kuwait



Kuwait's Ambassador to the UK Bader Al-Awadhi meets with dignitaries during the annual gala dinner. — KUNA

four years ago, he extolled urban development in the country over 33 years.

For his part, Major General Arthur Denaro, commander of the Irish Hussars' Basra Road Dining Club, said the 68-tank regiment had been getting prepared in Saudi Arabia for five months. He noted that the tank he was onboard was equipped with protective equipment against chemical and biological weapons in anticipation of a possible attack from the former Iraqi regime's forces, referring to some injuries to the soldiers. The regiment entered Basra at 7:30 a.m. on February 28, 1991, driving fast towards Kuwait, he said. It arrived in the destroyed Kuwait City one day later. — KUNA



KUWAIT: International Diplomatic Club Kuwait (IDCK) is pleased to announce that the proceeds from the AlJoud International Charity Bazaar it held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on Monday, February 19, 2024, amounted to KD 85,246,466. The full amount was handed to the Kuwait Red Crescent Society to benefit the medical needs of the children of Gaza. The IDCK would like to extend its deepest gratitude to all those who supported this critical humanitarian endeavor.



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A decade later, Malaysia plane crash families demand justice

Zelensky vows Ukrainian victory



SEOUL: Doctors hold up placards reading "Opposition to the increase in medical schools" during a rally against the government's plan to raise the annual enrolment quota at medical schools on March 3, 2024. — AFP

S Korean healthcare standoff escalates

Thousands of doctors rally against reforms supported by 75 percent of public

SEOUL: Thousands of South Korean doctors protested Sunday in Seoul in an escalating standoff with the government over medical training reforms...

Medical Association told the crowd of protestors. "The government is very aware of the reasons why all doctors are opposing the increase in the medical school admissions but are exploiting policies to turn doctors into slaves forever".

The mass work stoppage has taken a toll on hospitals, with crucial treatments and surgeries cancelled, prompting the government to raise its public health alert to the highest level.

Under South Korean law, doctors are restricted from striking, and the government this week requested police investigate people connected to the stoppage.

utmost leniency for trainee doctors if they return to work by the end of today", Interior Minister Lee Sang-min said on Sunday in a KBS television interview.

Undemocratic

South Korea's government is pushing to admit 2,000 more students to medical schools annually from next year to address what it calls one of the lowest doctor-to-population ratios among developed nations.

Doctors fear the reform will erode the quality of service and medical education, but proponents accuse medics of trying to safeguard their salaries and social status.

But doctors have also vowed not to back down, saying the government's plan did not address the sector's real problems.

Canadian, Italian PMs' soiree scrapped amid pro-Palestine protest

MONTREAL: A soiree to be attended by the prime ministers of Canada and Italy on Saturday in Toronto was cancelled over "security concerns", the Canadian leader's office said...

Meloni, whose country holds the rotating presidency of the Group of Seven (G7) nations, is visiting Canada ahead of a leaders' summit in Italy in June.



TEHRAN: Iranian women show their documents as they queue in front of a polling station to cast their ballots on March 1, 2024. — AFP

Conservatives get bulk of seats in Iran poll

TEHRAN: Iranian conservatives secured the bulk of seats in elections for a key clerical body and the national legislature, local media reported Sunday...

out was lower in Iran's bigger cities than its smaller ones, and that there was a significant number of "blank votes".

'Wake-up call'

Turnout in the capital Tehran was around 25 percent, according to Iranian media, which reported that ultraconservative candidates secured 12 of the 30 parliament seats allotted to the capital.

The pro-government Iran Daily said authorities should see the low turnout as a "wake-up call and redouble their efforts to fortify their support base".

Political analyst Mohammad Mohajeri said conservatives and ultraconservatives will emerge as the main winner in the elections due to "sharp decline in the participation rate".

Indian navy to open new base near Maldives

NEW DELHI: India's navy has said it is bolstering forces on "strategically important" islands close to the Maldives, with a new base set to open just days before Male starts sending home Indian forces.

Relations between India and the Maldives have soured since pro-China President Mohamed Muizzu won elections last year after promising to expel Indian forces.

veillance" of the area, the navy said in a statement late Saturday. Muizzu has asked India to withdraw 89 security personnel based in the Maldives to operate reconnaissance aircraft...

India's Lakshadweep islands lie about 130 kilometers (80 miles) north of the Maldives, with the new naval base on the island of Minicoy situated at their closest point.



TORONTO: Police stand guard outside the Art Gallery of Ontario as protesters confront attendees of a reception for the Italian and Canadian prime ministers. — AFP

Advertisement for the KISS Humanitarian Award 2023, featuring Mr. Bill Gates as the recipient and details about the award ceremony and winners.

International

Zelensky vows Ukrainian victory

Death toll in Odesa strike hits 10 with 215 emergency responders involved in rescue operations

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Sunday called for the world to help Kyiv defeat "Russian evil" as the death toll from a Russian drone strike on Odesa rose to 10, including three young children.

A Russian drone hit an apartment block in the southern port city early on Saturday morning, partially destroying several floors and leaving more than a dozen under the rubble. "So far, 10 people have died, including three children: Mark, who was not even three years old, Yelyzaveta, eight months old, and Timofey, four months old. Ukrainian children are Russia's military targets," Zelensky said on Sunday in a post on Telegram.

Local officials said they expect the toll to rise as there are still people unaccounted for. Zelensky on Saturday had pleaded with Kyiv's Western allies to supply more air defense systems as Russia continues to pound his country with drones, missiles and artillery fire in the war's third year. Ukraine is currently on the back foot with Russia having made recent frontline battlefield gains. Ukraine's interior ministry separately reported one death and three people wounded in the southern Kherson region.

Zelensky said 215 emergency responders had taken part in an ongoing search and rescue operation in Odesa. As delays to a crucial \$60-billion aid package from the United States has left Kyiv facing ammunition shortages, Zelensky said the attack showed the importance of supporting Ukraine. "We must win this war," he said on Sunday. "Every

Russian loss at the front is our country's response to Russian terror. The world must respond to every manifestation of Russian evil and repel Russia's actions."

Bodies huddled together

There was no comment on the strike in Moscow, which denies targeting civilians despite excessive evidence of Russian strikes on residential areas and the United Nations having verified at least 10,000 civilian deaths since Russia invaded in February 2022.

Ukraine's emergency services said they had found the bodies of families huddled together as they sifted through the rubble on Sunday. "A mother tried to cover her eight-month-old baby with her body. They were found in a tight embrace," the agency said on Telegram.

Russian military bloggers also reported an attempted massive Ukrainian drone attack on the annexed peninsula of Crimea overnight. Moscow said it shot down 38 Ukrainian drones, while the Rybar Telegram channel, close to Russia's armed forces, said one hit a pipeline at an oil depot that was the presumed target of the attack.

Kyiv has hit several Russian oil facilities in recent months in what it has called fair retribution for Moscow's attacks on Ukraine's power grid. A senior Ukrainian commander separately accused Russian forces of dropping explosives containing an unspecified chemical substance over the battlefield, and said the situation on the frontlines was "complicated, but under control." — AFP



ODESA: People react in front of toys displayed outside a multi-storey building heavily damaged in Odesa on March 3, 2024. — AFP

60 years in, UN peacekeepers vital for Cyprus divide

NICOSIA: In the heart of Nicosia's walled Old City, two UN peacekeepers unlock a padlocked door and step back five decades. They are entering the buffer zone that separates Greek Cypriots from Turkish Cypriots, and thousands of troops, on the divided island.

Like countless soldiers before them, the blue berets clambered over rooftops, past drying laundry lines, before walking along crumbling streets and through abandoned flats and businesses caked in thick layers of dust. "When you first get here it's really quite surreal, obviously it's not something that most people will ever really experience," Sapper Michael Clasper, a British peacekeeper from 71 Engineer Regiment, told AFP.

This year marks a triple anniversary for the Mediterranean island. It's 60 years since the arrival of the blue berets, 50 since an Athens-backed coup aimed at uniting Cyprus with Greece triggered a Turkish invasion that divided the island, and 20 since a referendum saw Greek Cypriots reject a UN reunification plan.

The appointment of a new UN envoy last month has sparked a flicker of hope for a new push for a settlement, but with six decades of failed negotiations behind it, the UN faces questions of how much longer it should stay.

"You've got a peacekeeping force on a holiday island... which is a really bizarre disconnect," said James Ker-Lindsay, a visiting professor at the London School of Economics and a Cyprus expert. "But that also raises questions about UNFICYP and its long-term mandate," he said, using the acronym for the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

The UN is fully aware how long it has been here. "We always intend to come, fulfil the peacekeeping task at hand and leave," said UNFICYP spokesman Aleem Siddique. "The fact that we're

still here, 60 years later, highlights the fact that we still need a solution to the Cyprus problem."

Intercommunal violence

Cyprus, which has a large Greek Cypriot majority and a sizable Turkish Cypriot minority, gained an uneasy independence from Britain in 1960 under terms that forbade partition and union with Greece or Turkey.

Yet the new republic's delicately crafted constitution buckled under the strain of inter-communal tensions and in December 1963 the dispute exploded into deadly violence. Turkish Cypriots withdrew into enclaves and Nicosia, the capital, was divided along what was dubbed the Green Line.

British troops had deployed quickly from their bases on the island to try to restore peace, but London was uneasy about both the costs and the implications of making it a long-term mission. "Peacekeeping was a really new thing at the time," said Ker-Lindsay. With the Cold War at its height, there were strong US efforts to make it a NATO mission, but the Cypriot president appealed to the Soviet Union and the idea was dropped.

Eventually, in March 1964, UNFICYP was created and has been in operation ever since, with Britain an ever-present contributor. The Turkish invasion of 1974 and its aftermath put an end to the enclaves and divided Cyprus in two, with the Turkish Cypriot north unilaterally declaring independence nine years later in a move recognized only by Ankara.

The buffer zone now stretches the full length of the island, 180 kilometers (110 miles) from west to east. Cyprus has, for the most part, remained peaceful since the Turkish invasion, but it would be a mistake to think that the buffer zone is anything other than tense.

The role of soldiers on patrol is to spot the slightest unauthorized alteration, even a new padlock, and report it up the chain, so that the UN can step in quickly and maintain the status quo. "The attention to detail is something you really need to focus on when you're out here," said Clasper. Frequent requests by former residents to retrieve their property are rejected, because the UN cannot allow the status quo to change.

Thousands of incidents

The buffer zone sees thousands of infringements each year. The UN says the most common are unau-

thorized civilian crossings, while there is also plenty of criminality, including illegal hunting and the smuggling of everything from asparagus to people.

There can also be serious confrontations, like one in August over the construction by Turkish Cypriots of a road in the buffer zone to the mixed village of Pyla, which led to four peacekeepers being injured. "It's easy for small incidents to explode into international ones, and we saw that recently with the dispute in Pyla," Siddique said.

The longevity of the mission and the apparently slim hopes of a resolution — the last UN-backed talks collapsed in 2017 — have led to doubts about its continuing efficacy. Under the Donald Trump administration, there was US pressure to review the UN's peacekeeping missions and "Cyprus was definitely in the firing line", Ker-Lindsay said. He said it was saved in part because "if things really kick off in Cyprus, it will draw in two NATO allies", in the form of Greece and Turkey.



NICOSIA: Sappers Sam Proctor (right), Aaron Joyce and Corporal Anna Rowell from the British Army's 71 Engineer Regiment, members of the UNFICYP, climb up on a rooftop of an abandoned building in the divided capital of Cyprus. — AFP

thorized civilian crossings, while there is also plenty of criminality, including illegal hunting and the smuggling of everything from asparagus to people.

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Since 1974, Sector 2 of the buffer zone, which covers Nicosia, has been headquartered in the Ledra Palace Hotel, once among the most glamorous in Cyprus and now a symbol of its division. After five decades with only minimal upkeep, it is no longer fit for human habitation and in the grounds of the hotel prefab buildings are being put up to house UNFICYP.

It's a similar scene all along the buffer zone, but it's not just the physical disintegration that troubles the UN, the status quo is under threat, too. UNFICYP can "hold the ground", said Siddique, but "the (UN) secretary-general has made clear the status quo is changing, is being challenged by both sides. "So we hope that this underlines the importance of returning to the negotiating table and securing a lasting settlement that will pave the way for the exit of the peacekeeping force". In the meantime, the UN is "absolutely necessary", Ker-Lindsay said. "I don't think it's really been factored in by society at large how precarious the situation is." — AFP

Zionists kill babies with...

Continued from Page 1

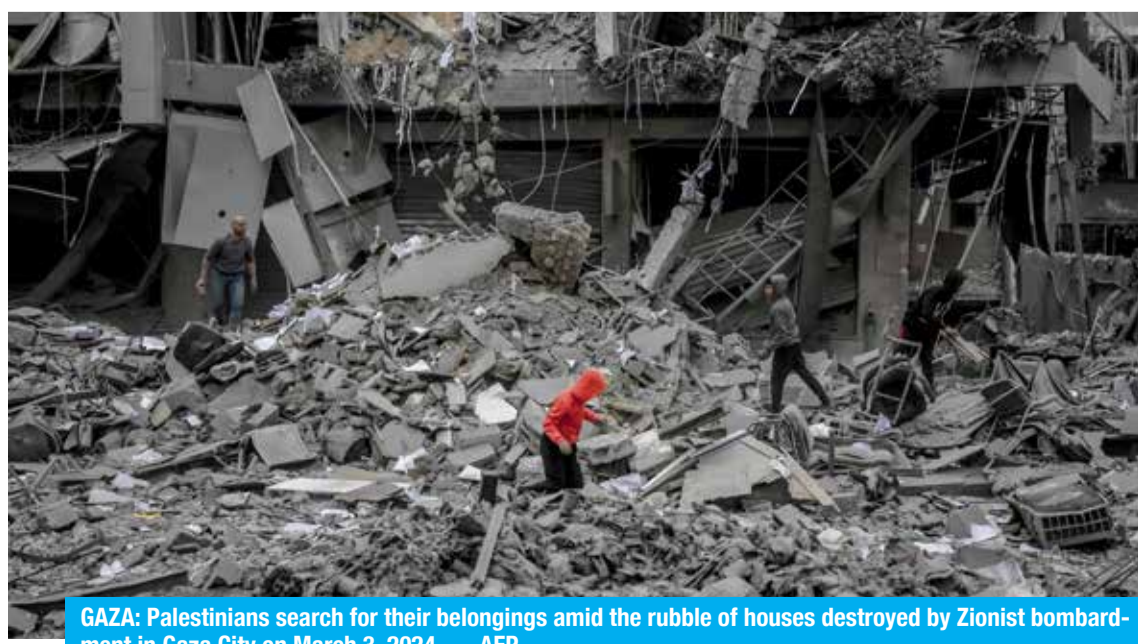
The six-member bloc is unwavering in its support for the Palestinians, the GCC chief emphasized, vowing to ramp up diplomacy in efforts to halt the violence and protect the Palestinians, subsequently allowing the delivery of humanitarian aid into the Palestinian enclave.

Mediators in Cairo have made a renewed push for a Gaza ceasefire, but differences remained as fighting raged on in the Palestinian territory gripped by desperate food shortages. US, Qatari and Hamas envoys traveled to Cairo for the latest effort towards a six-week truce, stepped-up aid deliveries

and the exchange of hostages for Palestinian prisoners.

Despite the latest push to halt the fighting, Zionist bombing and urban combat again rocked Gaza, home to 2.4 million people, most of whom have been displaced. A Zionist siege on Gaza has sparked dire warnings from the United Nations of famine, leading the United States to start airdropping food rations into Gaza on Saturday. Jordan and some other countries have already done so. Screaming Palestinian children ran toward food parcels that drifted on black parachutes onto the Mediterranean beach.

At least 16 children have died of malnutrition in recent days as "famine spreads" in Gaza's north, said health ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qudra. Gaza's desperation was grimly highlighted last Thursday when more than 100 people were killed in chaotic scenes around a convoy of aid trucks. Gaza health officials said Zionist forces opened fire into the crowd, causing a massacre. — Agencies



GAZA: Palestinians search for their belongings amid the rubble of houses destroyed by Zionist bombardment in Gaza City on March 3, 2024. — AFP

Candidate registration opens, most ex-MPs...

Continued from Page 1

Voting starts at midday and will continue until midnight on April 4 because it falls during the holy fasting month of Ramadan, where adult Muslims ab-

Shehbaz Sharif elected Pak PM...

Continued from Page 1

Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party was targeted by a crackdown of arrests and censorship.

PTI candidates were forced to run as independents but nonetheless secured more seats than any other party. However, they fell short of the figures needed to form a government, paving the way for Sharif's return. Omar Ayub Khan stood against Sharif as the candidate of choice for MPs loyal to Imran Khan, gaining 92 votes. "They put our leaders in jail, took our election symbol, rigged the elections, but we kept standing, and we will stand our ground," Omar Ayub Khan told parliament.

Sharif, 72, first served as prime minister in 2022 at the head of a strikingly similar alliance which ousted Imran Khan, a former cricket star. Much like during his first tenure, Sharif will face an overlapping trio of crises plaguing the nation of more than 240 million. Pakistan came to the brink of economic default during his first term, before a last-minute International Monetary Fund (IMF) deal saved the day.

Inflation remains sky-high and Sharif will be the face of unpopular belt-tightening measures likely demanded by the IMF for a new deal needed in the coming months. "Can a nuclear-capable Pakistan

stain from eating and drinking from dawn to dusk for 30 consecutive days. It will be the second time elections are held in the month of Ramadan. The first time was in 2013.

Kuwait, with a native population of 1.5 million, has around 800,000 male and female voters who must be at least 21 years of age. Naturalized Kuwaitis can vote after 20 years of gaining citizenship. Kuwait is divided into five constituencies, with each constituency electing 10 MPs.

sustain its existence with the burden of debts? It will sustain if we collectively decide on a deep surgery and change the system. We have to bring reforms," Sharif said.

Security has also deteriorated, with Islamabad blaming a spike in attacks on the Taleban group's return to power in neighboring Afghanistan in 2021. Sharif said one of his priorities was to "repair" its relationship with the United States after Imran Khan blamed US interference for his downfall. President Xi Jinping of China — one of Pakistan's most significant economic allies — sent a congratulatory message to Sharif on Sunday, Chinese state media reported.

Analysts warn of a legitimacy crisis, with PTI claiming they were robbed of a majority by rigging on polling day when mobile Internet was shut down and results were massively delayed. Pakistan's powerful military establishment has loomed large over the election, throwing its weight behind PML-N and targeting the charismatic Imran Khan and his followers with a crackdown.

While PML-N has found itself back at the helm in Islamabad, the fact it had to broker a broad alliance to rule has badly bruised its reputation. Shehbaz's brother and three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif had been tipped to lead when PML-N expected a better showing from the elections. But Shehbaz — considered the more pragmatic mediator, a softer personality and the military's favorite — stepped into the role after the result was not what they hoped for. — AFP

International



SUBANG JAYA: (Left) A person holds a balloon during an event held by relatives of the passengers and supporters to mark the 10th year since the Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 disappeared. (Right) Relatives hold candles during the event. — AFP

A decade later, Malaysia plane crash families demand justice

Malaysian government to resume talks with Texas firm for new search operation

KUALA LUMPUR: Relatives of passengers on a Malaysia Airlines plane that mysteriously vanished 10 years ago pushed for a new search Sunday as they spoke of enduring grief and the struggle to find closure. Flight MH370, a Boeing 777 aircraft carrying 239 people, disappeared from radar screens on March 8, 2014, while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

Despite the largest search in aviation history, the plane has never been found. About 500 relatives and their supporters gathered Sunday at a shopping center near the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur for a "remembrance day", with many visibly overcome with grief.

They lit 239 candles, one for each passenger lost on the flight. Some relatives came from China, where almost two-thirds of the passengers of the doomed plane were from. "The last 10 years have been a non-stop emotional rollercoaster for me," Grace Nathan, a 36-year-old Malaysian lawyer whose mother, Anne Daisy, 56, was on the flight, told AFP.

Speaking to the crowd, she called on the Malaysian government to conduct a new search. "MH370 is not history," she said. Liu Shuang Fong, 67, from China's Hebei province lost her 28-year-old son Li Yan Lin, who was also a passenger on the plane. "I demand justice for my son. Where is the plane?" said Liu, who

flew to Malaysia for the event. "The search must go on," she added.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke told reporters that "as far Malaysia is concerned it is committed to finding the plane ... cost is not the issue." He told relatives at the gathering that he would meet with officials from Texas-based marine exploration firm Ocean Infinity, which conducted a previous unsuccessful search to discuss a new operation.

"We are now awaiting for them to provide suitable dates and I hope to meet them soon". Ocean Infinity's search in 2018 ended after several months of scouring the seabed without success. An earlier Australia-

led search that covered 120,000 square kilometers (46,000 square miles) in the Indian Ocean found hardly any trace of the plane, with only some pieces of debris picked up.

Considered the biggest search in aviation history, the operation was suspended in January 2017. The plane's disappearance has long been the subject of a host of theories — ranging from the credible to outlandish — including that veteran pilot Zaharie Ahmad Shah had gone rogue. A final report into the tragedy released in 2018 pointed to failings by air traffic control and said the course of the plane was changed manually. — AFP

Trump's superfans follow their idol everywhere

RICHMOND: As soon as the arena doors open for the Donald Trump rally, they rush to the front row, ignoring "Reserved" signs and grab their spots. "We got perfect seats, Trump's going to look right at us," beamed Scott Knuth, 57, sporting a red, white and blue jersey labeled "Front Row Joes." He and a few others here are among a group of the former president's most diehard fans — this is Knuth's 43rd Trump event. Snagging the prime perch involved negotiating with security and waiting all night in the rain. "They will need a bulldozer to get me out," he said with a laugh, more than two hours before Trump's speech was scheduled to start in Richmond, the capital of Virginia.

On Tuesday, this eastern US state will join 14 others in holding party nominating contests that are expected to deliver a haul of delegates to Trump, all but sealing his bid to become the Republican White House candidate to take on Joe Biden in November. Knuth first saw Trump in 2015 and at the time felt alone in his excitement over the real estate mogul's then-nascent political campaign.

Since then, the construction worker has seen crowds swell for Trump, whom he has spoken to eight times and taken multiple selfies with. He's well-versed in the rhythm of a Trump rally: a sea of red "Make America Great Again" caps bob in an arena filled with lively music, the energy crescendoing as the main event approaches. "It has a rock show kind of feel with the music, how it builds up, everybody gets going," Knuth explained.

'Warrior'

It's hard to match Edward Young's enthusiasm for Trump — Richmond is his 73rd rally. "The Trump rallies are the greatest show on Earth," the 64-year-old said with a frenetic energy. On Friday, he worked until 6 pm then drove from New Jersey "all night in the rain" to arrive in Virginia at 4 am to be in position to snag a front row seat. "I haven't slept," said Young, who helps small businesses manage their debt.

Young and Knuth attract admiration from Trump fans who are seeing their political idol for the first time. But this devotion comes at a steep cost. In 2016, Young totally threw himself into Trump's campaign, so much so that he was at the victory party in New York on election night. "But I had completely exhausted my bank account," he said. "If the campaign lasted one more week in 2016, I was like, I'll be bankrupt." The cost of following Trump this election cycle continues to accumulate, with Young spending thousands on gas, hotels and other expenses since January. "I'm once divorced and once widowed ... I got no kids. I don't mind spending the money but I'm dipping into my savings," he said. — AFP



RICHMOND: Supporters of former US President and 2024 Republican Presidential hopeful Donald Trump known as the "Front Row Joes," including Scott Knuth (left) wait in line to enter a rally. — AFP



LISBON: (Left) Muslims queue to enter the mosque in Lisbon's Mouraira neighbourhood on February 2, 2024. (Right) A Bangladeshi man poses wearing a scarf which bears the Portuguese national coat of arms. — AFP photos

Portugal: Europe's last open door for immigrants

SAO TEOTONIO, Portugal: In Sao Teotonio, a small country town in southwest Portugal, there are more Indian and Nepalese restaurants than Portuguese ones. Which makes sense when you discover South Asian workers keep the fruit farms that are the mainstay of the region going. Nepalese immigrant Mesch Khatri, 36, picks raspberries and strawberries in the greenhouses around Sao Teotonio while his wife Ritu, 28, runs their cafe, called the Nepali, in the town. Their seven-year-old son speaks Portuguese, a little English, but no Nepali at all.

Khatri moved to Portugal in December 2012 after working in Belgium. "I came here because it was hard to get a resident's permit in Belgium. It's easier to get papers here." Five years after arriving in Portugal he had residency, and two years after that a Portuguese passport. While migrants in most other European countries face a deliberately dissuasive obstacle course to get papers, resulting in many working illegally, in Portugal it is the other way around. Immigrants are quickly absorbed into the legal economy, paying taxes and social charges straight away.

While the agricultural Alentejo region has been losing its people for decades, the population of the municipality that includes Sao Teotonio has gone up 13 percent in the last decade. Migrant farm workers have brought life back to an area badly hit by the flight from the land. With one of Europe's most open immigration regimes, Portugal has seen its foreign-born population double in five years, partially due to South Asians who have come to work in farming, fishing and restaurants.

The influx has been encouraged by the socialist government, which has been in power since the end of 2015, but all this could change if the country shifts to the right after the March 10 general election.

'We need them'

Fewer than half a million in 2018, last year a million foreigners were living in Portugal — one in 10 of the population, according to provisional figures given to AFP by AIMA, the state agency for integration, migration and asylum. Brazilians, with their long historical links to the country, remain the biggest contingent — around 400,000 — followed by the British and other Europeans. But the 58,000 Indians and 40,000 Nepalis are already more numerous than people from Portugal's former African colonies like Angola and Cape Verde.

Bangladeshis and Pakistanis now also figure in the top 10 of new arrivals. "The main reason Portugal has seen the number of immigrants rise is because it needs them," said Luis Goes Pinheiro, the head of AIMA, saying the country has Europe's most ageing population after Italy.

Far from the "sea of plastic" of greenhouses around Sao Teotonio, Luis Carlos Vila also depends on foreign workers to pick his apples in an isolated corner of the northeast. "I have no other choice," he told AFP. "We have an elderly population and there are no more agricultural labourers."

Six Indians were hard at work in his orchards in Carrazeda de Ansiães. "I love Portugal," said Happy Singh, a Punjabi Sikh in halting English. "The money is good, the work is good and the future is good. In India there is no future." Vila hires his foreign workers completely legally through employment agencies and sees in them a little of his own family history. "My father also had to emigrate (to France) to earn a living," he said.



SAO TEOTONIO / LISBON: (Left) Children of immigrant parents attend a Portuguese class in Sao Teotonio, Odemira on January 16, 2024. (Right) People have lunch at an Asian restaurant in Bem Formoso street.

'Generous country'

Even among the most traditional of Portuguese fishing communities like Caxinas near Porto — the living embodiment of the country's strong maritime heritage — half of the crews are made up of Indonesians. At the helm of his 20-metre trawler the Fugitive, Jose Luis Gomes — a skipper like his father and grandfather — is resigned to the fact that his compatriots no longer want to do this tough job when there are better salaries elsewhere. Javanese fisher Saeful Ardani was working his fourth 18-month contract for Gomes.

Hired through a boat owners' group, the 28-year-old told AFP that the "Indonesian fishermen who work here have no problems. And our families back home are reassured because we are not illegal." A country of emigrants throughout the 20th century, Portugal has become a destination for immigrants since the turn of the 21st. "Whatever indicator you take, it is one of the most generous" countries in Europe when it comes to immigration, said Jorge Malheiros, a migration specialist at Lisbon University. Since 2007, Portugal has been granting papers to all those who declare their earnings. In 2018 the socialist government extended this to those who had entered the country illegally. A new amendment in 2022 allowed foreigners looking for work a temporary six-month visa.

'More racism'

"Portugal's laws are not perfect but they are better than a lot of countries with regressive policies," said

Timoteo Macedo, of the Immigrant Solidarity group. While these laws have prevented the people smuggling tragedies that have happened elsewhere, and migrants living under constant fear of expulsion, it has not stopped "people making money on the back of human misery", Macedo added.

The authorities have dismantled trafficking networks in the Alentejo region, where farm workers were forced to live in unacceptable conditions. Learning on the counter of his cafe in Sao Teotonio, Mesch Khatri acknowledged that the influx of foreigners had brought new challenges. "Before it was easier to earn your living, now there is more racism. The Portuguese don't like it when there are 10 or 15 people living in a



house and if they don't speak Portuguese," added his wife Ritu.

Julia Duarte volunteers in a charity shop right next to a center where around 20 children are helped with their homework, only one of whom has a Portuguese name. Originally from Alentejo, the 78-year-old worked in Lisbon before retiring back to Sao Teotonio. "I thought I would be able to enjoy my retirement in peace—then there was just an avalanche" of migrant workers, she said. "Lots of people and lots of hustle, everyone looking for a job, for a place to stay. "Then I realized that these were gentle people."

Such is the demand that the anti-poverty NGO Taipá has changed its focus to help to integrate migrants. "Ten or 15 years ago we were not ready for this," admitted its head Teresa Barradas. "It is quite a big thing for a community that was more closed in on itself and not used to such big cultural differences." But the biggest problem for immigrants is the lack of homes, "particularly for families", she added. Portuguese law allows for family reunification, and "that plays a big role in tackling prejudice because you see that your neighbours are a family who have children at school with your own", Barradas said. Pinheiro, the head of the state integration agency, agrees. "Family reunification is extraordinarily important to guarantee the full integration and rooting of migrants, particularly in rural areas." Created late last year after the border police agency was wound up, AIMA inherited 350,000 outstanding regularization applications. — AFP

Business

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2024

Zain KSA achieves record annual revenue of SAR 9.9 billion in 2023

Al-Kharafi: Results reflect company's profitable operational and cost optimization strategy

RIYADH: Zain Group announced its operation in Saudi Arabia (Zain KSA) recorded all-time high financial results for the year 2023, reporting an annual revenue of SAR 9.9 billion, an impressive annual 9 percent growth. This revenue surge propelled Zain KSA to achieve its highest-ever annual profit, reaching SAR 1.3 billion, a remarkable annual increase of 131 percent.

For the second consecutive year, the company also announced the Board of Directors' recommendation to distribute cash dividends to shareholders for the year 2023 at a rate of 5 percent of the nominal share value.

This record net profit for the year was driven by the total net gain from the sale and leaseback transaction of all 8,069 towers which was fully recognized during 2023, for a total of \$303 million.

Zain KSA's positive financial results resonate with its sustainability focused strong operational and financial performance, driven by its emphasis on 5G services and solutions, robust enterprise (B2B) and wholesale sector revenues, and a notable boost in demand for appealing individual digital services, most notably, the Yaqoot digital operator service and Taman, the company's microfinance arm.

Commenting on the financial results, Zain Vice Chairman & Zain Group CEO and Zain KSA Vice-Chairman, Bader Al-Kharafi, said, "These record results reflect the Zain Group and Zain KSA teams' joint efforts in implementing the operator's profitable operational and efficiency optimization strategy, driven by innovation and growth of digital services. Moreover over the Zain KSA Board's decision to distribute dividends for the second consecutive year reflects the improved financial solvency of the company and its focus on sustainable growth powered by its robust 5G network empowering the community and lucrative enterprise sector."



Zain Vice Chairman & Zain Group CEO and Zain KSA Vice-Chairman Bader Al-Kharafi

- Board of Zain KSA recommends dividend distribution to shareholders for the second consecutive year
- Bader Al-Kharafi: Record performance a result of company's profitable operational and cost optimization strategy, driven by innovation, digital services and sustainability

Al-Kharafi added, "Together, Zain Group and Zain KSA share a unified mission in playing our key supporting role in the Kingdom's Vision 2030 and maximizing value for our shareholders in unison with a corporate sustainability agenda that focuses on providing meaningful connectivity leading to equi-



Zain KSA HQ

table systemic change." Through its 2023 corporate sustainability strategy that focuses on,

1. Safeguarding the planet;
2. Addressing societal challenges through the core business;
3. Enabling an inclusive digital society; and
4. Build the youth of the future

Zain KSA seamlessly integrated environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) principles into operational, financial, and administrative processes, driving innovation and responsible achievements. The operator's focus on green tech-

nology saw it launch the world's first zero-emission 5G network, designed and implemented in the Red Sea. Zain KSA's framework agreement with Shareek, the Private Sector Partnership Program, paved the way for the development of several hyper-scale data centers to attract global companies and empower modern technological investments across the Kingdom.

These efforts are a few examples that resulted in Zain KSA's upgraded A classification within the MSCI ESG Index.

Gulf Bank announces 10 winners of Al-Danah account monthly draw



KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing commitment to reward its customers, Gulf Bank has announced the 10 monthly winners of the Al-Danah account draw for February 2024. The lucky winners who will be taking home a prize of KD 1,000 each, are:

- Raies Khan Wazer Khan
- Khaleel Ibrahim Mohammad Al-Kharafi
- Abdulrahman Mutar Mohammad Al-Enezi
- Mohsen Abdellhakim Sabet Abozeid
- Fatma Jasem Mohamed Bohamed
- Bibi Khaled Hussain Al-AbdulMohsen
- Haider Khaled Haider Bo-Shehri
- Ahmad Shehab Audah Al-Fadli
- Ali Mohamed Ali Abdelfattah Oudah
- Abdullah Mohammed Ali Pouladlan

The deadline for depositing and participating in the semiannual Al-Danah millionaire's draw is on March 31, 2024. The draw is scheduled for July 18, 2024, with representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and Ernst & Young in attendance. Renowned as one of the top savings accounts in Kuwait, the Al-Danah account offers numerous benefits, including periodic draws with substantial prizes. Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account offers monthly opportunities to win KD 1,000 to ten lucky winners, in addition to two quarterly draws with KD 100,000 prizes each, a semi-annual draw prize of KD 1 million and a grand draw prize of KD 2 million. Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is the only account in Kuwait, that rewards customers for their loyalty by providing loyalty chances, and transfers your chances of winning from the previous year to the next year, as part of a program that rewards customers for their loyalty to Gulf Bank.

In order to increase one's chances of winning, customers must maintain a minimum of KD 200 in their accounts, or deposit continuously to increase their chances of winning. Al-Danah account holders are eligible to win Gulf Bank's upcoming monthly, quarterly, and annual Al-Danah draws.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience. Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

IMF: Iraq growth to continue despite oil sector volatility

WASHINGTON: Iraq's economic growth is projected to continue amid fiscal expansion although medium-term vulnerabilities to oil price volatility have increased significantly, the International Monetary Fund said on Sunday. Reducing oil dependence and ensuring fiscal sustainability while protecting critical social and investment spending will require a significant fiscal adjustment, focused on controlling the public wage bill and increasing non-oil tax revenues. In parallel, higher economic growth will be needed to absorb the rapidly expanding labor force, boost non-oil exports and broaden the tax base, the IMF said in a statement following the 2024 Article IV consultation with Iraqi officials.

An IMF mission, led by Jean-Guillaume Poulain, met with the Iraqi authorities in Amman during Feb 20-29. "The authorities should therefore seek to enable private sector development, including through labor market reforms, modernization of the financial sector and restructuring of state-owned banks, pension and electricity sector reforms, and continued efforts to improve governance and reduce corruption.

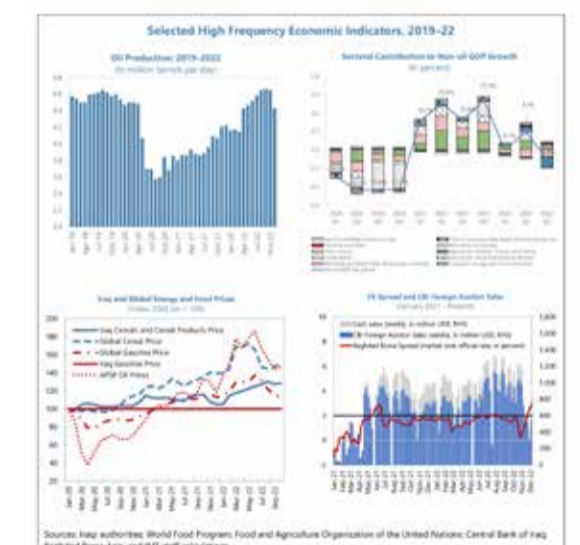
Growth in the non-oil sector has rebounded strongly in 2023 while inflation receded. Supported by increases

in public expenditure and solid agricultural output, real non-oil GDP is estimated to have grown by 6 percent in 2023 after stalling in 2022. Headline inflation declined from a high of 7.5 percent in January 2023 to 4 percent by year-end, reflecting lower international food and energy prices, and the impact of the February 2023 currency revaluation. The current account is expected to have recorded a surplus of 2.6 percent of GDP and international reserves increased to \$112 billion.

These positive developments were supported by the normalization of trade finance and the stabilization of FX market. After some initial disruptions following the introduction of new anti-money laundering and combating financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) controls on cross-border payments in November 2022, the improved compliance with the new system and the Central Bank of Iraq (CBI)'s initiatives to cut processing time led to a recovery in trade finance in the second half of 2023. This ensured private sector access to foreign exchange at the official rate for imports and travel purposes, the statement added.

Overall growth is projected to rebound in 2024 and risks are tilted downwards amid heightened uncertainty. Non-oil growth momentum will continue in 2024. Larger declines in oil prices or extended OPEC+ cuts could weigh on fiscal and external accounts. If regional tensions escalate, a disruption of shipping routes or damage to the oil infrastructure could result in oil production losses that could outweigh the potential positive impact of higher oil prices.

An ambitious fiscal adjustment would be required to help stabilize debt in the medium term and rebuild fiscal



buffers, while protecting critical capital spending. Most of the fiscal adjustment would have to come from reducing current expenditure, especially controlling the wage bill by limiting mandatory hiring and gradually introducing an attrition rule. The authorities should also seek to increase non-oil revenues by broadening the personal income tax base and making it more progressive, reviewing the customs tariff structure, and considering new taxes on luxury items. In parallel, efforts to make revenue and customs administration more efficient should continue, the statement said.

UK finance minister dampens down hopes of tax cuts

LONDON: British finance minister Jeremy Hunt on Sunday talked down the likelihood of tax cuts in this week's budget, pledging "prudent and responsible" measures "for long term growth". The Chancellor of the Exchequer had been widely expected to cut taxes in Wednesday's budget, in a move seen as a way of closing the gap on the main opposition Labour Party ahead of elections.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party is trailing in the polls with pollsters predicting that Labour leader Keir Starmer is on track to win the keys to number 10 Downing Street at a general election later this year. Voters, hit by a cost of living crisis, have repeatedly punished the Conservatives in a string of recent by-elections. With the Bank of England's main interest rate sitting at a 16-year high of 5.25 percent, millions of voters are also suffering from soaring mortgage repayments.

"It's going to be a prudent and responsible budget for long term growth," Hunt told Sky News television channel. Official data last month showed Britain had sunk into recession after the economy shrank in the final two quarters of 2023. While economists predicted that the recession could be short-lived, the data has been a big setback for Sunak, who has placed economic growth as a key priority.

But Hunt said he would not cut taxes at the expense of future generations. "I think the most uncon-



LONDON: A handout picture released by the BBC, taken and received on March 3, 2024, shows Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt appearing on the BBC's 'Sunday Morning' political television show with journalist Laura Kuenssberg. — AFP

servative thing I could do would be to cut taxes by increasing borrowing," he told the BBC.

"Because that's just cutting taxes and saying that future generations have to pick the tax up," he added. Although he would not be drawn on tax measures expected in the budget, Hunt did announce an £800 million (\$1.01 billion) package of technology reforms designed to make public services more efficient and reduce paperwork. As part of the package, police will use drones to assess incidents such as traffic collisions and artificial intelligence (AI) will be

deployed to speed up the results of cancer scans in the state-run National Health Service. "There is too much waste in the system and we want public servants to get back to doing what matters most: teaching our children, keeping us safe and treating us when we're sick," Hunt said in a statement.

According to The Sunday Times, the Office for Budget Responsibility told Hunt on Wednesday that he has £12.8 billion of headroom to play with—more than £2 billion less than the figure the Treasury is said to have previously been basing its calculations on. — AFP

Business

NBK launches Al-Jawhara account with new benefits, increases total prizes to KD 5 million

The account currently offers the biggest number of million-worth prizes in Kuwait

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) always seems to offer customers a top-notch banking experience integrating top-notch products and services and exclusive, unmatched benefits and rewards. In this context, the bank has increased the total worth of Al-Jawhara Account prizes to KD 5 million.

NBK is launching Al-Jawhara Junior Draws for customers below the age of 21 with 7 winners with existing monthly draw (KD 1,000 for three winners and KD 500 for four winners) in addition to 1 winner of KD 10,000 prize with each grand prize draw, making the total worth of Al-Jawhara annual draws KD 5 million. Al-Jawhara customers below 21 will have the benefit of entering both Al-Jawhara Junior Draws and all Al-Jawhara current draws.

On the other side, NBK is introducing the exclusive new Al-Jawhara Saver Account, offering customers a bonus interest rate up to 1.5 percent for the first year, in addition to the chance to enter the monthly and grand draws if savings reach KD 5,000 and above. The bank is also offering customers who have been banking with it for more than two years double chances in case they were not eligible to earn the existing double chances.

Commenting on this, Mohammed Al-Othman Chief Executive Officer of Consumer & Digital Banking, at National Bank of Kuwait said: "NBK always seeks to offer customers an array of top-



Al-Othman: We always seek to enhance the benefits and rewards provided to our customers within an impeccable banking experience

- Al-Jawhara Junior Draw, with seven monthly winners
- Chances for Al-Jawhara customers below 21 to enter all current draws in addition to Al-Jawhara Junior Draws
- Exclusive new Al-Jawhara Saver Account with up to 1.5 percent interest, and eligibility to enter the monthly and grand draws

notch products and services, complemented by exceptional rewards and benefits. Al-Jawhara Account is an instrumental part of our customer rewarding strategy while serving as a key tool to promote a savings culture and financial inclusion."

"As we are always keen to boost the benefits and rewards provided to Al-Jawhara customers, we are introducing various enhancements including Al-Jawhara Junior Draws offering special prizes for the youth customers, making Al-Jawhara total earnings KD 5 million annually. We are also providing the new Al-Jawhara Saver

Account offering the combined benefits of interest and chances to enter Al-Jawhara draws to encourage savings," he mentioned.

"NBK is committed to providing customers with an impeccable banking experience packed with exceptional rewards all year round. This comprises all segments according to their various expectations, which the bank is keen to learn about by being always in touch with them through multiple digital and other channels," he noted.

NBK has already increased Al-Jawhara prizes by more than the double in early 2023, making it the



biggest in Kuwait, with KD 20,000 prize weekly, KD 125,000 monthly, and grand prizes worth KD 1,000,000 each, three times a year.

China's economy of 'great concern' at annual meetings



WEIFANG, China: An employee works on a tractor production line at a factory in Weifang, in China's eastern Shandong province on March 1, 2024. — AFP

BEIJING: A spokesperson for China's political advisory body said Sunday the economy, especially youth employment, was of "great concern" to its delegates on the eve of annual legislative meetings in Beijing. Thousands of delegates from across the country will convene in Beijing on Monday for the start of the ruling Communist Party's yearly conclave, known as the "Two Sessions".

The meetings come as the world's second-largest economy battles a range of challenges from a protracted property crisis to flagging domestic consumption and persistently high youth unemployment. Liu Jieyi, a spokesman for the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), told a news conference on Sunday that "economic topics are of great concern to our representatives". "The employment of young people, especially fresh graduates, is a matter of great concern," he said.

Beijing reported economic growth of 5.2 percent last year, one of its slowest rates in decades. Youth unemployment officially stood at around 15 percent at the end of 2023, after the statistics bureau adjusted its calculation methods. It stopped publishing the politically sensitive figure for several months from last summer as the jobless rate soared well above 20 percent. Liu said China's economy still had "a good foundation and favorable conditions for promoting high-quality development". The country had also proven "resilient" in the face of "external shocks... and internal difficulties", he said.

The CPPCC will run until the morning of March 10, Liu said. Its discussions are relatively low-stakes compared to the near simultaneous gathering of the country's legislature, the National People's Congress. — AFP

China's real estate sector to drive growth despite risks: IMF

BEIJING: Accelerated cleanup of distressed developers and other policies will help smooth the path to a smaller, more sustainable role in China's economy, said the International Monetary Fund. Real estate has long been important for China's economy, driving its rapid growth in recent decades and accounting for as much as 20 percent of activity. This reliance has, however, been accompanied by the build-up of significant risks. Home prices became significantly stretched relative to household incomes in the decade before the pandemic, in part because consumers preferred to invest their considerable savings in real estate given the scarcity of attractive alternative savings options. Expectations of continued increases in home and land prices allowed property developers to borrow rapidly, with land sales providing crucial revenue for local governments, the IMF said in a report.

More recently, the authorities have appropriately focused on containing risks and helping the sector transition to a more appropriate and sustainable size. They took

Artificial glaciers stave off drought in Kyrgyzstan

SYN-TASH, Kyrgyzstan: In the Tian-Shan mountains of Kyrgyzstan, villagers have made an artificial glacier to provide water for their drought-hit farms. Standing on the ice hillock, farmer Erkinbek Kaldanov said he was optimistic about harnessing nature to counteract climate change.

"We won't have any more problems with water," said the farmer, who was worried for his sheep last year after some unusual temperature spikes. "When the glacier melts, there will be enough water for the livestock and to water the land in Syn-Tash," the surrounding district, he said.

The glacier currently measures five meters (16 feet) high and about 20 meters long. At the height of winter it was 12 meters tall. Local residents made it over a period of two weeks in autumn by re-directing water from the peaks of Tian-Shan, which tower more than 4,000 meters high in northern Kyrgyzstan.

Kaldanov and others are being forced to adapt since natural glaciers in Central Asia—the main water source for the region—are slowly disappearing due to global heating. A 2023 study in the journal Science predicted that the acceleration in the melting of the glaciers would peak only between 2035 and 2055. The lack of snow, also due to higher temperatures, does not allow them to regenerate.

The extent of the problem can be seen in satellite images of Central Asia and in the regular warnings issued by the United Nations. The problem has a knock-on effect on the lowlands of Central Asia, in more arid countries like Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. This in turn feeds into existing tensions between the different countries, which still share water resources under a complex and obsolete scheme inherited from the Soviet era. "There is less and less water every year. The water tables are emptying out, the springs are drying up and we

Thousands protest rising economic woes in Tunisia

TUNIS: Thousands protested deteriorating living standards outside the prime minister's office in Tunis on Saturday following a call from Tunisia's main trade union confederation. "The economic and social situation

resolute action to rein in excessive developer borrowing and other property sector risks after the start of the pandemic. Real estate activity has since contracted sharply, and most recently the authorities have aimed to boost rental housing, expand affordable housing, and upgrade under-developed urban neighborhoods.

With the property downturn in its third year, progress in downsizing the sector has been rapid in some respects. Housing starts have fallen by more than 60 percent relative to pre-pandemic levels, a historically rapid pace only seen in the largest housing busts in cross-country experience in the last three decades. Sales have fallen amid homebuyer concerns that developers lack sufficient financing to complete projects and that prices will decline in the future, it said.

At the same time, key property sector vulnerabilities have yet to be addressed, pointing to ongoing risks to sustainability. Many developers have become non-viable but have avoided bankruptcy thanks in part to rules that allow lenders to delay recognizing their bad loans, which has helped mute spillovers to real estate prices and bank balance sheets. Home prices have also decreased only modestly in part because some cities have sought to limit price declines through rules and guidance on listing prices.

China's housing market faces additional



SYN-TASH, Kyrgyzstan: A group of men, including farmer Erkinbek Kaldanov (second left), 54, and the Syn-Tash district chief Maksat Dzholdoshev (left), is seen near the artificial glacier in a mountain gorge near the village of Syn-Tash, some 60 km from Bishkek. — AFP

have problems with grazing," said Aidos Yzmaniye, a spokesman for the Syn-Tash farmers.

Finding solutions is urgent, particularly as farming represents around 10 percent of the fragile Kyrgyz economy and two thirds of its inhabitants live in rural areas. In the north of Kyrgyzstan, a country accustomed to revolutions and uprisings, the lack of water has already stoked social tensions in previous periods of drought. "Our main aim is to provide water for livestock since the majority of the 8,400 inhabitants of the Syn-Tash district are farmers," said district chief Maksat Dzholdoshev. "We expect to create two or three additional artificial glaciers for farmland," he said.

The idea and its implementation are relatively simple. Each glacier costs around 550,000 som (around \$6,200) to create. "The water comes from a mountain source three kilometers away through un-

derground piping. It gushes out and freezes, forming a glacier," said Yzmaniye. "Apart from providing water when it melts, the glacier also helps lower the ambient temperature and create humidity.

"(That) helps the surrounding vegetation, which is grazed by cattle from spring to autumn," Yzmaniye said. Artificial glaciers were first created in the Indian Himalayas in 1914 and have gone global—cropping up in Chile and Switzerland.

In Kyrgyzstan, their introduction was spearheaded by Abdilmalik Egemberdiyev, head of the Kyrgyz association of pasture users. Egemberdiyev pointed to an additional benefit. The glaciers allow farmers to keep livestock on spring pastures for longer before sending them to summer pastures, thus slowing soil erosion. "We now have 24 artificial glaciers around the country and more still to be created," he said. —AFP

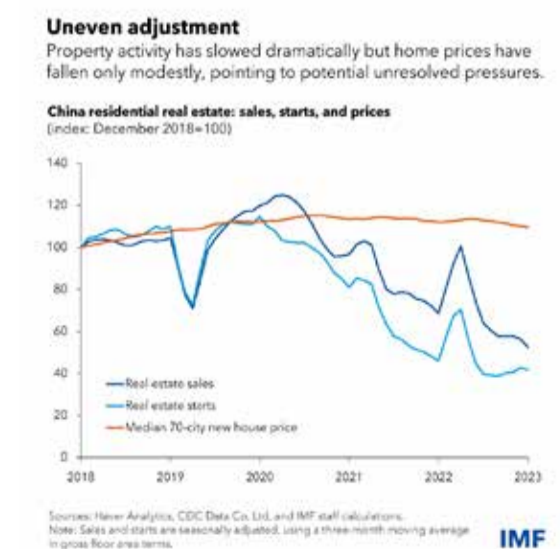
continues to worsen," the confederation's head, Nouredine Taboubi, said in a speech to protesters. Taboubi said the state's ability to service its foreign debt in 2023 had been "to the detriment of the people and resulted in shortages of basic products". He criticized the implementation of "diktats" from the International Monetary Fund" (IMF) at the expense of ordinary Tunisians.

The Tunisian economy is at a standstill with growth of 0.4 percent and an unemployment rate of 16.4 percent in 2023, ac-

pressures in coming years from structural factors, in particular demographic change. The need for additional new housing will diminish in coming years as the population declines and urbanization slows. Large public subsidies in the previous decade helped millions of people move to newer housing from older buildings lacking modern amenities. Such demand will likely be more limited as depressed land sale revenues have tightened local government fiscal constraints and fewer residents live in older housing.

Facing these cyclical and structural adjustment pressures, housing investment is poised to fall further and likely remain subdued. We recently projected new real estate investment into the medium term based on several scenarios for the evolution of fundamental demand as well as the impact of the overhang of inventories and other supply-side pressures. In these scenarios, our analysis shows, real estate investment would likely fall 30 percent to 60 percent below its 2022 level, rebounding only very gradually. This would be comparable to major housing downturns in other countries with similarly sizable slowdowns in starts.

Increases in spending on affordable housing and urban redevelopment that are planned this year could help offset some of the investment decline. But this spending is not likely to sufficiently reduce the large



overhang of housing inventories held by troubled developers.

A shorter and smoother transition for the real estate sector is achievable, however. Allowing more market-based adjustment in home prices and quickly restructuring insolvent developers will help to clear the overhang of inventories and ease fears that prices will continue to gradually decline. Rules allowing banks to avoid recognition of bad loans to developers should be phased out, the report further said.

Lifestyle

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2024



Workers from Cape Karoo international work on ostrich feathers on the production line in Oudtshoorn, South Africa.

Weeks old ostrich are seen in crates few days after hatching at the hatchery of Saag Jonker Holdings.

Ostrich farmer Saag Jonker checks on ostrich eggs at the hatchery of Saag Jonker Holdings. — AFP photos

A At a South African farm, hundreds of ostriches stretch their slender necks and shake their black feathers under the setting sun. The birds' lanky legs raise a cloud of ochre dust in their enclosure, one of dozens dotting the rugged landscape surrounding the southern town of Oudtshoorn. "May the feathers be with you," reads an inscription welcoming visitors to what is known as the ostrich capital of the world.

of Art's annual fundraising ball is renowned for its over-the-top outfits.

Hats and dusters

Yet, local producers say it's the ostrich's versatility that has allowed them to survive the whims of fashion. Just like for pigs, all parts are put to use and

ing to show off at fancy parties tanked when the world was forced indoors by the coronavirus pandemic, it was feather dusters that kept the industry afloat.

"People were in lockdown, restricted to their homes, and everyone wanted to clean!" says Liebenberg. Oudtshoorn had been there before. In the

big thing," says Liebenberg. But demand "always comes back", he adds.

Big birds, big gains

Today about 200 workers sort, cut, wash and dye plumes in several hundred colours at his processing facility in Oudtshoorn. Seamstresses in pink uniforms sew feather boas in a room

one of the large eggs, revealing a small beak and a pair of dozing eyes.

"I became an ostrich feather auctioneer at the age of 22 or 23. So that is how I then landed in the ostrich industry, and I never looked back," Jonker recalls. His firm is now the largest private ostrich breeding, processing and



An ostrich themed board from the Tourism Bureau is seen on one of the main streets.



South African town sees gold in ostrich plumes

From dusters to boa scarves, about 70 percent of ostrich products globally originate from South Africa. Most come from Oudtshoorn, in the little Karoo, a valley nestled between two mountain ranges running along south Africa's southern coast, with a semi-arid climate ideal for big bird farming.

Since the town's early days, fashion has been the main market for local farmers, the lush plumes used to decorate luxury hats and eccentric dresses. "If you want to see a good exposure of our products, it will be, like, the Met Gala, in New York," says Peter Liebenberg, who heads the feather division of Cape Karoo International. The star-studded Metropolitan Museum

nothing is wasted, they say. A quick stroll into town reveals what they mean. Restaurants serve ostrich steak. Store windows display ostrich leather bags as well as lamps and other ornaments shaped out of the birds' giant eggs.

The flue of the feather can be worked and curled to make brooches, says Saag Jonker, an 82-year-old farmer. "At the moment it's really in fashion," he says. A mischievous-looking ostrich adorns the logo of the local tourism office. As demand for extravagant cloth-

early 1900s, ostrich feathers were a prized designer item and South Africa's fourth biggest export.

Their price by weight rivalled that of gold and the Oudtshoorn farmers' association once gifted Britain's Queen Mary a dazzling fan made of white plumes in a sign of prosperity. But the market crashed soon after as World War I disrupted maritime trade and cars became a popular means of transport.

"You can't get into a car with a hat with an ostrich feather. So that was a

adorned by images of Paco Rabanne, Jean Paul Gaultier and Balmain fashion shows. Cape Karoo International sells around a hundred tonnes of feathers each year, including more than a million dusters and 130,000 metres of trim, he says.

Not far away in Jonker's hatchery, the squawking of hundreds of newborns drowns out the soft crackle of hatching eggs. With an expert hand, a worker opens a temperature-controlled drawer and removes a few pieces of shell from

marketing company in the world, with nearly 45,000 birds slaughtered every season. After being sterilized and sorted, the black and white plumes of the wings—the most prized ones—are sold via haute couture houses throughout the world. Clients range from Moulin Rouge performers in Paris to the carnival revelers in Rio de Janeiro. "It's really an excellent product," he says. — AFP



Weeks old Ostrich roam in a fenced field on one of Saag Jonker Holdings farms.



Ostrich feathers are placed on scale to be weighed at Cape Karoo international factory.



A worker from Cape Karoo international works on ostrich feathers on the production line.



Ostrich themed messages are painted on walls at the exit of Oudtshoorn.

Oscar-nominated makeup genius **Kazu Hiro** comes full circle with 'Maestro'

When Kazu Hiro first started experimenting with makeup as a teenager in the 1980s, one face leapt out at him from books and magazines he saw in shops: legendary conductor Leonard Bernstein. Four decades later, the two-time Oscar winner has come full circle with "Maestro," in which he transformed Bradley Cooper into the towering musical great.

And the makeup effects artist has another Academy Award in his sights. "Leonard Bernstein was a big inspiration when I was a kid," Hiro told AFP in an interview. "Every time I create a human face, I need a reference photograph. And at that time, there was no Internet," the 54-year-old explained. "So I had to go to a bookstore." And the face he saw over and over was Bernstein's. In the 1980s, the internationally acclaimed conductor had a packed concert schedule, along with teaching and composing. Shortly after that, the Kyoto native saw Bernstein in a documentary on Japanese television.

"I was really inspired by what he was talking about," Hiro said. "I thought, you know, 'Someday, I want to work on



Japanese-US makeup artist Kazu Hiro attends the Oscar Nominees Luncheon at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California. - AFP photos

a film about Leonard Bernstein." Then in 2020, he got a call from Cooper, who directed, cowrote and stars in "Maestro," which offers a look at Bernstein's life through the lens of his marriage to actress Felicia Montealegre (Carey Mulligan). "It's really a passion project," Hiro said. "Bradley and me love Leonard Bernstein so much."

Out of retirement

Hiro first honed his craft in Japan, teaching himself how to change the



US actor and director Bradley Cooper arrives for the 30th Annual Screen Actors Guild awards at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles.

contours of a face by trial and error. He moved to the United States in the 1990s, and ultimately became one of the most sought-after makeup artists in Hollywood. Hiro has worked on dozens of films with A-list stars, including "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," transforming Jim Carrey into the beloved Dr Seuss character, and "Nutty Professor II: The Klumps" with Eddie Murphy. But after earning two Oscar nominations — for "Norbit," again starring Murphy, and "Click" with Adam Sandler — Hiro

walked away, "retiring" in 2012 and vowing to dedicate the next phase of his career to sculpture.

However, Tinseltown soon lured him back. He transformed Gary Oldman into Winston Churchill for "Darkest Hour" (2017), a feat that earned him his first Oscar. Two years later, he earned another golden statuette for "Bombshell," in which Charlize Theron morphed into television journalist Megyn Kelly. Working with Cooper was a no-brainer, given his emotional connection to the subject matter.

'Perfectionist'

When Cooper and Hiro first met in 2020, they talked about how to bring Bernstein to life, and effectively represent the nearly 50-year span the film covers. The makeup artist divided the movie into five phases — from having to make Cooper, now 49, look younger, to progressively aging him. Preproduction lasted longer than expected — in large part due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also because of the project's complexity.

Transforming Cooper into a young Bernstein took two and a half hours. The middle stage required three hours, and the final stage meant the actor was in the chair for about five hours "because he had to be covered from head to toe," Hiro said. "We are both kind of a perfectionist," Hiro said. "He conjured Leonard Bernstein from inside out."

But that artistic feat brought other challenges. When Netflix released the film's first trailer last year, there was sharp criticism about Cooper's use of a large prosthetic nose, with some saying the depiction of the Jewish maestro reflected anti-Semitic tropes. Bernstein's children Jamie, Alexander and Nina rallied to the movie's defense, saying they were "perfectly fine" with the decision and adding: "It happens to be true that Leonard Bernstein had a nice, big nose." Hiro admits it was a "difficult" moment. "I was really confused about it," the artist said. "It took me a while to [digest it]." "We had so much respect for Leonard Bernstein. And he happened to have that nose." — AFP

US designer, 'geriatric starlet' Iris Apfel dies age 102

Iris Apfel, centenarian style icon from the New York borough of Queens immediately recognizable by her oversized owl glasses, has died at age 102, according to her Instagram account. The self-described "geriatric starlet," best known as a textile designer and fashion celebrity, reached peak fame only in her 80s and 90s. A flamboyant

Park Avenue apartment with work by the great designers of the 20th century, amassed over her multiple decades of life. And designers and fashion notables from Alexander Wang to Isaac Mizrahi declared themselves fans of the world's most chic centenarian, well-known for her love of baubles.

Maysles' successful 2014 documentary about her, "Iris." Four years later her autobiography "Iris Apfel: Accidental Icon" hit bookstore shelves.

Always the entrepreneur, Apfel was known for her collaborations with a variety of brands: a Barbie was made in her image, she had a Home Shopping Network collection and even produced a makeup line with MAC Cosmetics. The key to enjoying life, she said, was to never stop working. "I haven't," she once told guests at a reception in her honor at the American Embassy in Paris.

"Try new things. Don't let age and numbers frighten you. You have to find your own bliss, be as individual as you can, and don't go with the herd," she added. Apfel and her husband, Carl Apfel, who lived to be 100, co-owned Old World Weavers from 1950 to 1992, restoring and selling textiles including to the White House. Born Iris Barrel on August 29, 1921 in Queens, Apfel went on to graduate from the University of Wisconsin's art school and worked as a copywriter for Women's Wear Daily.

Never one to shy away from color or unconventional silhouettes, Apfel urged young women at one gathering to abandon the modern "uniform of black tights or jeans with a sweater, boots and a leather bomber jacket." Instead, she told them to "dare to be different. Be yourselves, be individual." — AFP



Iris B. Apfel attends the 2008 Lighthouse International Light Years Gala at Cipriani 42nd Street on October 20, 2008 in New York City. - AFP photos



Iris Apfel attends the 2021 ACE Awards at Cipriani 42nd Street on November 2, 2021 in New York City.

interior designer, she was a fixture on front rows of Paris fashion shows for more than half a century.

Her cropped white hair, massive glasses, bright lipstick, large-bead necklaces and bangles earned her kooky distinction among New York's glitterati. Apfel filled two floors of her

'Find your own bliss'

New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art staged the first major retrospective of her wardrobe in 2005, with Apfel admitting she was as likely to pick up interesting jewelry in a Harlem junk shop as in Tiffany's. Helping Apfel's fame spread beyond the style pages was Albert



British actress Kate Winslet arrives for the premiere of HBO's "The Regime" at The Museum of Natural History in New York City. - AFP

Kate Winslet stars as dictator in 'uncomfortable' satire

Kate Winslet stars as a dictator dealing with her personal demons in "The Regime," a new political satire whose makers hope it is "funny and awful" at the same time. The Oscar-winning actor returns for her third HBO mini-series after the successes of "Mildred Pierce" and "Mare of Easttown". In "The Regime," which airs from Sunday, Winslet plays Elena Vernham, a dictator and hypochondriac, cocooned in her palace in a fictive central European country, blind to the horrors of her rule.

It was partly directed by Britain's Stephen Frears, known for films including "The Queen," "Dangerous Liaisons" and "High Fidelity". Frears, 82, told a press conference he was attracted by the originality of the script by Will Tracy, who previously worked on "Succession". "To have a woman who is a dictator and damaged in her own way seemed to me

very interesting," said Frears.

The show also stars Matthias Schoenaerts as a violent soldier with whom Elena becomes infatuated, and features Hugh Grant as an imprisoned political opponent. It was partly filmed at Schoenbrunn Palace in Vienna. "I never shot anywhere as nice," said Frears. "I said we should remake 'Dangerous Liaisons' since those rooms were so much more beautiful than what we had back then." Despite the comedy, the series has echoes of the rising authoritarianism in many countries today.

"The idea was to draw from as many different sources as possible and make something that felt unique and original but could be believable today," said co-director Jessica Hobbs ("The Crown"). "It's an uncomfortable show to watch." — AFP



LuLu's Paws and Tails Carnival celebrates woofs, meows and green thumbs

LuLu Hypermarket's Qurain outlet recently hosted an awesome event for pet lovers and plant enthusiasts alike. The 'Paws and Tails Carnival', held from 28 February to 5 March, offered amazing discounts on pet food, accessories, and more.

The excitement began on second of March with an inauguration ceremony officiated by LuLu's top management. The event featured a variety of furry friends, with over 100 cats and dogs participating in a special costume fashion show, captivating the audience with their adorable charm. The winners were presented with prizes and gift vouchers in their respective categories.

But the fun did not stop there. The carnival also hosted an exhibition showcasing a diverse range of animals, including flying parrots, small birds, reptiles, llamas, munchkin goats, snakes, ostriches, turtles, bunnies, meerkats, hedgehogs, and owls. This unique menagerie delighted both young and old visitors alike. Pet food suppliers set up stalls, offering a bounty of samples for pet lovers.

Additionally, the event highlighted a 'Go Green Campaign', promoting



eco-friendly plant life and garden accessories. Popular nurseries participated in the event, showcasing a variety of their plants and flowers.

To further tingle green thumbs, LuLu conducted two exciting contests, 'Best Garden 2024' and 'Best Balcony Garden 2024'. The winners from both these contests received valuable gifts,

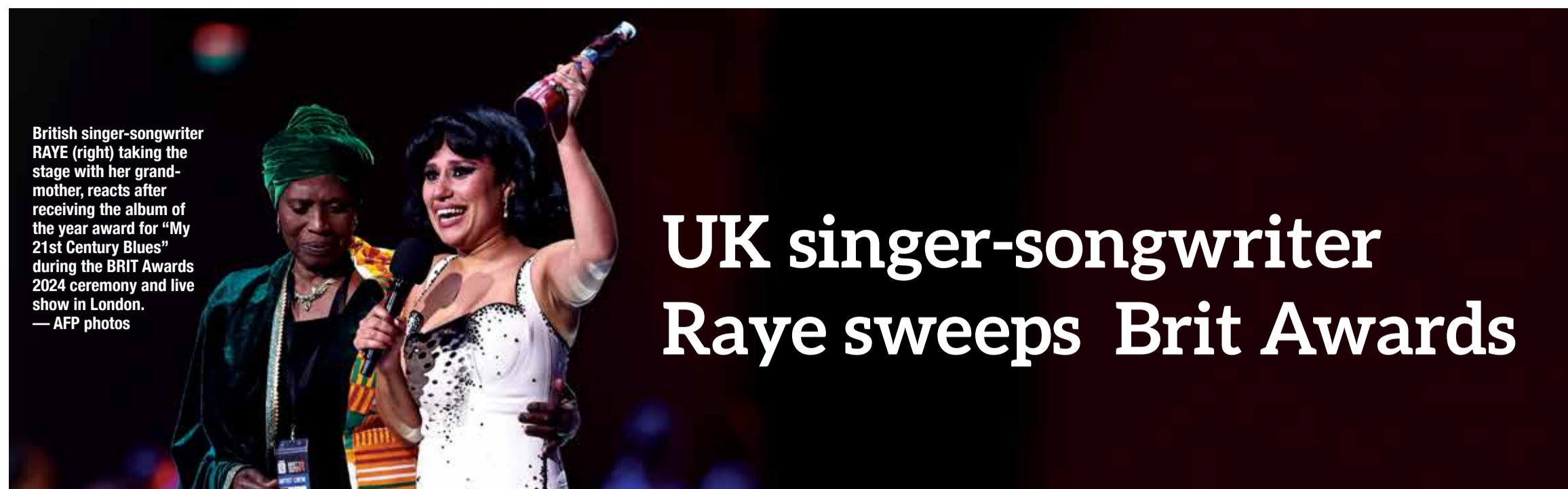
gift vouchers, and hampers from LuLu Hypermarket.

LuLu's top management personally presented the prizes to the winners of the various contests, ensuring a memorable experience for all participants. Besides the winners, all contestants were presented with consolation prizes, making sure everyone went home

with a smile, a woof and a meow.

The 'Paws and Tails Carnival' proved to be a resounding success, bringing together pet lovers, plant enthusiasts, and families for a weekend of fun, furry friends, blooming gardens, and the joy of responsible pet ownership.





UK singer-songwriter Raye sweeps Brit Awards

British singer-songwriter RAYE (right) taking the stage with her grandmother, reacts after receiving the album of the year award for "My 21st Century Blues" during the BRIT Awards 2024 ceremony and live show in London. — AFP photos



Australian singer Kylie Minogue reacts on stage after receiving the Brit's Golden Icon award.



British singer-songwriter Dua Lipa reacts after collecting the Pop Act of the year award.

Rising star Raye on Saturday swept the UK's top music awards, setting a record for winning the most prizes in a single year. The 26-year-old singer-songwriter scooped six awards including best artist, R&B act, new artist, song of the year for "Escapism" and album for "My 21st Century Blues". Her award for best songwriter was pre-announced.

Accepting the best new artist award she called the win "overwhelming", adding "this is wild". "What is actually happening right now?" a delighted Raye told the audience at London's O2 arena. "The artist I was three years ago would not believe the sight she is seeing today. I'm in control, I'm my own boss now," she declared.

She had made history even before the ceremony started by being nominated for a record seven prizes in one year. The Londoner, whose real name is Rachel Keen, had been up against six other female artists out of the 10 shortlisted in the gender neutral best artist category following a controversy last year.

Not a single female artist ended up being shortlisted in the category in 2023 after the merging of the best female and male artist categories for the first time a year earlier. That led Brit Awards chairman Damian Christian to complain about a "disappointing lack of female representation", blaming a dearth of eligible 2022 releases by big female stars. This year the shortlist was extended from five to 10 and included Dua



British singer-songwriter Rachel Keen, known as Raye (left) reacts after receiving the song of the year award for "Escapism." (featuring 070 Shake) during BRIT Awards 2024 ceremony.



British rap and grime artist CASISDEAD speaks after receiving the Hip Hop/Grime/Rap Act of the year award.

Lipa and Jessie Ware, newcomer Olivia Dean, and Mercury Prize winners Little Simz and Arlo Parks, as well as Raye.

Rocky road

This year's awards also saw prizes go to Dua Lipa for best pop act, US singer-songwriter SZA for international artist and US indie supergroup Boygenius for international group. Kylie Minogue was honored with the Brit Awards global icon prize.

Minogue also took to the stage, with other artists performing including DJ Calvin Harris, Ellie Goulding, Dua Lipa, Nigerian Afrobeats star Rema

and Raye. Her Brits triumph follows a sometimes difficult path to the top. Before making it as a solo artist she wrote songs for big names such as Beyonce, Jennifer Lopez and Little Mix.

She also had success as a guest artist on dance tracks. But after being signed by record company Polydor, creative disagreements led to a tearful online post in which she accused the label of refusing to release her debut album.

Polydor subsequently released her from her contract and she went on to critical and commercial success as an independent artist. Her track "Escap-

ism" featuring American rapper 070 Shake took off on TikTok and scored a UK number one hit just over a year ago. The single, the third from her debut album, also topped singles charts in Denmark and Ireland and entered the top 10 in 20 countries. The Brit Awards were first held in 1977. The event is run by British Phonographic Industry, a trade association that represents the UK music industry. — AFP



Saul Milton (left) and Will Kennard (right) perform as Chase & Status collect their Producer of the Year award.



Lydia Kitto, Tom McFarland and Josh Lloyd-Watson from British electronic music project Jungle perform on stage.



Australian singer Kylie Minogue performs on stage.



Oli Sykes, Matt Nicholls, Lee Malia and Matt Kean from British rock band Bring Me the Horizon speak on stage after receiving the Alternative/Rock Act of the year award.



Lydia Kitto, Tom McFarland and Josh Lloyd-Watson from British electronic music project Jungle speak after receiving the group of the year award.



Nigerian rapper Rema performs on stage during BRIT Awards 2024 ceremony and live show in London.



British DJ and singer Calvin Harris speaks after receiving the Dance Act of the year award.

Cummins hails Lyon, Green after victory in first New Zealand Test

'Cam was amazing, he was really the difference in the end'

WELLINGTON: Australia captain Pat Cummins heaped praise on team-mates Nathan Lyon and Cameron Green on Sunday for match-winning performances as his side secured a 172-run triumph over New Zealand in the first Test.

Lyon spun the visitors to victory in the morning session on day four in Wellington, taking six wickets as New Zealand crumbled to 196 all out. New Zealand lost their last seven wickets before lunch for 70 runs, with four falling to off-spinner Lyon, who finished with figures of 6-65 off 27 overs and 10-108 in the match.

The 36-year-old capitalized on spin-friendly Basin Reserve conditions and some meek batting from New Zealand, who began the day on 111-3 needing an unlikely 258 more runs to win. Green's career-high unbeaten 174 on day one rescued Australia from 89-4, having been put into bat, to reach 383 and set up a decisive 204-run first-innings lead.

It gave Green the nod over Lyon as man of the match and Cummins said that was a fair outcome. "Cam was amazing, he was really the difference in the end," Cummins said. "I thought the way he went about it, with that intent, really put the pressure back on the bowlers on day one."

"There was as much bounce as I've seen in any wicket for a long time but thankfully it spun which, with Nathan on our side, is always a pretty good thing." New Zealand pace bowler Will O'Rourke is a doubt for the second and final Test starting in Christchurch on Friday after leaving the field with a tight hamstring on day three.

Captain Tim Southee said he wouldn't rule out a shock recall for veteran pace bowler Neil Wagner,

who retired last week. The 37-year-old had been named in New Zealand's squad, but tearfully announced his retirement after being left out of the first Test side, ending a 64-Test, 260-wicket career.

Southee ruled out calling up Trent Boult because he has only been playing white ball cricket of late, but was less adamant when asked about Wagner. "Obviously the Test match has only just finished so we'll see how Will scrubs up and we'll go from there," Southee said.

Cummins said Australia would be prepared if Wagner returned. "It'd be the world's shortest retirement," he said of the short-ball specialist. "It'd be good to see his high energy." Southee hailed Glenn Phillips after the all-rounder top scored with 71 in the first innings and claimed career-best figures of 5-45 with his part-time off-spin as Australia were dismissed for 164 in the second.

"Glenn's still new to Test cricket and new to bowling, and he's doing a great job," Southee said of the 27-year-old. Southee and batsman Kane Williamson will both play their 100th Test at Hagley Oval in Christchurch.

The final morning's capitulation began in the seventh over when Lyon claimed the key wicket of Rachin Ravindra for 59. Ravindra had only added three to his overnight score when he failed to keep a cut shot down and was caught by Cameron Green at point.

Tom Blundell was caught close in by Travis Head without scoring in the same over and Glenn Phillips was trapped leg before by Lyon for one soon afterwards, to expose the tail. Scott Kuggeleijn struck 26 off 28 balls before he failed to control a short ball



WELLINGTON: New Zealand's Rachin Ravindra (L) plays a shot past Australia's wicketkeeper Alex Carey (R) during day four of the 1st International cricket Test match between New Zealand and Australia at the Basin Reserve in Wellington on March 3, 2024. — AFP

from Green to be caught by wicketkeeper Alex Carey and Matt Henry fell for 14, caught at slip by Steve Smith off Josh Hazlewood.

Southee became Lyon's sixth victim before Daryl Mitchell was the last wicket to fall, for 38, caught and bowled by Hazlewood. — AFP

Tiger wins USGA Bob Jones Award

WASHINGTON: Tiger Woods, the 15-time major champion who redefined golf and inspired a generation of talent, was awarded the US Golf Association's highest honor, the Bob Jones Award, on Saturday.

The 48-year-old American returned to the PGA Tour last month after ankle surgery last April following the Masters to ease pain following a 2021 car crash, the latest example of perseverance that has helped make him among golf's greatest legends.

"This award goes beyond playing performance, recognizing the lasting impact of one person's journey that has forever changed the image and growth of golf," said USGA chief executive Mike Whan. "There are very few who stand alongside Tiger Woods in terms of on-course accomplishments and he's in a class of his own when it comes to the impact he has made on the game and future generations who will play it."

The announcement came as the USGA also revealed the 2036 US Open and US Women's Open tournaments will both be played at Shinnecock Hills, the Long Island venue to stage the events on consecutive weeks.

It will be only the third time both US Opens are staged at the same course on back-to-back weeks, with Pinehurst having done it in 2014 and being set to do it again in 2029. Shinnecock has hosted the US Open five times, most recently when Brooks Koepka won there in 2018, and is set to host again in 2026.

Woods received the Bob Jones Award, named for the Masters co-founder who was a 1920s star who captured 13 titles in what were then considered the four major events, including five US Amateurs and four US Opens.

Like ones Woods has won nine USGA titles, with Woods capturing three US Junior Amateurs, three US Amateur titles and three US Open triumphs. "Bob Jones was a pillar of our game because of the integrity with which he played it and I'm truly humbled to receive the award that bears his name and join the many who have received it before me who continue his legacy," Woods said in a statement.

"It's especially fitting to receive this honor from the USGA, which has meant so much to my career and the entire game of golf." Previous Bob Jones Award winners include Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Ben Hogan, Byron Nelson and Annika Sorenstam.

Woods won the 2000 US Open at Pebble Beach by a record 15 strokes and captured the 2008 US Open at Torrey Pines on a broken leg. Woods will be recognized in an award ceremony in June at Pinehurst at this year's US Open. — AFP

James becomes first NBA player with 40,000 points but Lakers lose

LOS ANGELES: LeBron James became the first NBA player to reach 40,000 career regular-season points on Saturday, the 39-year-old superstar scoring nine against defending champion Denver to achieve the milestone.

But James called the historic effort "bittersweet" because it came in a losing cause as Nikola Jokic scored 35 points to rally the Nuggets late for a 124-114 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers. "Being the first player to do something, it's pretty cool in this league 'cause you just know the history, you know the grace that has come through the league," James said.

"But the main thing is always the main thing and that's the win. And I hated that had to happen in a defeat especially versus a team that plays extremely well. "We played some good basketball but wasn't able to close it out, so bittersweet, but I enjoyed every moment though, while on the floor."

James scored a team-high 26 points, 13 in the fourth quarter, but the Nuggets stretched their win streak to

Green snatches championship with birdie on 18

SINGAPORE: Australia's Hannah Green drained a remarkable 30-foot birdie putt at the final hole to edge Celine Boutier of France and win the HSBC Women's World Championship by a stroke in Singapore on Sunday.

The US LPGA Tour's flagship event in Asia had looked like it was heading for a playoff after Boutier's five-under 67 put her in the clubhouse at 12-under par and for Green to draw level with birdies at the 16th and 17th.

But the Australian completed a hat-trick of birdies over the closing holes to snatch victory when her snaking putt on the 18th green curled into the cup to a huge ovation. "I knew I needed to at least birdie the last to win by one," said world number 29 Green, who was drenched in champagne by her fellow Australian competitors in celebration after finishing the tournament on 13-under 275.

"As soon as that putt went in, I was like, 'Oh, my God, I've won!'," said the 27-year-old, who lifted her fourth LPGA Tour title. "You have to take these highs

when they come because it doesn't always come and golf can be a learning sport sometimes."

"Celine played great today but she didn't end up with the trophy in her hands. But she should still be proud of how she performed under this pressure," said Green. It was the Australian's first win in Asia and also eased the heartbreak of finishing second in Singapore three years ago.

"I almost won the championship in 2021 when I was playing it for the first time," said Green.

"I remembered I three-putted 17 and then three-putted again on 18 to lose. It feels great to have this trophy in my hands now."

'It was frustrating'

Playing in the group ahead of Green on the Tanjong course at Sentosa Golf Club, Boutier was unable to make a birdie over her closing holes to put pressure on the Australian and missed a great chance on 17. "I knew my putt (on 17) was going to be important but it ended up being short-sided. It was frustrating," said world number three Boutier.

"I gave myself chances. I made some putts and also missed some. But such things happen and I can't be too mad about my round today."

Ko Jin-young of South Korea, who was defending her 2022 and 2023 titles, briefly threatened to get into the mix when she drained a monster 90-foot birdie putt at the 11th.



SINGAPORE: Hannah Green of Australia lifts the trophy after winning the final round of the HSBC Women's World Championship golf tournament at Sentosa Golf Club in Singapore on March 3, 2024. — AFP

But two bogeys followed and her one-under 71 saw her finish six shots behind Green on seven-under 281. Japan's Ayaka Furue took a two-shot lead into the final round Sunday but had a day to forget, completing a three-over card of 75 with a scruffy double bogey at the 18th to finish six behind playing partner Green. World number one Lilia Vu, who started the day five shots back of the lead, withdrew during her final round because of illness. — AFP

Ireland's Lowry in 3-way tie for lead at Cognizant Cup

MIAMI: Former Open Champion Shane Lowry shook off a "disappointing" short par miss to card a five-under par 66 on Saturday and join David Skins and Austin Eckroat atop the leaderboard at the US PGA Tour Cognizant Cup. Lowry, who finished runner-up at PGA National in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida in 2022, had a 13-under par total of 200. English journeyman Skins carded a bogey-free five-under par 66 and Eckroat posted a 68 to join him there — three strokes ahead of a group of five players on 203.

Ireland's Lowry, chasing his first global title since the 2022 BMW PGA Championship on the DP World Tour, got off to a hot start with birdies at the first, third and fourth. A birdie at the 10th gave him the solo lead at 12-under, but he missed a three-foot par putt at 13 to fall one back as Eckroat birdied 13.

"Thirteen was very disappointing," Lowry said. "I was very proud of myself after that because sometimes I can lose it a little bit when I miss a short putt like that. "I was very happy with how I reacted after that," added

Lowry, who rolled in a seven-foot birdie putt at the 16th and got up and down from a greenside bunker for a birdie at the par-five 18th.

Lowry, whose British Open triumph and a 2015 WGC Bridgestone crown gave him two US PGA Tour titles, owns four other DP World tour titles besides and has to be considered the favorite among the leading trio. But he said he wouldn't take anything for granted on Sunday. "If my best is good enough tomorrow, that will be amazing," Lowry said. Skins and Eckroat are each chasing a first tour title.

Feel those juices

Skins, 42, launched his day with a 22-foot birdie at the first hole and grabbed his fifth birdie of the day at 18, where he, like Lowry and Eckroat, picking up a shot from the greenside bunker. "Really pleased," Skins said, adding that he was "excited" to be in contention. "I've just been waiting a long time to be in this spot," he said. "You want to feel those juices. You want to be there on Sunday. That's why you put in all those hours when nobody is watching, and I've put in a lot of hours, and I'm pleased I get to see what it will be like on Sunday."

Eckroat, 25, is trying to improve on his previous best tour finish, runner-up at the Byron Nelson last May. He was delighted to get his birdie at the last and join the leading group. "I saw that the other two guys made birdie, and it's just a different mindset when you're going into



PALM BEACH GARDENS: Shane Lowry of Ireland plays his shot from the 18th tee during the third round of The Cognizant Classic in the Palm Beaches at PGA National Resort And Spa in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. — AFP

the next day if you're one shot back versus if you're tied with the guys," he said. "Happy about it." World number two Rory McIlroy was closing in on the leaders after birdies at the 10th, 12th and 13th, but he slid back with a bogey at 15 and a triple-bogey seven at the 16th — where he tried to hit out of the shallows of the water hazard only for his ball to hit the bank and roll back in. McIlroy carded a one-over par 72 that left him six-strokes adrift on seven-under. — AFP



LOS ANGELES: LeBron James #23 of the Los Angeles Lakers scores his 40,000th career point during the first half against Denver Nuggets at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Sports

Two each for Messi and Suarez as Miami hit five past Orlando

Defending MLS champions Columbus Crew held to a 1-1 draw

FORT LAUDERDALE: Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez scored two goals each as Inter Miami turned on the style hammering Orlando City 5-0 in Major League Soccer on Saturday. Florida rivals Orlando finished second in the Eastern Conference last season and have been considered contenders for this season's MLS Cup but they were outclassed by Miami from the outset.

Suarez had lacked sharpness and match fitness in his first two outings but the prolific 37-year-old top scorer for Gremio in Brazil last season put aside any doubts about his continuing ability in the final third.

"I'm very happy for him, that he was able to score. We were calm anyway, we know what Luis is and what he is capable of doing and everyone knows it," Messi said. "He is like that, when you least expect it he solves a game for you like he did today, with the goals and the assists." Suarez took just four minutes to get Miami on the scoreboard and his first goal for his new club came in emphatic style, meeting a low cross from Julian Gressel with a thumping first-time shot inside the near post.

Seven minutes later and Suarez had doubled his tally with Gressel again the provider to the Uruguayan, who showed good close control in the box before burying into the corner. Miami were in total control and the crowd lapped up some delicious touches from Messi but it was his former Barcelona teammate Suarez who was doing the damage.

Robert Taylor made it 3-0 in the 29th minute after the excellent Gressel split the Orlando defenders, finding Suarez, who unselfishly picked out Taylor for a simple tap in. Messi then struck a trademark, curling free-kick from 30 yards out against the upright and minutes later he provided a classy through ball to Suarez, who found the net. But his hopes of a hat trick celebration were denied by an offside flag. Orlando came out aggressively after the break, seeking a possible way back into the game and they were frustrated when Martin Ojeda's effort was ruled out for offside.



FORT LAUDERDALE: Inter Miami's Argentine forward #10 Lionel Messi controls the ball during the MLS football match between Orlando City and Inter Miami FC at Chase Stadium in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. — AFP

Back in the groove

Miami quickly found a groove, Messi firing inches wide in the 54th minute and then Gressel blasting against the bar after a clever exchange with Suarez. Another of Miami's ex-Barca quartet, left-back Jordi Alba, created the fourth when he burst down the flank, played a one-two with Suarez and clipped the ball goalwards. Orlando captain Robin Jansson's desperate clearance flew out off the bar and Messi was on hand to put the ball home.

Suarez looked keen for his hat trick but, when

found in space in the inside left channel, he looked up and spotted Messi at the back post and found him with a perfectly weighted left-foot cross, which the Argentine headed into the far corner.

Miami, with seven points from the opening three games, return to action on Thursday against Nashville in the CONCACAF Champions Cup. "We're doing well, we're enjoying it, we're growing," Messi said. "Today was an important match to win, to continue on this path of growth and this has to make us very strong for everything that's to come."

Earlier, defending MLS champions Columbus Crew were held to a 1-1 draw at unfancied Minnesota United. Colombian striker Cucho Hernandez put the Crew ahead with a strike from the edge of the box in the 58th minute but Minnesota snatched a point deep in stoppage time through Tani Oluwaseyi.

MLS 2023 runner-up Los Angeles FC fell 3-0 in snowy conditions at Real Salt Lake, with Andres Gomez delivering a brace for the home side. The game was played on a snow covered field and LAFC coach Steve Cherundolo was fuming with the decision to let the game go ahead.

"It was an absolute joke we had to play today. It was one of the worst professional sporting events I've ever seen in my life," he said. "I feel terrible for the players that we put them through this. The game could have and should have been called (off). In my opinion, it was an absolute disgrace we had to play today." The Los Angeles Galaxy enjoyed 3-1 win at San Jose in their all-Californian clash. — AFP

Today's Matches

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Sheffield United v Arsenal 23:00
beIN Sports HD 1

SPANISH LEAGUE

Osasuna v Deportivo Alaves 23:00
beIN Sports HD 3

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE SERIE A

Inter Milan v Genoa CFC 22:45
AD SPORTS Premium 1



Mauricio Pochettino

Pochettino feels unloved by frustrated fans

LONDON: Mauricio Pochettino admitted he feels unloved at Chelsea after frustrated fans called for his sacking during Saturday's 2-2 draw at Brentford. Pochettino's side led through a Nicolas Jackson header, but were pegged back by Mads Roerslev's close-range strike after half-time.

Shortly after Yoane Wissa put Brentford ahead with a spectacular overhead kick, Chelsea supporters packed into one corner of the stadium began chanting for Pochettino's dismissal and singing the name of former Blues manager Jose Mourinho.

Axel Disasi scored a late equaliser to spare Chelsea another embarrassing defeat in a troubled first season in charge for Pochettino. But it was hardly an enjoyable afternoon for the former Tottenham and Paris Saint-Germain manager on his 52nd birthday.

Asked if he had heard the Chelsea fans' taunts, Pochettino said: "I've been told, I didn't hear to be honest, it's difficult for me to understand. "But it's normal, we were losing the game 2-1 and they expressed their frustration. I am one of the ones responsible, I'm the coach.

"I was asked before if I feel the love from the fans? No." Pochettino has failed to revitalise Chelsea after arriving in the close-season to clear up the mess left by his predecessors Graham Potter and Thomas Tuchel.

Chelsea have spent over £1 billion (\$1.2 billion) on signings since Todd Boehly's consortium bought the west London club from Roman Abramovich in 2022. But the spree has left Chelsea with an unbalanced and underachieving squad who are languishing in 11th place in the Premier League.

The Blues, who have not won a domestic trophy since 2018, were beaten by Liverpool in last weekend's League Cup final despite facing an inexperienced line-up. Pochettino is certain to suffer more terrace jibes amid mounting speculation that he will be axed by the end of the season.

But the Argentine, yet to win a trophy in English football, is adamant he can cope with the vitriol. "I'm not worried. We need to accept this relationship. You win your relationship through winning games," he said.

"I will continue to work and try to change this perception. We need to manage some reality. We are working really hard to try to win games, the team is fighting. "If it doesn't work and the fans are disappointed I need to respect their opinion. I think the relationship is good. If they did what they did, fans are emotional.

"I am fighting with all my sense to try to provide a team to play in the best way to score goals and win games. Today is my 52nd birthday, I know this business, but I'm going to fight." — AFP

Madrid 'bothered' by Bellingham red card in Valencia draw

MADRID: Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said on Saturday his side were "bothered" after midfielder Jude Bellingham was sent off after the controversial final whistle in the 2-2 La Liga draw at Valencia. England's Bellingham was shown a red card after protesting after referee Jesus Gil Manzano blew for time an instant before Bellingham hit what would have been a 99th minute winner at the Mestalla.

Manzano blew as Ibrahim Diaz whipped in his would-be assist. Madrid players, coaches and substitutes flooded the pitch to confront the referee and Bellingham earned a red card. "I think what's just happened is unprecedented. It's never happened to me," Ancelotti told reporters.

"We had possession of the ball and the match should have been finished when Valencia had the ball. "What bothers us is the red card for Bellingham be-

cause he didn't say anything insulting. He was frustrated of course," said Ancelotti, adding that Bellingham had used a common English swearword when telling the referee it was a goal. Madrid's second draw in three league games leaves the 35-time Spanish champions seven points clear of second-placed Girona, who head to lowly Mallorca on Sunday. On Wednesday, Ancelotti's outfit welcome RB Leipzig in the Champions League last 16 second leg, with a 1-0 aggregate lead.

The hosts in central Spain led 2-0 after just half an hour as striker Hugo Duro and Roman Yaremchuk deservedly put Valencia in the lead. Real's reaction came five minutes into first half injury time with Vinicius Junior's first goal.

The Brazil attacker then equalised with 14 minutes to play. The game marked his return to a ground where he was racially abused last season and Vinicius celebrated both goals with gestures towards the Valencia crowd, including raising his fist to the air after one effort. Madrid pushed forward for a winner as Valencia's Mouctar Diakhaby attempted to clear but his right leg was trapped under Tchouameni in the 89th minute. Guinea's Diakhaby was stretchered off after players from both sides were visibly shaken by his injury. After the incident, the referee added seven minutes of inju-

ry time. Almost two further minutes had been played when Bellingham thought he had claimed three points. The draw gives Girona a chance to cut the deficit to four points on Sunday.

Sociedad problems

Earlier, a reshuffled Real Sociedad went down to a fourth defeat in their last five matches with a 3-2 loss to Sevilla ahead of their Champions League second leg against Paris Saint-Germain. This second consecutive setback in La Liga plunges the Basques into doubt just three days before they host PSG hoping to turn round a 2-0 first-leg deficit.

The Basques were undone by Moroccan striker Youssef En-Nesyri, who bagged a brace in two minutes early in the game before Sergio Ramos got the third on 65 minutes. An Andre Silva penalty deep into first-half injury time gave the visitors hope but Brais Mendez's consolation in the second minute of added time was not enough. Third-placed Barcelona coach Xavi said on Saturday it was now the "moment of truth" for his side who are on a roll of four league wins in five with an away match at Athletic Bilbao in La Liga and a Champions League return game at home to Napoli. — AFP



REIMS: Reims' Maltese French midfielder #10 Tedy Teuma fights for the ball with Lille's Kosovar midfielder #23 Edon Zhegrova (down) during the French L1 football match between Stade de Reims and Lille LOSC at the Stade Auguste-Delaune in Reims. — AFP

David sends Lille into CL spots, as Marseille thrash Clermont

REIMS: Jonathan David pounced on a defensive gift to score the sole goal as Lille beat Reims on Saturday to jump into fourth spot, while Marseille continued their fine run with a win in Clermont. A miscued backpass from Reims captain Yunus Abdelhamid allowed Lille's Canadian striker to race through before slotting past Yehvann Diouf just before the hour, securing a 1-0 victory.

The win allowed Paulo Fonseca and his team to bounce back from a 3-1 defeat at Toulouse last weekend and provisionally leapfrog Nice into fourth, the

final Champions League spot. The Portuguese coach was pleased with the "tactically perfect match" to earn Lille's first away league win since November.

Regarding this poor away form, Fonseca said: "The problem was that we were playing against teams that weren't very strong. I've spoken to the players about it, and we need to change this mentality." Lille went into the break goalless against their eighth-placed hosts but did create the best chance of a close-fought first period when only a fine double save by Diouf kept the sides level.

The Reims stopper did not cover himself in glory when he pushed Edon Zhegrova's angled strike straight to the feet of David, but he reacted superbly to foil the striker before Thibault De Smet hacked clear with the goal gaping. David's next big chance came on 56 minutes and this time he was clinical when the last defender fluffed his pass, intercepting and sweeping home past the stranded 'keeper for the only goal. — AFP

Brazil rout Argentina to reach Women's Gold Cup semis

LOS ANGELES: Bia Zaneratto scored twice as Brazil thrashed Argentina 5-1 on Saturday to move into the semi-finals of the CONCACAF Women's Gold Cup while Olympic champions Canada scraped past Costa Rica with a 1-0 win after extra-time.

The Brazilians had simply too much firepower for Argentina as they set-up a semi-final clash with the winner of Sunday's game between Mexico and Paraguay. Argentina had the first opening when Brazil keeper Luciana was caught off her line but Dalila Ippoliti's attempted chip from distance fell harmlessly wide.

The Brazilians got ahead in the 19th minute when Yaya rose to angle in a superb header from a Zaneratto cross from the left. Yasmim Ribiero then doubled the lead in the 36th minute when a clearance fell to her on the edge of the box and her low drive took a slight deflection as it whistled into the corner. There was no change to the flow of the game after the break—the Argentine defence was at sea and Brazil took full advantage with Zaneratto poking home from the center of the box. A header from Gabi Nunes on a Gabi Portillo cross from the right made it 4-0 and put the outcome beyond any doubt. Argentina pulled a goal back in the 82nd when a ball over the top found Celeste Dos Santos who chipped the advancing Luciana.

But there was still time for Brazil to add one more when the outstanding Zaneratto fired home a left foot diagonal shot to complete the rout. Brazil captain Rafaella praised the way the team approached the game.

"I think we started the game on the right foot and then we just went on from there," she said. "It's always hard to play against Argentina. We have a lot of history but I think in all of these games, we have been winning and we have been proving that we're the best team in South America."

The free-scoring Brazilians have had nine different players find the target so far in the competition, which Rafaella said was a sign of their strength in depth. "I think everybody's pushing hard and it doesn't matter who is playing at the top," she said. "Everybody understands and we really embrace the way we're going to play and we're lucky we have a lot of good players. Canada will face the winner of Sunday's quarter-final match between the United States and Colombia after fighting their way past stubborn Costa Rica. — AFP



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's English defender #05 John Stones (C) goes down in the United area but no penalty was given during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Manchester United at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England, on March 3, 2024. — AFP

Foden double inspires Man City to derby day fightback over Man Utd

Bournemouth push Burnley closer to relegation

MANCHESTER: Phil Foden scored twice as Manchester City came from behind to beat Manchester United 3-1 on Sunday and close to within one point of Premier League leaders Liverpool. Erling Haaland also struck in stoppage time to leave the title race perfectly poised ahead of City's trip to Liverpool next weekend.

Marcus Rashford's wonder strike had fired United into a shock lead at the Etihad. Haaland was then guilty of a miss that will go down in Premier League folklore when he fired over with an open goal just before half-time.

Foden ensured City did not slip up in the title race as he blasted into the top corner to level and produced a composed finish 10 minutes from time. Haaland then rolled in his sixth goal in four Premier League derbies against United to atone for his earlier miss.

An 11th league defeat of the season for United leaves Erik ten Hag's men 11 points adrift of the top four with 11 games remaining. The former Ajax boss was furious that City's equaliser was allowed to stand as he claimed Rashford had been fouled at the other end seconds earlier. But United could have few complaints after being thoroughly outplayed by their rivals for almost the entire match.

Rashford rounded on his critics this week as he hit back at questions of his

commitment. The England international has been a pale imitation of the forward who scored 30 goals last season for most of this campaign, but showed a glimpse of the quality he is capable of to open the scoring on eight minutes.

City pleaded in vain for an offside flag against Bruno Fernandes and he laid the ball back for Rashford to smash in a stunning long-range effort off the underside of the bar. Pep Guardiola's men dominated from that moment on, but were kept at bay for nearly an hour by wayward finishing and some fine goal-keeping by Andre Onana.

Twice the Cameroonian foiled Foden when clean through, while Rodri was also denied by a smart stop low to his left. At the other end Rashford should have doubled United's lead before the break.

A slip from Ruben Dias put Rashford clean through, but a poor touch allowed Kyle Walker to race back and clear. United's lead remained intact until half-time but only thanks to a moment that will be replayed for years to come. City finally cut the visitors' mass ranks of defence to shreds as Rodri's cross was headed back across goal by Foden, inviting the finishing touch by Haaland.

However, he incredibly turned the ball over with the goal gaping from point-blank range. The rearguard action from

the Red Devils was finally undone as Foden produced a strike to match Rashford's in the first half.

Ten Hag was furious that a foul had not been awarded to Rashford at the other end, but he appeared to go to ground too easily under contact from Walker. Rodri picked out Foden, who cut inside and arched a blistering shot into the top corner.

A slick one-two between Foden and Julian Alvarez opened up the United defence for the decisive goal as the England international fired in his 18th of the season. Haaland's redemption rounded off a fine afternoon for the English champions. Rodri dispossessed Sofyan Amrabat and teed up the Norwegian to curl beyond Onana.

In Burnley, Bournemouth pushed struggling Burnley closer to relegation from the Premier League with a 2-0 win at Turf Moor on Sunday. Andoni Iraola's side inflicted Burnley's 20th defeat in 27 league games this season thanks to Justin Kluivert's early goal and Antoine Semenyo's strike in the closing minutes.

While Bournemouth sit comfortably 11 points above the relegation zone after their first league win in 2024, Burnley are languishing in 19th place. The Clarets are 11 points from safety and look destined for an immediate return to the Championship after last season's promotion.

Vincent Kompany's men are without a

win in 10 games in all competitions, losing their last four and conceding 13 goals in the process. They have lost 11 of their 14 home league games and once again appeared out of their depth despite a determined effort on a chilly afternoon in Lancashire.

Burnley should have taken an early lead when Wilson Odobert shot straight at Bournemouth keeper Neto from Lorenz Assignon's cross. Bournemouth suffered a blow when defender Marcos Senesi limped off with a hamstring injury. But in the 13th minute, Bournemouth exposed Burnley's vulnerability at the back. A long ball from Lewis Cook was seized on by Kluivert, who cut inside Dara O'Shea before lashing his shot past James Trafford.

Burnley got in behind the Bournemouth defence in the 41st minute, but Neto came out sharply to deny David Datro Fofana, with Jacob Bruun Larsen's follow-up bravely blocked by Adam Smith. Bournemouth nearly doubled their lead in the 56th minute when Kluivert broke free down the left and crossed for Solanke, who was denied by a good save from Trafford.

Burnley thought they had equalised in the 66th minute, but Josh Cullen's close-range effort was disallowed for a foul by Larsen on Smith. Semenyo wrapped up the points in the 88th minute, breaking down the right flank to curl his shot inside the corner with unerring precision. — AFP



TOKYO: Benson Kipruto of Kenya wins first place in the men's marathon during the Tokyo Marathon 2024 in Tokyo on March 3, 2024. — AFP

Kipchoge struggles to 10th place as Kipruto wins Tokyo Marathon

TOKYO: Kenya's double Olympic champion Eliud Kipchoge said "not every day is Christmas" after his Paris Games preparations hit a snag with a 10th-place finish at Sunday's Tokyo Marathon behind winner Benson Kipruto.

The 39-year-old Kipchoge faded badly at around the 20-kilometre (12-mile) mark and crossed the line in 2hr 6min 50sec. Kenya's Kipruto won in a course-record 2:02:16 ahead of countrymen Timothy Kiplagat (2:02:55) and Vincent Ngetich (2:04:18).

The race was taking place less than a month after world record-holder Kelvin Kiptum died when his car crashed into a tree in Kenya. Kipchoge will attempt to win his third straight Olympic marathon gold later this year and he said it was "too early to say" what shape he will be in at the Paris Games.

"That's how it is—not every day is Christmas Day," he told Japan's Nippon TV. Kipchoge said "something happened in the middle of the race", without elaborating. He dropped back dramatically to leave Kiplagat, Kipruto and Ngetich fighting it out in the leading pack.

Kipchoge continued to struggle as the race wore on and had dropped out of the top 10 by the 35km mark. "I will go back, relax and start training," he said. Ethiopia's Sutume Asefa Kebede won the women's race in 2hr 15min 55sec—also a course record.

Kenya's defending champion Rosemary Wanjiru (2:16:14) was second ahead of Ethiopia's world title-holder Amane Beriso Shankule (2:16:58). Sifan Hassan of the Netherlands was fourth after clocking 2:18:05. — AFP

Brest grab second spot in Ligue 1, Nice slip up

PARIS: Brest moved a little closer to Paris Saint-Germain with a 1-0 home win over Le Havre on Sunday, as Nice missed the chance to go third in Ligue 1 with hosts Toulouse coming from a goal down to win. A goal just after the half-hour from Pierre Lees-Melou gave Brest victory to close the gap to PSG to nine points and seal a club record 13 top-flight matches without defeat. "Very satisfied. We've got a bit of a lead on points, it's good to get them now," said Brest coach Eric Roy.

"I'm proud and happy for our team, who have made history by going 13 games unbeaten." The win gives Brest a four-point cushion over third-placed Monaco, who played out a goalless draw with PSG on Friday.

Midfielder Lees-Melou slotted in Mathias Pereira Lage's cross at the near post with 34 minutes on the clock in what was the decisive moment of a close-fought match. Brest held firm in the second half to close out the three points as fatigue set in for both sides and the foul count rose.

Nice failed to hold onto a first-half lead and break back into the top three after going down 2-1 at Toulouse. Terem Moffi gave Nice the early advantage when he fired past Guillaume Restes after eight minutes.

Toulouse, who beat Monaco and Lille in their last two Ligue 1 outings, created the better chances in the second half and hit two goals in quick succession. In the 65th minute, Romain Perraud failed to cut out a pass to right wing Warren Kamanzi. He crossed for Thijs Dallinga to head his ninth goal of the season and his fourth in the last five matches.

Four minutes later, the 23-year-old Dutch striker turned supplier. He teed the ball up for Yann Gboho who swivelled round Pablo Rosario before crashing the ball past Nice goalkeeper Marcin Bulka, who could only get his fingertips on it, and into the roof of the net.

The win moved Toulouse up a place to tenth, leap-frogging Lyon who host Lens later on Sunday. Nice remain in fifth, missing the chance to go above Monaco and Lille. "We need to wake up," said Nice coach Francesco Farioli, after his team failed to win for a fifth consecutive league match.

"We're still fifth, so we're still in a position to achieve our goals. We need to rediscover the energy we had at the start of the season." It was the first time that Nice had lost a game after leading since May 2022 against Lille, a run of 30 matches.



BREST: Brest's Uruguayan Italian forward #07 Martin Satriano (L) fights for the ball with Le Havre's French midfielder #94 Abdoulaye Toure during the French L1 football match between Stade Brestois 29 (Brest) and Le Havre AC at Stade Francis-Le Ble in Brest. — AFP

Lowly Metz picked up three points with a 2-0 win at Nantes, courtesy of two second-half goals in two minutes from Georges Mikautadze, from the spot, and Matthieu Udol. Montpellier came from behind twice to draw 2-2 with visiting Strasbourg. A brace from Arnaud Nordin, cancelled out Mouhamadou Diarra's 47th-minute penalty and an Emanuel Emegha goal. — AFP