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Egypt honors Amir on state visit

President Sisi awards Sheikh Mishal Order of the Nile after official talks



CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi honors HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal with the Order of the Nile after welcoming him during his state visit to Egypt on April 30, 2024. — KUNA photos

Bibi vows Rafah offensive 'with or without' truce



GAZA: A Palestinian mourns a child killed in Zionist bombardment at the Al-Najjar Hospital in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on April 29, 2024. — AFP

GAZA: Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed on Tuesday to launch a ground offensive on the Gaza Strip's far-southern city of Rafah "with or without" a truce deal being agreed with Hamas. The hawkish premier issued the warning despite strong concerns raised by top ally Washington and hours before US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was set to arrive in the Zionist entity on his latest Middle East crisis tour.

Netanyahu, who has vowed to destroy Hamas over its Oct 7 attack, promised "total victory" and said stopping the war "before achieving all of its goals is out of the question". "We will enter Rafah and we will eliminate the Hamas battalions there with or without a deal," he told families of some of the hostages still being held in Gaza, his office said.

Netanyahu's comments came as Hamas was weighing the latest plan for a truce proposed in Cairo talks with US, Egyptian and Qatari mediators that had raised cautious hopes for an end to the fighting after nearly seven months. The Palestinian group said it was considering a plan for a 40-day ceasefire and the exchange of scores of hostages for larger numbers of Palestinian prisoners.

Continued on Page 6

CAIRO: HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation arrived in Egypt on a state visit on Tuesday. HH the Amir was received by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and senior officials.

An official reception ceremony was held at the Federal Palace in honor of HH the Amir on the occasion of his state visit to Egypt. Upon the arrival of the Kuwaiti official delegation to the Federal Palace, trumpets were blown and artillery fired 21 rounds to welcome HH the Amir. The national anthem of Kuwait and Egypt were

also played. HH the Amir greeted top Egyptian officials and Sisi welcomed the Kuwaiti delegation.

HH the Amir and President Sisi held an official session of talks at Al-Ittihadiya Presidential Palace. During the talks, both sides touched on the deep-rooted bilateral ties between the two countries and ways of boosting cooperation to serve the aspirations of the two peoples. The two sides agreed on supporting the process of joint Arab action that brings together the Arab countries and ways to develop relations in all fields. Latest regional and global

developments were also touched on during the talks.

Sisi then awarded HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal the Order of the Nile, the most prestigious Egyptian medal given to presidents, kings and amirs in recognition of their roles. The order was given to HH the Amir at Al-Ittihadiya Palace, to reflect deep-rooted relations between the two sisterly countries and enhance the bonds of friendship with HH the Amir. Sisi later held a banquet in honor of HH the Amir and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of the state visit. — KUNA (See Page 3)

Gulf Bank posts Q1 2024 net profit of KD 12.9 million

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank announced its financial results for the first three months ending March 31, 2024. The bank reported a net profit of KD 12.9 million, a decline of KD 4.4 million or 25.6 percent compared to 2023's first three months'

net profit of KD 17.3 million.

Gulf Bank Chairman Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi said: "I am pleased to announce that Gulf Bank has showcased a robust operational performance during the first quarter supported by a solid topline growth and healthy balance sheet indicators."

Gulf Bank Acting CEO Waleed Khaled Mandani said: "Gulf Bank is ready to leverage these foundational changes to drive operational efficiencies and enhance customer experience." (See Page 8)



Gulf Bank Chairman Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi

Gulf Bank Acting CEO Waleed Khaled Mandani

MPs urge govt to find solutions to power shortages

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Lawmakers called on the government on Tuesday to take emergency measures to face what they called massive shortages in power production that could lead to catastrophic results. The lawmakers

were apparently alerted by a limited power outage in two Kuwait City suburbs way before the start of the summer peak when electricity consumption is expected to surpass the 17,000 megawatts mark, resulting in a key deficit.

MP Abdulwahab Al-Essa warned in a statement on Tuesday that the expected supply from the GCC power grid may not be sufficient to meet the shortages, eventually leading to repeated outages. Essa repeated a warning he made a year ago in the National Assembly in which he showed that Kuwait will continue to face power shortages for several years. That warning said that the expected power production deficit in Kuwait will be 1,331 MW in the summer of

2024, about 1,444 MW in 2025 and 1,636 MW in 2026.

Essa said the public sector in Kuwait is "clinically dead" and incapable of resolving any problem facing the country, adding the next government should realize the magnitude and seriousness of the electricity problem and must take major technical decisions.

Electricity consumption in the summer of 2023 jumped above the 16,300 MW mark for the first time and estimates expect consumption to break the 17,000 MW mark this summer, depending on the increase in temperature. According to local media, Oman has agreed to supply Kuwait with 350 MW of electricity through the Gulf power grid and another

Continued on Page 6

Activists occupy Columbia hall as protests flare

NEW YORK: Demonstrators at Columbia University barricaded themselves inside a campus building on Tuesday, escalating a standoff with school officials as pro-Palestinian protests spread across the United States. Masked individuals smashed windows and blocked doors with metal tables in the early hours of the morning

after administrators began suspending protesting students for failing to comply with an order to disperse.

President Joe Biden's White House sharply criticized the seizure of the building, with a spokesman saying it was "absolutely the wrong approach" as police patrolled street entrances to the prestigious New York university. "That is not an example of peaceful protest," the spokesman added.

Demonstrators vowed to remain at the hall until their demands are met, including that Columbia divest all financial holdings linked to the Zionist entity.

Continued on Page 6



NEW YORK: Students and demonstrators lock arms to prevent authorities from reaching fellow protesters who barricaded themselves inside Hamilton Hall on April 30, 2024. — AFP



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Zain attracts national talent to foster private sector growth

Zain the 'Exclusive Sponsor' of GUST 25th career fair

KUWAIT: Zain announced its Exclusive Sponsorship of the 25th career fair organized by Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) at the main campus in Mubarak Al-Abdullah. The event, which ran for three consecutive days, came under the patronage of Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Adel Al-Adwani.

The opening ceremony was attended by the representative of the event's patron, Acting Secretary General of the Private Universities Council Adel Al-Bader, Acting President of Gulf University for Science and Technology Dr. Bassam Alameddine, Zain Kuwait Corporate Relations Department Manager Hamad Al-Musaibeeh, Zain's Human Resources team, officials from the participating companies, along with GUST students and graduates.

Zain continues to support and actively participate in major career fairs in Kuwait in collaboration with the biggest educational and academic institutions from both the public and private

sectors. The company strives to attract national talent to join the Kuwaiti private sector with the goal of fostering sustainable growth and introducing young people to its success story in the telecom sector.

Through its dedicated booth at the career fair, Zain presented its available job vacancies, shared its internal policy, and showcased its wonderful workplace environment. Zain's team also provided a detailed explanation of the nature of work at various departments and divisions and answered all questions and inquiries.

Through such contributions, Zain seeks to stimulate the local job market, exchange experiences, and offer career opportunities to students, fresh graduates, and those who are looking for their next career journey. The company is keen on offering job seekers with career opportunities that best suit their skills, competencies, and passions to progress national economy and increase national talent representation in the Kuwaiti private sector.



Adel Al-Bader and Dr. Bassam Alameddine recognize Hamad Al-Musaibeeh and Zain's HR team for the company's support.



Moh's Health Promotion Director Dr. Abeer Al-Baho

Health ministry launches anti-smoking drive to protect children

KUWAIT: Kuwait Ministry of Health (MoH) will launch an awareness campaign on Thursday on national anti-smoking program aiming at protecting children from smoking, in cooperation with other ministries and state agencies. In a statement to KUNA on Tuesday, the ministry's Health Promotion Director, Dr. Abeer Al-Baho, said that the anti-smoking awareness campaign targets men, women, and children and warns of the harms of smoking.

This campaign will bring awareness to the legal and criminal charges the smoker might face when smoking in undesignated smoking spaces, protecting people with health issues, children, and the environment, added Dr. Al-Baho. Dr. Al-Baho said the campaign also aims to reduce the number of diseases and deaths that result from smoking, underscoring the lung damage smoking can cause directly or indirectly.

She mentioned that the anti-smoking awareness campaign will last until May 31, World No Tobacco Day, and will extend to all six Kuwaiti governorates by holding demonstrations in regards to the dangers of smoking. Statistics show that children between the ages of 13 and 15 have been smoking electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) threefold in comparison to adults. She warned against the harms and dangers of being exposed to tobacco, traditional smoking, and e-cigarettes, underscoring the effects on fetuses and growing children.

Dr. Al-Baho mentioned that there are 34 countries that ban the use of e-cigarettes, 88 countries that do not enforce an age limit on e-cigarettes, and 74 countries that do not have any regulations toward e-cigarettes. Dr. Al-Baho also discussed the long-term illnesses derived from smoking, cancer, lung, and heart diseases being a few examples, warning that there must be ways to limit the use of these harmful substances. — KUNA

UNITAR, Saud Nasser Diplomatic Institute sign memorandum

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Saud Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) to enhance cooperation and instill the necessary skills and knowledge for Foreign Ministry personnel to adapt to various regional and international issues. Assistant Foreign Minister for the Institute Ambassador Nasser Al-Sabeeh told KUNA that the MoU, serving various national establishments, is part of many MoUs signed by the institute and several bodies.

The Diplomatic Institute has inked MoUs with a number of private institutes, certified universities, and governments, all to expand on their experiences and expertise, he commented. Assistant Secretary General to the UN and Institute Executive Director, Nikhil Seth, said that this contributes to boosting relations between the two institutes, commending the cooperation and depth of relations between Kuwait and UN bodies. — KUNA

The unseen impact of psychological abuse

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: Yelling, cursing, and punishing are all too often employed by parents as forms of psychological abuse, under the mistaken belief that these are the only methods to raise disciplined children. When verbal and emotional abuses remain unnamed and unacknowledged, their consequences can extend far beyond the impact of physical abuse, leaving a mental scar that can persist for years.

Not only this behavior fails to raise disciplined children, but it can completely damage the kids' personalities, as noted by Shreefa Al-Ayoub, counselor for childhood and adolescence. "It can erase their sense of self, completely destroying their self-confidence," she noted, highlighting it as "a prime contributor to destroying the relationships between children and their parents."

Yelling, which is mostly accompanied by other forms of psychological abuse, is the hardest to resist. Ayoub added that it can often be witnessed happening around you all the time, with a mother frequently yelling at her child for the most trivial reasons like accidentally tripping when running fast, not finishing his whole meal, or perhaps waking up too late.

No matter the size of the children's mistakes, parents often resort to shouting as the quickest reaction. The issue is that they usually do it out of deep love and concern for their children, which are good

intentions that cannot be comprehended by kids in these situations. "Hearing sudden yelling or screaming makes my heart tremble, even as an adult. Imagine how it feels for a child," remarked Ayoub. She pointed out that while children vividly recall the negative effects of yelling on their emotional well-being, they easily forget the main reason behind it, making its purpose meaningless.

Another ineffective method that she added is punishing, which does more harm than good. Forcing a child to sit still or stay quiet is against their nature and makes them feel suppressed. Instead, she suggested every mother who wants to teach her child about the consequences for their actions, should have a conversation with him first, and involve him in the decision-making process of his desired punishment method. "It is important to let him be punished with dignity, instead of forcing him on something."

This highlights the significance of communication with children. Continuously blaming them, issuing orders, or offering advice, may ultimately lead your children to stop listening to you. Sometimes, all they need is a simple moment of fun with you, a genuine conversation, or some quality time together. Ayoub added. "The word is love, and love is the cornerstone of your relationship with your child."



Shreefa Al-Ayoub



It's important for every parent to always educate themselves about the proper ways to deal with their children. Given the stressful life that almost every parent leads, Ayoub emphasized that regardless of one's efforts, there will always be a margin of error that should be embraced. She advised, "We all make mistakes, but what matters the most is admitting them. Learn to apologize to your child and say it out loud, 'I'm sorry, please forgive me.'"

She believes that people in our society should prioritize their social life and family bonding over anything else, and parents must stop relying solely on housemaids to care for their children. "Now, when you walk in the mall, you can see a mother with two or three housemaids following her," she observed, emphasizing that these housemaids should only assist with household chores, not raising children. "A child needs their mother nearby. They need her touch, and they need her gaze to meet theirs."

Palestinian cause remains a central Arab issue: Kuwait

DOHA: The just Palestinian cause remains the central Arab issue, affirmed Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, stating that the Zionist entity and its continuous violations are the driving factors behind the failure to adopt sustainable solutions. Ambassador Al-Sabah addressed the third session of the Arab Economic and Cooperation Forum with Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan in Doha on Tuesday.

He called on the international community to adhere to its responsibilities and put an end to the systemic crimes against Palestinians. The Kuwaiti diplomat also urged the Security Council to safeguard international peace and security, address the cause of escalation, provide protection to Palestinians against forced eviction, and guarantee the flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza. Once again, Kuwait asserts its unwavering stance on the legitimate rights of Palestinians and their right to just and comprehensive peace, based on international legitimacy rules and Arab peace initiatives.

The Ambassador spoke of Kuwaiti efforts to boost cooperation and augment exchanged benefits in the region to achieve integration and arrive

Czech Embassy marks anniversaries of EU and NATO accession

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The embassy of the Czech Republic to Kuwait held a reception on Monday on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the historically largest enlargement of the European Union and the 25th anniversary of the accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland to NATO.

During his speech, the ambassador of the Czech Republic, Jaroslav Siro, said, "This year, we are commemorating the 25th anniversary of the accession of Czechia, Poland, and Hungary to NATO and the 20th anniversary of the accession of ten Central and Eastern European countries to the EU. Twenty years ago, the dreams of these revolutions came true. One of the

at a realistic, implementable economic plan. Concluding his statement, Ambassador Al-Sabah took time to highlight the Kuwait 2035 vision and its efforts in achieving sustainable development goals. He stated that a number of national programs for developing human resources, nationalizing technology, and supporting a more sustainable economy have been approved.

Ambassador Al-Sabah also mentioned that Kuwait is following with interest a number of regional and international issues, including combating terrorism and extremism and freedom of maritime navigation as per international law stipulations. In attendance at the session were Qatari Minister of Industry and Commerce, Mohammad bin Qasim Al-Thani, Ministers of Arab and Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan, and Arab League Secretary General, Ahmad Abulghiet.

Medical teams arrive in Gaza

In another development, the second medical delegation of the Kuwait Relief Society arrived in Gaza on Tuesday via the Rafah crossing, carrying seven tons of aid to support the Palestinian health system in the Strip. The Vice President of the Society, Omar Al-Thuwaini, said that the medical team arrived at the Rafah land crossing and consisted of 17 people, including 14 of the Kuwaiti national medical staff, including a consultant, specialist, and nurse in several delicate and urgent medical and surgical specialties, in addition to the person in charge of the team and two relief coordinators.

slogans chanted then in the frozen Prague squares was Back to Europe. The main driving force for returning to Europe was the desire to return to where we have always historically belonged. To a Europe based on the values of democracy and freedom. The ultimate goal of these countries, therefore, was full membership in all Euro-Atlantic political and economic structures."

He indicated that EU membership has had a considerable positive impact on new members, leading to a revival of the democratic political systems that the communists had abolished forty years prior and the establishment of vibrant civil societies that replaced the ideological party-states. Continuing, he added, "The freedoms also came with the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people that contributed to the transformation of their economies. The standard of living in the Czech Republic, for example, which was at 73 percent of the EU average in 2000, has risen to 93 percent in 2021."

The ambassador praised Kuwait as an important political partner in the region, with whom they share several key international concerns and objectives, adding, "The Czech Republic fully supports closer



Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

Al-Thuwaini noted that the Kuwait Relief Society team arrived with seven tons of necessary medical equipment and supplies to contribute to supporting the health system in the Gaza Strip and to provide the necessary tools for surgical operations, medical care, and medications, especially for some critical cases and chronic diseases. He also affirmed that the Kuwaiti team is to perform a number of important surgical operations in some surgical specialties, in addition to implementing some other relief projects, most notably food and shelter projects. Since the beginning of the Zionist aggression on the Gaza Strip, various Kuwaiti delegations and aid have arrived via air bridges to support the Palestinian people. — KUNA

cooperation between the EU and other countries of the GCC. Kuwait presents the opportunity of establishing much closer institutional relations between the EU and the GCC." For her turn, European Union Ambassador Anne Koistinen stated, "Twenty years ago, a new, larger European Union was born. As a result of the 2004 enlargement, the number of EU member states increased overnight from 15 to 25, and the number of official languages increased from 11 to 21, while the bloc's population increased by 75 million."

"For Europe, it was a unique opportunity to further unify a divided continent and to extend the peace project - the very reason for the existence of the European Union - over a major part of the continent, based on the same set of values: democracy, the rule of law, and the respect of fundamental freedoms and rights. It was not just the birth of a larger union; it was the birth of a new era," she said, adding that the 10 countries now play a very important role in shaping the EU's response to global challenges such as supporting Ukraine and the leadership of Cyprus' opening a maritime corridor for aid to Gaza. Europe's voice on the global stage is much more powerful.

Kuwait-Egypt summit deepens ties



CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi receives His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. An official reception ceremony was held at the Federal Palace on Tuesday in honor of His Highness the Amir, on the occasion of his state visit to Egypt. Upon the arrival of the Kuwaiti official delegation to the Federal Palace, trumpets were blown and artillery fired twenty-one rounds to welcome His Highness the Amir. — KUNA photos



CAIRO: The deep-rooted relations between Kuwait and Egypt are an eminent mark of pan-Arab cooperation and a framework of mutual interests bonding the two brotherly peoples. Abdulsadeq Al-Shorbaji, the head of the Egyptian Press Authority, said the state visit by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his meeting with President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi would further deepen and strengthen the distinguished relations between the two states, impacting positively on pan-Arab economic interests.

He indicated that the Kuwaiti-Egyptian summit coincides with mounting challenges on the international arena, sending ramifications to all states without exemption; thus, the Arab states, amid this situation, ought to coordinate efforts to address some of these hazardous challenges, namely the war on the Gaza Strip. He lauded the level of Egyptian-Kuwaiti ties in various sectors and expressed satisfaction with the volume of Kuwaiti investments in Egypt, noting the Egyptian press' major role in cementing further these relations and reacting to bids by "hostile powers" to strain these special relations by disseminating rumors and lies.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Kamal, the board chairman and chief editor of the Middle East News Agency, said in remarks to KUNA



that Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations, during the era of President Al-Sisi, have noticeably improved. "Our leadership has been seeking to bolster these relations with solid steps in all sectors," he affirmed. The leaderships of the two countries have been keenly maintaining coordination, particularly amid the difficult circumstances prevailing across the

Arab world, Kamal said, noting the identical views on the necessity of halting the genocide waged by the Zionist occupation since seven months ago in Gaza.

The joint stand is also aimed at halting the Zionist aggression and establishing an independent Palestinian state along the June 4, 1967, borders, with East Jerusalem

as its capital. President Al-Sisi has visited Kuwait several times since 2015, the latest of which was on December 17, 2023, during which he congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal on taking office and offered condolences on the demise of the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir had visited Cairo and participated, when he was the Crown Prince and the Deputy Amir, in the "Cairo Peace Summit," held in October 2023, to discuss the Palestinian cause. The Kuwait-Egypt coordination, moreover, covers Arab issues such as the crises in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. At the economic level, Kuwaiti investments are robust in many sectors, and the Kuwaiti private sector effectively contributes to developing the Egyptian economy, he said, estimating the Kuwaiti businesses' value at more than \$20 billion.

The Kuwait-Egypt volume of trade in 2020 reached \$5 billion; the two countries have been bonded by some 140 treaties; and Kuwait is a third trade partner for Egypt. Furthermore, the number of Kuwaiti students in Egypt has exceeded 30,000. Kuwait backed Egypt in the aftermath of the "June 30 revolution," and Egypt backed Kuwait in the 1991 liberation and independence.

Jamal Al-Kashki, the Al-Ahram Al-Arabi chief editor, said the visit by His Highness the Amir would affirm the depth of the relations and the harmony of the views with respect to maintaining the Arab nation's security. The visit coincides with major events in the Arab region, namely the aggression on Gaza and its impact on the Arab countries. — KUNA



Amir's visit to Egypt marks new chapter of bonds

CAIRO: The visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Egypt to meet President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi comes within the framework of the historical relations between Kuwait and Egypt, said the Egyptian Presidency on Tuesday. The official spokesperson for the Egyptian Presidency, Ahmad Fahmi, said in a statement to KUNA that the visit comes in light of the keenness of the leaderships of the two countries to enhance bilateral relations. He noted that Egypt's warm welcome to the visit of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait reflects Egypt's full appreciation of the strong relations between Kuwait and Egypt and the common belief in unity and destiny.

Fahmi stressed that the visit reflects the keenness of Egypt and Kuwait to coordinate positions and visions towards the developments and challenges facing the region. This is the third visit by His Highness the Amir to Egypt. His Highness participated in the 27th session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) and the second edition of the Middle East Green Initiative Summit (MGI) in Sharm El-Sheikh in November 2022, as well as the Cairo Peace Summit in October 2023.

The visit comes amid the growing relations between the two countries under the patronage of His Highness the Amir and President Al-Sisi and their keenness to promote cooperation in all fields and joint coordination on regional and international challenges, including the aggression on Gaza, tensions in the Red Sea region, and ways to contain escalation in the region. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen off by senior state officials. His Highness the Amir and his accompanying delegation left for Egypt on a state visit on Tuesday. — KUNA

In my view

Visionary leaders



Dr. Khalid A Al-Saleh

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You can purchase anything you desire if you possess wealth. You can even establish factories, import equipment and labor, but true self-reliance comes from manufacturing essential goods, developing production capabilities and nurturing skilled labor domestically. This stark contrast distinguishes between consumer nations, which exhaust their budgets and regress to square one, and developed, productive nations.

We need visionary leaders who comprehend the importance of manufacturing, development and scientific research. These pillars underpin the nation's advancement and ensure the well-being of future generations. While both leaders and individuals acknowledge this truth, leaders often prioritize political equilibrium, strengthening ties with former colonial powers, while disregarding counsel from intellectuals and supporters.

Meanwhile, many individuals, particularly the youth, are ensnared by virtual luxuries, embracing idleness over labor. They tend to criticize abundantly yet produce sparingly, fixating on emulating the West in language, education and even leisure pursuits. This dysfunctional dynamic between leaders and citizens perpetuates a cycle of consumption, cloaked in the facade of civilization, without actually fostering it. Some advocate for a paradigm shift to avert descent into backwardness or becoming akin to banana republics, reliant on external resources, relinquishing control to foreign corporations and local tycoons who endanger our future.

While colonial powers ostensibly withdrew from colonized territories, they left behind vestiges in the form of corporations and businessmen who perpetuated consumption patterns to ensure continued import reliance. This new form of colonization, exemplified by resort companies in the Maldives, foreign mining firms in Chile, and the tobacco industry in the Philippines, maintains control over economies. Similar patterns exist in various guises, deterring manufacturing, development and research while perpetuating consumption. Eventually, we will confront this sobering reality, paid for dearly by future generations, albeit after it is too late.

KRCS provides humanitarian aid to 450 people in Armenia

ARCS official commends Kuwait's support



Kuwaiti Red Crescent Society team with the Armenian Red Cross.



KRCS field team delivering food parcels. — KUNA photos



ANKARA: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced Tuesday that it provided humanitarian aid to 450 individuals in the Armenian capital, Yerevan. Khaled Al-Mutairi, head of the society's field team, clarified in a phone call with KUNA that the aid was distributed according to essential needs, particularly targeting the elderly and the most vulnerable groups, in coordination with the Armenian Red Cross Society. Food parcels, sufficient for a family of five, were distributed for one month along with blankets, heaters, and cleaning supplies, Al-Mutairi added.

He pointed out Kuwait's commitment to responding promptly to humanitarian appeals and assisting those in need, especially in disaster-stricken and vulnerable countries. He expressed gratitude to Kuwait's Ambassador to Armenia, Nawaf Al-Enezi, and the embassy staff for their dedication and support of the team, mobilizing all resources to facilitate their mission. Last Friday, KRCS launched a humanitarian aid campaign to assist over 1,500 individuals in need and displaced from the Nagorno-Karabakh region in various areas of Armenia.

Meanwhile, an Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS) official on Tuesday commended Kuwait's relief efforts and humanitarian response in helping those in need and displaced in Armenia. In a statement to Kuwait Red Crescent



Over 1,500 people across Armenia would benefit from KRCS' distinctive humanitarian assistance, he noted. He underlined KRCS' dedication to humanitarian service worldwide, underscoring the impartial and inclusive nature of their efforts. Last Friday, KRCS launched a humanitarian aid campaign to assist over 1,500 individuals in need and displaced from the Nagorno-Karabakh region in various areas of Armenia in response to a call from ARCS. — KUNA



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Kuwait crude oil exports to Japan down 22 percent

TOKYO: Kuwait's crude oil exports to Japan in March fell 22.0 percent from a year earlier to 5.11 million barrels, or 165,000 barrels per day (bpd), down for the sixth consecutive month, government data showed Tuesday. As Japan's third-biggest oil

provider, Kuwait supplied 6.9 percent of its total crude imports, compared with 8.4 percent in the same month of last year, the Japanese Natural Resources and Energy Agency said in a preliminary report. Japan's overall imports of crude oil in the reporting month declined 4.4 percent year-on-year to 2.40 million bpd, down for the fourth month in a row.

Shipments from the Middle East accounted for 94.7 percent of the total, down 1.9 percentage points from the year before. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) remained in the top spot, with imports from the country growing 9.8 percent from the year before to 1.06 million bpd, followed by Saudi Arabia

with 982,000 bpd, down 7.1 percent. The US ranked fourth with 97,000 bpd and Qatar fifth with 50,000 bpd, respectively. Japan is the world's third-biggest oil consumer after China and the US.

Kuwait oil price down

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti oil price slightly fell 24 cents to \$89.63 per barrel (pb) on Monday, compared to \$89.87 pb, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said on Tuesday. In international markets, futures of Brent crude oil fell \$1.10 to reach \$88.40 pb, and those of West Texas Intermediate crude oil dropped \$1.22 pb to \$82.63 a barrel. — KUNA



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RIYADH: Kuwait's Minister of Finance and State Minister for Economic and Investment Affairs, Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf and Saudi Finance Minister, Mohammed Al-Jadaan discuss bilateral cooperation and ways to boost financial and economic relations. — KUNA

Kuwait and Saudi ministers discuss investments

RIYADH: Kuwait's Minister of Finance and State Minister for Economic and Investment Affairs, Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf, discussed with Saudi Finance Minister, Mohammed Al-Jadaan, bilateral cooperation and ways to boost financial and economic relations. The Kuwait Ministry of Finance mentioned in a statement that this came in a meeting between the two officials on the sidelines of the Islamic Development Bank Group annual meetings in Riyadh. The statement said the Finance Ministers discussed bilateral cooperation and reinforcement of the deep-rooted strategic relations that tie the two friendly countries; they also went over topics of shared interest in the economic and financial fields.

Space center

Meanwhile, the World Economic Forum signed an agreement with the Saudi Space Agency to establish the Center for Space Futures, set to open this autumn, according to the Saudi Press Agency. The center, to be hosted by the Saudi Space Agen-

cy, aims to facilitate public-private discussions on space collaboration, incorporate best practices from the forum and its communities into the global space sector, and generate forward-looking contributions to accelerate space technologies.

"The center is committed to fostering a vibrant, prosperous, and sustainable space economy globally. By developing principles, expanding knowledge, refining models, and cultivating partnerships, we aim to responsibly harness the vast opportunities of space," said Saudi Space Agency CEO Dr. Mohammed Altamimi. "From monitoring the effects of climate change to increasing human connectivity via satellites, the impact of the global space sector on Earth cannot be overstated," World Economic Forum Managing Director Jeremy Jurgens said.

He added that the Center for Space Futures is integrated into the C4IR Network due to the importance of addressing various topics such as space technological innovation, policies and regulations, as well as sustainability. The Center for Space Futures is the first in the network of the Fourth Industrial Revolution Centers to focus exclusively on space. It will work alongside the existing center in the Kingdom (C4IR Saudi Arabia) to advance Saudi Vision 2030, the country's roadmap for economic diversification, global engagement, and improved quality of life. — KUNA



Gunman storms Afghan mosque, kills six

UN: Impact of Lebanon border clashes on children alarming

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DEIR EL-BALAH, Palestinian Territories: A girl gestures as people gather with jerrycans and other containers to collect water from a tanker cistern in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip on April 30, 2024.—AFP

ICJ throws out Gaza genocide request

Nicaragua accuses Zionist entity of violating 1948 genocide convention

THE HAGUE, Netherlands: The UN's top court Tuesday threw out Nicaragua's request for emergency measures to stop Germany sending military supplies to Zionist entity because of its action in the Gaza war. International Court of Justice presiding judge Nawaf Salam said the circumstances presented to the court did not warrant "provisional measures". Nicaragua hauled Germany before the ICJ to demand emergency measures to stop Berlin from sending Zionist entity weapons and other assistance that could be used in the devastating Gaza war. Nicaragua accused Germany of violating the 1948 international genocide convention.

Nicaragua targeted Germany rather than Zionist entity's main ally, the United States, because Washington did not recognize ICJ jurisdiction in the case, Managua's lawyers said. Lawyers from the two countries clashed at the court this month, with Nicaragua saying Germany was "pathetic" for providing weapons

to Zionist entity and aid to Gazans. Berlin responded that Zionist entity's security was at the "core" of its foreign policy and that Nicaragua had "grossly distorted" Germany's supply of military aid to Zionist entity.

Berlin said its supply of arms to Zionist entity was under "meticulous scrutiny" and constantly evaluated within the standards of international law.

Nicaragua requested five emergency measures, including that Germany "immediately suspend its aid to Zionist entity, in particular its military assistance including military equipment". The judges on Tuesday agreed with Berlin, saying "the court notes that Germany states that it has fulfilled the obligation incumbent on states parties to the Genocide Convention to prevent the occurrence of genocide." This was by "using all reasonable means at its disposal to exert its influence on Zionist entity in order to improve the situation in Gaza."

In fact, it noted that "as stated by Germany" there had been a significant decrease in its supply of military material since November 2023. Berlin, in a statement welcomed the ruling at the ICJ—set up after World War II to legally resolve issues between states.

"No one is above the law. This is what guides our action," the German Foreign Ministry said on X, former Twitter. Nicaragua's representative at the ICJ, Carlos Arguello, told reporters outside the courtroom that "Palestinians expected a bit more." "On the specific order that we have requested, the court considered that for the moment there was not sufficient proof that what Germany was giving... was important for what was happening in Palestine," he said. "In any case, if things continue or develop, Nicaragua would obviously bring the matter to the attention of the court again," he said. The proper case however, could take months, or even years before a judgment would be handed down at

the Hague-based tribunal. The war began on Oct 7 with an unprecedented Hamas attack that resulted in the deaths of about 1,170 people in Zionist entity, according to an AFP tally of Zionist entity official figures. Zionist entity's retaliatory offensive has killed at least 34,488 people in Gaza, mostly women and children. In another procedure, South Africa accused Zionist entity—which like the United States is not a member of the court—of perpetuating genocide in the Gaza Strip. Zionist entity "categorically" denies the South African accusations, which include responsibility for starvation. In that case, the court called on Zionist entity to do everything in its power to prevent genocide and recently ordered the country to "ensure urgent humanitarian assistance" in Gaza without delay. Though ICJ decisions are binding, the court has no mechanism to enforce them. For example, it ordered Russia to cease its invasion of Ukraine, in vain. —AFP

Boy, 14, killed in London sword attack: Police

HAINAULT, UK: A 14-year-old boy died on Tuesday after a man wielding a sword stabbed the youth, two police and two other people, in a street attack in east London, police said. The man used what appeared to be a Samurai-type sword in the Hainault district shortly before 7 am (0600 GMT). Police said they arrested a 36-year-old man using Taser stun weapons and took him into custody. The incident is not believed to be terror-related, they said. Chief Superintendent Stuart Bell, from London's Metropolitan Police, said all five victims were taken to hospital.

The two police officers were awaiting surgery for "significant" injuries, he added. But they, and those sustained by the two members of the public, were not believed to be life-threatening. "It's with great sadness that one of those injured in this incident... has died from their injuries," he told reporters at the scene. "He was taken to hospital after being stabbed and sadly died a short while after." Bell called the incident "truly horrific" and said specialist officers were supporting the boy's family. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak called the stabbings "shocking". "Such violence has no place on our streets," he added in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

"I'd like to thank the emergency services for their ongoing response, and pay tribute to the extraordinary bravery shown by police on the scene." Video footage and photographs posted on social media appeared to show a man in a yellow jumper on the streets near houses with the weapon.

Emergency service vehicles, including police, fire and ambulances, were seen behind cordons, including near the town's underground railway station. One resident, who asked not to be named, said she hid behind a window while the suspect was outside her home shouting "do you believe in God?" at police. "We were very scared and trying to hide and not show ourselves through the window because he was standing right next to our house and he could have seen us if he looked up," she added. "We were very scared and we didn't know what to do." Another witness said he saw two police chasing the man, shouting at him to put down the weapon. Police in England, Scotland and Wales are not routinely armed but do carry Taser weapons to disable suspects. London Mayor Sadiq Khan said he was "absolutely devastated" by the incident and was in close contact with the city police commissioner. —AFP



BEIRUT: Students take part in a pro-Palestinian demonstration in the American University of Beirut (AUB) on May 30, 2024.— AFP

'We are with them': Lebanon students rally for Gaza

BEIRUT: Hundreds of university students in Lebanon protested on Tuesday against Zionist entity's bombardment of Gaza, inspired by recent pro-Palestinian demonstrations that have rocked US and European campuses, AFP correspondents said. Dozens of students gathered at the prestigious American University of Beirut (AUB), some wearing the traditional Arab keffiyeh scarf that has long been a symbol of the Palestinian cause, an AFP photographer said.

"We are Palestine's neighbors. If we do not stand with them today, who will?" asked AUB student Zaina, 23, declining to provide her surname. "Around the world, students my age, from our generation, are the ones raising their voices," she added. Zionist entity's retaliatory offensive, aimed at destroying Hamas, has killed at least 34,535 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-

run territory. The protests came as Hamas said it was considering a plan for a 40-day ceasefire and the release of scores of hostages in exchange for larger numbers of Palestinian prisoners. Some students also carried banners declaring solidarity with south Lebanon, where Zionist entity and Hamas-ally Hezbollah have exchanged near-daily cross-border fire since October.

The protests came as similar demonstrations swept universities across the United States, posing a challenge to administrators trying to balance free speech with complaints that the rallies have veered into anti-Semitism. Footage of police in riot gear called in by universities to break up the rallies has circulated worldwide, recalling the protest movement that erupted during the Vietnam War. "We renew our demand to stop the American-backed Zionist entity genocide against Palestinians and urgently demand to stop Zionist attacks" on south Lebanon, a female student told the crowd at AUB, praising "the global student movement supporting our people". At the nearby Lebanese American University, dozens of students gathered, raising Palestinian flags and burning a Zionist entity one. "We want to convey a message to our people in Gaza: we are with them... We have not forgotten them," Lara Qassem, 18, told AFP.—AFP

Kenya's Ruto orders evacuations after deadly floods

NAIROBI: Kenyan President William Ruto on Tuesday deployed the military to evacuate everyone living in flood-prone areas after 171 people were killed due to heavier than usual rainfall since March. Monsoon rains, amplified by the El Nino weather pattern, have devastated the East African country, engulfing villages and threatening to unleash even more damage in the weeks to come. In the worst single incident that killed nearly 50 villagers, a makeshift dam burst in the Rift Valley before dawn Monday, sending torrents of water and mud gushing down a hill and swallowing everything in its path.

The tragedy in Kamuchiri village, Nakuru county, was the deadliest episode in the country since the start of the March-May rainy season. Ruto, who visited the victims of the Kamuchiri deluge after chairing a cabinet meeting in Nairobi, said his government had drawn up a map of neighborhoods at risk of flooding.

"The military has been mobilized, the national youth service has been mobilized, all security agencies have been mobilized to assist citizens in such areas to evacuate to avoid any dangers of loss of lives," he said. People living in the affected areas will have 48 hours to move, he added. "The forecast is that rain is going to continue and the likelihood of flooding and people losing lives is real and therefore we must take preemptive action," he said. "It is not a time for guesswork, we are better off safe than sorry."

The Kamuchiri disaster—which left at least 48 people dead—cut off a road, uprooted trees, and destroyed homes and vehicles. Around 26 people were hospitalized, Ruto said, with fears that the death toll could rise as search and rescue operations continued. The cabinet warned that two dams—Masinga and Kiambere—both less than 200 kilometers (125 miles) northeast of the capital had "reached historic highs", portending disaster for those downstream. "While the government encourages voluntary evacuation, all those who remain within the areas affected by the directive will be relocated forcibly in the interest of their safety," a statement said.

Monday's tragedy came six years after a dam accident at Solai, also in Nakuru county, killed 48 people, sending millions of litres of muddy water raging through homes and destroying power lines.—AFP

International

UN: Impact of Lebanon border clashes on children alarming

Thousands of kids out of school and healthcare 'critically impacted'

BEIRUT: The United Nations children's agency warned Tuesday that conflict on Lebanon's border was taking a heavy toll on children, with thousands out of school and healthcare "critically impacted". "We are deeply alarmed by the situation of children and families who have been forced from their homes," Edouard Beigbeder, the Lebanon representative for UNICEF, said in a statement.

He further warned of "the profound long-term impact the violence is taking on children's safety, health and access to education". "We call for an immediate ceasefire and the protection of children and civilians," he said. "We must redouble our efforts to make sure every child in Lebanon is in school and learning, is protected from physical and mental harm, and has the opportunity to thrive."

After Hamas's October 7 attack triggered war in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon's Hezbollah and other armed groups have been exchange-

ing regular cross-border fire with Zionist forces, saying their attacks are in support of Gazans and Hamas. Eight children have been killed in Lebanon and 75 wounded since hostilities started, UNICEF said, citing figures from the country's health ministry. More than 92,000 people, almost a third of them children, have meanwhile been displaced, according to the UN's migration agency.

"Should this conflict continue to escalate... the repercussions for children will be devastating," UNICEF spokesman James Elder told a press conference in Geneva. Amid a crushing four-year economic meltdown, UNICEF said "multiple overlapping crises" were pushing families in Lebanon "closer to the brink". The agency said in a statement that "more than 70 schools are currently closed, affecting around 20,000 students and significantly affecting their education", warning of the heightened risk of child labor and early marriage.

It said in a report that health services in

south Lebanon were "critically impacted", with 10 primary healthcare centers and 17 dispensaries "partially or completely closed". More than 10,000 people "including 4,000 children are in need of essential services" like immunization and access to critical medication, UNICEF said. It also cautioned that a surge in vaccine-preventable diseases was "already evident" and said the risk of measles outbreaks was "significant".

UNICEF's Ettie Higgins told the press conference that "we had seen a three-fold increase" of children being referred to the agency's malnutrition programs in the past year. "We are facing a massive collapse" in humanitarian funding in Lebanon in recent months that has forced the agency to cut back "virtually all of our services", Higgins added. "Without a permanent ceasefire, Lebanon is at risk of a full-scale war which would have a devastating impact on the 1.3 million children living in the country today," the UNICEF report added. — AFP



Mourners carry the coffins and pictures of two women from the same family, killed on April 23 in a reported Zionist strike that destroyed their house in the southern Lebanese village of Hanin, during their funeral on April 25, 2024. — AFP

Iran commutes death sentence for tycoon

TEHRAN: Iran's judiciary said Tuesday it had commuted a death sentence handed down against a billionaire business tycoon convicted of pocketing \$2.8 billion while circumventing US-led sanctions for the oil ministry. Following an appeal for clemency, Babak Zanjani, 50, was sentenced instead to 20 years behind bars, judiciary spokesman Asghar Jahangir told reporters. "With the approval of the head of the judiciary, (Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Ejei) and the agreement of (the supreme) leader (Ayatollah Ali Khamenei), his death sentence was overturned and was commuted to 20 years of imprisonment," Jahangir said.

The judiciary chief had taken into consideration "his cooperation during his time in prison" and his return of properties held abroad, Jahangir added. Zanjani had been found guilty of the capital offence of "corruption on earth" after a lengthy public trial in 2016, a rarity in Iran where high-profile cases are normally held behind closed doors.

Zanjani denied any wrongdoing throughout the trial, insisting that the only reason the missing funds had not been paid to the oil ministry was that sanctions had prevented a planned transfer from taking place. In media interviews since, he has said repeatedly that he was tasked by the administration of then president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad with evading restrictions on Iran's access to the international banking system to repatriate hard currency receipts in return for commission.

Ahmadinejad's successor Hassan Rouhani repeatedly accused his predecessor's 2005-13 administration of corruption, triggering a series of prosecutions over alleged illegal commission payments. Zanjani is one of the most high-profile Iranian business figures targeted with asset freezes and travel restrictions by the European Union and the United States for their role in helping their government to evade sanctions. — AFP

King Charles III resumes duties

LONDON: Crowds of well-wishers on Tuesday greeted King Charles III as he made his first official public appearance since being diagnosed with cancer, after doctors said they were "very encouraged" by the progress of his treatment. The British head of state and his wife, Queen Camilla, toured the University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre in central London, which diagnoses and treats a wide range of cancers.

Charles, 75, is patron of Cancer Research UK and Macmillan Cancer Support, while Camilla, 76, is president of Maggie's, another cancer support charity. Outside the centre, the couple smiled and waved to crowds and waiting media before heading inside to meet medical specialists, patients and their families. Charles suspended public-facing duties in February after cancer was found while he was being treated for an enlarged prostate the previous month. The exact nature of his cancer has not been disclosed.

His daughter-in-law Catherine, Princess of Wales, 42, underwent abdominal surgery in January and said in March that she was receiving chemotherapy. Again, no details were given about what type of cancer she has. Kate, as she is widely known, is married to Charles's elder son and heir Prince William. Tuesday's event was



LONDON: Britain's King Charles III, holding a bunch of flowers, waves to crowds after he visits the University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre in London on April 30, 2024. — AFP

the first in a number of planned engagements in the coming weeks and designed to raise awareness of the importance of early cancer diagnosis and highlight innovative research, Buckingham Palace said.

Charles, who succeeded his mother Queen Elizabeth II in September 2022, was officially crowned king on May 6 last year. He has been seen attending church services since his diagnosis and at selected audiences. He has also continued his official state business. On Friday, Buckingham Palace said doctors were "very encouraged" by the progress of his treatment and were "positive" about his continued recovery.

His treatment as an out-patient will continue but

Top French university loses funding over Palestinian protests

PARIS: The Paris region authority sparked controversy Tuesday by temporarily suspending funding for Sciences Po, one of the country's most prestigious universities, after it was rocked by tense pro-Palestinian demonstrations. "I have decided to suspend all regional funding for Sciences Po until calm and security have been restored at the school," Valerie Pécresse, the right-wing head of the greater Paris Ile-de-France region, said on social media on Monday.

She took aim at "a minority of radicalized people calling

for anti-Semitic hatred" and accused hard-left politicians of seeking to exploit the tensions. Regional support for the Paris-based university includes 1 million euros earmarked for 2024, a member of Pécresse's team told AFP. On Tuesday, the university's acting administrator, Jean Basseres, said he regretted the decision.

"The Ile-de-France region is an essential partner of Sciences Po, and I wish to maintain dialogue on the position expressed by Mrs Pécresse", he told French daily Le Monde in an interview published Tuesday. In an echo of tense demonstrations rocking many top US universities, students at Sciences Po have staged a number of protests, with some students furious over the Zionist-Hamas war and ensuing humanitarian crisis in the besieged Palestinian territory of Gaza.

France is home to the world's largest Jewish population after Zionist entity and the United States, as well as Europe's

biggest Muslim community. University officials called in police to clear a protest last week. On Monday, police broke up a student protest demanding an end to bombardment of Gaza at Sorbonne, another top French university. Higher Education Minister Sylvie Retailleau said on Tuesday the French government had no plans to suspend funding for Sciences Po.

Speaking to broadcaster France 2, she estimated the state's funding for the university at 75 million euros. She said there had been "no anti-Semitic remarks" and no violence had been committed during the demonstrations. Both Basseres and Retailleau also said there were no plans to suspend Sciences Po's collaboration with universities in Zionist entity. Critics on the left have denounced Pécresse's announcement. "It's shameful and an absolute scandal," said Mathilde Panot, the head of hard-left France Unbowed (LFI) deputies in parliament, adding the behavior of the students was a "credit to the world and a credit to our country". — AFP

his schedule in the coming weeks will be reduced and subject to medical advice, a spokesperson added. One upcoming engagement is a state visit by Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako of Japan in June. Members of the public last week welcomed the king's return to some duties, and hailed him for raising awareness about cancer, which will affect one in two people, according to Cancer Research UK. "It's a huge issue in today's society," Keegan Gray, 23, a demolitions manager from New Zealand, told AFP. "A lot of people have cancer and a lot of people they keep it to themselves, they're a bit shy about it."

He said it was "really beautiful" that the king was raising awareness of cancer and the work of treatment clinics. Actor Annie Rae Donaghy, 21, said the king's condition will remind people that "everyone struggles with this", regardless of status. Charles and Kate's cancer diagnoses have created a headache for the royal family, with both having postponed public engagements. William has also taken a step back to support his wife and their three young children, leaving fewer senior royals to fill the schedule.

Camilla, 76, has stepped in to take over many of her husband's engagements. Charles's sister Princess Anne and his youngest brother Prince Edward have also taken on more prominent roles. Charles's estranged younger son, Prince Harry, is no longer a working royal but is expected in London on May 8 to mark the 10th anniversary of his *Invictus* Games for disabled military veterans. He will then join his American wife Meghan on a visit to Nigeria. — AFP

MPs urge govt to find solutions to...

Continued from Page 1

Gulf state has offered 150 MW, which may be just enough to meet shortages.

MP Bader Al-Mulla said the power outages in Nuzha, Mansouriya and Dahiyat Abdullah Al-Salem before the start of the summer heat and before consumption levels soar is an indication of more bad news amid buying more power from the Gulf grid in the absence of a clear vision and a fundamental solution. He said after the inaugural session of the Assembly on May 14, he will submit a motion for a general debate over the electricity problem.

Activists occupy Columbia hall...

Continued from Page 1

The school has rejected the demand, with university president Minouche Shafik saying talks with students had collapsed. Protests have swept through US higher education institutions, with many erecting tent encampments on campus grounds after around 100 protesters were first arrested at Columbia on April 18.

At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, police moved in Tuesday morning to clear one encampment, detaining some protesters. TV footage showed police at the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond on Monday evening pushing and shoving away protesters, with students saying teargas and pepper spray was deployed.

At the University of Texas at Austin, police also clashed with protesters Monday, including using pepper spray, and made arrests while dismantling an encampment, adding to hundreds detained nationwide over the weekend. Protests against the Gaza war, with its high Palestinian civilian death toll, have posed a challenge to university administrators trying to balance free speech rights with complaints that the rallies have veered into "anti-Semitism" and "hate".

Footage of police in riot gear summoned at various colleges has been viewed around the world, recalling the protest

movement that erupted during the Vietnam War. On Tuesday, access to Columbia was restricted to residential students and essential staff. "After 206 days of genocide and over 34,000 Palestinian martyrs, Columbia community members took back Hamilton Hall just after midnight," a student group said in a statement citing the Zionist entity's war in Gaza.

It said the group had renamed the building "Hind's Hall" in honor of a six-year-old Gazan girl killed by the Zionist entity during its ongoing offensive against Hamas. UN human rights chief Volker Turk voiced concern at the heavy-handed steps taken to disperse the campus protests, saying that "freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly are fundamental to society". He added that "incitement to violence or hatred on grounds of identity or viewpoints — whether real or assumed — must be strongly repudiated".

Shafik, in her statement on Monday, said that many Jewish students had fled Columbia's campus in fear. "Anti-Semitic language and actions are unacceptable," she said. Protest organizers deny accusations of "anti-Semitism", arguing their actions are aimed at the Zionist entity's government and its prosecution of the conflict in Gaza. They also insist non-student agitators have engineered some of the incidents.

With the school year wrapping up, administrators point to the need to maintain order on campus for exam studies. One graduate student protester, who asked to be identified only as "Z," told AFP: "It's finals week, everyone is still working on their finals. But at the end of the day, school is temporary." — AFP

Bibi vows Rafah offensive 'with...'

Continued from Page 1

Hamas, whose envoys returned from Cairo talks to their base in Qatar, would "discuss the ideas and the proposal", said a Hamas source, adding that "we are keen to respond as quickly as possible". Al-Qahera News, a site linked to Egyptian intelligence services, earlier reported that Hamas negotiators were due to "return with a written response". A Zionist official told AFP the government "will wait for answers until Wednesday night", and then "make a decision" whether to send envoys to Cairo.

Washington has heightened pressure on all sides to reach a ceasefire — a message pushed by Blinken, who was on his seventh regional tour since the war broke out. Blinken, who arrived in Jordan from Saudi Arabia and was later heading to the Zionist entity for talks with Netanyahu and other officials on Wednesday, described the Zionist entity's offer as "extraordinarily generous".

In Amman on Tuesday, Blinken called for the redoubling of aid efforts at a "critical moment in making sure that everything that needs to be done is being done". He met with King Abdullah II, who stressed the "importance of immediate action to stop the humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip and the need to protect innocent civilians", according to a royal statement.

Washington has strongly backed its ally the Zionist entity but also pressured it to refrain from a ground invasion of Rafah, which is packed with displaced civilians. Calev Ben-Dor, a former analyst for Zionist foreign ministry and now deputy editor for specialized review Fathom, told AFP that Netanyahu's "Rafah comments likely have more to do with trying to keep his coalition intact, rather than operational plans in the near term".

The prime minister, whose government includes far-right politicians who have vehemently opposed the proposed truce, "is feeling the squeeze between the Biden administration... and the moderate and more extreme components of

his coalition", Ben-Dor said. US President Joe Biden, facing rising fury on US university campuses, urged the Egyptian and Qatari leaders Monday "to exert all efforts to secure the release of hostages held by Hamas".

Biden called this "the only obstacle" to securing relief for Gaza's civilians, who the United Nations has warned are on the brink of famine. A US-built floating pier on Gaza's coast to allow for greater aid deliveries is expected to be completed later this week, said Cyprus, the departure point for the planned "maritime corridor".

As diplomacy continued, the Zionist entity kept up its bombardment that has flattened swathes of Gaza. An AFP correspondent reported air strikes on Gaza City, Khan Yunis and Rafah. Palestinians in Rafah mourned the latest victims as children were being pulled from the rubble. At Al-Najjar Hospital, grief-stricken relatives jostled over the dead, whose bodies were shrouded in white. "We demand the entire world call for a lasting truce," said one bereaved relative, Abu Taha.

The Zionist entity's offensive has killed at least 34,535 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in the territory. As the Gaza war has roiled the region and its human toll has sparked international outrage, political momentum has built in the search for a post-war solution to the wider Zionist-Palestinian conflict.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said he expected several European governments to announce their recognition of a Palestinian state within the next month, including Belgium, Ireland, Malta, Slovenia and Spain. The UN's International Court of Justice on Tuesday threw out Nicaragua's request for emergency measures to stop Germany sending military supplies to the Zionist entity over alleged violations of the Genocide Convention.

In a pending ICJ procedure, South Africa accused the Zionist entity of perpetuating genocide in Gaza. China meanwhile said that rival Palestinian groups Hamas and Fatah had met in Beijing recently for "talks on promoting intra-Palestinian reconciliation". Hamas seized sole control of Gaza in 2007, while Fatah maintains partial administrative control in the Zionist-occupied West Bank through the Palestinian Authority. — AFP

International

Gunman storms Afghan mosque, kills six

Imam and three-year-old child among killed in Herat attack

HERAT, Afghanistan: A gunman stormed a mosque in western Afghanistan and killed six people, a government spokesman said Tuesday, with local residents claiming the minority Shiite community had been targeted. Interior ministry spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani said that "an unknown armed person shot at civilian worshippers in a mosque" in Herat province's Guzara district on Monday at around 9:00 pm (1630 GMT). "Six civilians were martyred and one civilian was injured," he wrote on social media platform X early Tuesday morning. Locals said the mosque served the minority Shiite community in a district just south of the provincial capital of Herat city, and the imam and a three-year-old child were among those killed.

They also said a team of three gunmen staged the attack, contradicting the official account. "One of them was outside and two of them came inside the mosque, shooting the worshippers," said 60-year-old Ibrahim Akhlaqi, the brother of the slain imam. "It was in the middle of the prayers." "Whoever was in the mosque has either been martyred or wounded," added 23-year-old Sayed Murtaza Hussaini.

While no group has claimed the attack, the regional chapter of the Islamic State (IS) group is the largest security threat in Afghanistan and has frequently targeted Shiite communities. The Taliban government has pledged to protect religious and ethnic minorities since returning to power in August 2021, but rights monitors say they've done little to make good on that promise.

The most notorious attack linked to IS since the Taliban takeover was in 2022, when at least 53 people—including 46 girls and young women—were slain in the suicide bombing of an education centre. Taliban officials blamed IS for the attack, which hap-



HERAT: Taliban security personnel stand guard as Afghans mourn at a burial ceremony of the slain Shiite Muslims after gunmen attacked a mosque in Guzara district of Herat province on April 30, 2024. -- AFP

pened in a Shiite neighborhood of the capital Kabul. Afghanistan's new rulers claim to have ousted IS from the country and are highly sensitive to suggestions the group has found safe haven there since the withdrawal of foreign forces.

Taliban authorities have frequently given death tolls lower than other sources after bombings and gun attacks, or otherwise downplayed them, in an apparent attempt to minimize security threats. A United Nations Security Council report released in January said there

had been a decrease in IS attacks in Afghanistan because of "counter-terrorism efforts by the Taliban". But the report said IS still had "substantial" recruitment in the country and that the militant group had "the ability to project a threat into the region and beyond". The Islamic State chapter spanning Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia claimed responsibility for the March attack on the Crocus City Hall concert venue in Moscow, killing more than 140 people. It was the deadliest attack in Russia in two decades. -- AFP

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Manila and Washington have a mutual defense treaty and recent confrontations between Philippine and Chinese vessels have fuelled speculation of what would trigger it. Top US officials have repeatedly said that "an armed attack" against Philippine public vessels, aircraft, armed forces or coastguard anywhere in the South China Sea would invoke the treaty.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos said this month that US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin had given assurances that the treaty would be invoked if another "foreign power" killed a Filipino soldier.

In the latest incident, a vessel belonging to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and another from the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) were delivering fuel and food to fishermen plying the waters near the reef. "During the patrol, the Philippine vessels encountered dangerous maneuvers and obstruction from four China Coast Guard vessels and six Chinese Maritime Militia vessels," the Philippine Coast Guard statement said.

China Coast Guard vessels used water cannon against the BFAR and Philippine Coast Guard boat, it said. The PCG vessel was sprayed from both sides, causing damage to its railing and canopy.

"Despite the harassment and provocative actions of the Chinese Coast Guard, both the PCG and BFAR vessels stood their ground and continued their maritime patrol," the statement said.

The Philippines found a floating barrier across the entrance to the shoal during a similar mission in September. Philippine Coast Guard personnel then cut a rope tethering the barrier to an anchor, allowing it to drift, in a special operation ordered by Marcos.

The China Coast Guard later removed the line of buoys from the water. Marcos has stood up to China's growing assertiveness in the waterway since taking office in 2022, insisting the Philippines "will not yield" as it defends its sovereign territory. -- AFP

Philippines accuses China of firing water cannon on its vessels

MANILA: The Philippines said the China Coast Guard used water cannon on two of its vessels on Tuesday, causing damage to one of them, during a patrol near a reef off the Southeast Asian country. Manila and Beijing have a long history of territorial disputes in the South China Sea, with several collisions involving Philippine and Chinese vessels in recent months, as well as the use of water cannon by the China Coast Guard.

The latest incident happened near the China-controlled Scarborough Shoal, which has long been a potential flashpoint, during a mission to resupply Filipino fishermen. "This damage serves as evidence of the forceful water pressure used by the China Coast Guard in their harassment of the Philippine vessels," a statement issued by the Philippine Coast Guard said.

The China Coast Guard had also reinstalled a 380-metre (416-yard) barrier across the entrance to the shoal, a traditional fishing ground, blocking access to the waters inside, the statement said.

China's coast guard said it had "expelled" two Philippine ships from its waters near Huangyan Island, which is the Chinese name for the shoal. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian later Tuesday told Manila to stop "provocative actions" in its waters.

"China advises the Philippines to immediately stop its infringing and provocative actions and not to challenge China's firm determination to safeguard its sovereignty," he told a regular press conference. China claims almost the entire South China Sea, brushing off rival claims from other countries, including the Philippines, and an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis. The triangular chain of reefs and rocks that make up Scarborough Shoal lies 240 kilometers (150 miles) west of the Philippines' main island of Luzon and nearly 900 kilometers from Hainan, the nearest major Chinese land mass. China seized the shoal from



AT SEA, Undefined: This frame grab from handout video footage taken and released on April 30, 2024 by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) shows the Philippine Coast Guard ship BRP Bagacay being hit by water cannon from Chinese coast guard vessels near the Chinese-controlled Scarborough shoal in disputed waters of the South China Sea. -- AFP

Taiwan warns against visiting China due to expanded secrets law

TAIPEI: Taipei has raised the alarm about the growing risks Taiwanese people could face when visiting China, pointing to an expanded state secrets law that will take effect on Wednesday. Chinese lawmakers passed the revised Law on Guarding State Secrets in February, according to state news agency Xinhua, expanding the definition of such sensitive information to include a new category known as "work secrets".

For people from democratic Taiwan—which Beijing claims as part of its territory—the expanded law means the risk of visiting China is likely to "increase significantly", Taipei's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) said in a statement Tuesday. Under the updated law, the "work secrets" category is defined as information that is "not state secrets but will cause certain adverse effects if leaked", according to the MAC, which handles cross-strait affairs.

It added that the expanded legislation was "highly vague and may cause people to break the law at any time". At the time of the law's passage, Xinhua said it stressed "the importance of upholding the CCP's (Chinese Communist Party's) leadership over work to guard state secrets".

The MAC criticized Beijing for "continuously using legislations" to strictly monitor overseas visitors to China, saying cases of "fabricated crimes" being leveled against Taiwanese and foreigners "are not uncommon". "We would like to once again remind the public to refrain from going to China for the time being unless necessary," it said on Tuesday.

Among the most high-profile Taiwanese arrested in China was democracy activist Lee Ming-che in 2017. He was jailed for five years on a national security conviction and released in 2022.

Last year a Taiwanese man who is vice chair of a minor political party that advocates for the island's independence was arrested in China and charged with "secession". MAC's announcement on Tuesday comes less than a month out from the inauguration of president-elect Lai Ching-te, whom China considers a "dangerous separatist" who will lead Taiwan down a path of "war and decline". He, like President Tsai Ing-wen, rejects Beijing's claim on the island. -- AFP

News in brief

Czech gov ups retirement age

PRAGUE: The Czech government on Tuesday approved a pension reform allowing the retirement age to rise above 65 to respond to the needs of an ageing society, Prime Minister Petr Fiala said. The reform, expected to take effect in 2025, will be submitted to parliament where the government has a majority. "The reform will ensure dignified pensions to people who are in their thirties and forties today," Fiala told reporters. "Had we not approved it, the system would not be sustainable and it would collapse sooner or later," he added. The retirement age has been growing steadily and is currently capped at 65 years for people born after 1971. -- AFP

France held more migrants in 2023

PARIS: France held slightly more undocumented migrants in detention centers last year than in 2022, non-governmental organizations said on Tuesday, warning of increasing violence inside. French authorities held 46,955 migrants in the detention centers across the country and in overseas territories in 2023, compared to 43,565 the previous year, a report by migrant rights groups including SOS Solidarity and France Terre d'Asile ("France Land of Asylum") said. In mainland France, the large majority were men, 5 percent were women and 87 individuals were children accompanied by their parents. More than 120 said they were under-18 but French authorities found them to be adults. -- AFP

Four die in Paris apartment fires

PARIS: At least four people were killed in apartment building fires that broke out in two separate Paris neighborhoods, police sources and prosecutors said Tuesday. Three bodies were found soon after 8:00 am (0600 GMT) in a seventh-floor flat near the Opera Garnier in the centre of the French capital. The blaze on the Boulevard des Italiens is believed to have started between 4:00 to 5:00 am. Those killed "couldn't get out of the window because of bars installed to prevent burglars getting in via the roof," said Ariel Weil, mayor of the city's four central districts. --AFP

French media scion resigns

PARIS: French media baron Arnaud Lagardere resigned Tuesday as chief executive of the sprawling group of the same name after being charged with misuse of corporate funds. Lagardere, who sold the firm built by his father to media giant Vivendi in November, plans to appeal a temporary ban on holding management positions resulting from the charges, his company said. The firm operates the profitable Relay chain of airport and train station stores, airport duty-free shops, major performance venues, as well as media including radio station Europe 1 and Sunday paper the Journal du dimanche and France's top book publisher Hachette. -- AFP



A monkey eats watermelon during a hot summer day in New Delhi on April 29, 2024. -- AFP

The heatwave baking large swathes of Asia

BANGKOK: Large swathes of Asia are sweltering through a heatwave that has topped temperature records from Myanmar to the Philippines and forced millions of children to stay home from school. Here are some questions and answers about the extreme heat, which scientists warn will become more frequent and intense because of human-induced climate change.

Where is affected?

The heat has hit much of South and Southeast Asia, with record temperatures in Myanmar's Chauk and the Philippine capital Manila in recent days. Thai authorities have issued warnings about "severe conditions", while authorities in Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, India and Bangladesh all forecast temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit).

The Philippines and Bangladesh both suspended in-person classes, while India is reviewing whether heat has affected turnout in national elections. Even northern Japan has been affected: temperatures in Japan's Sapporo this month passed 25C (77F) at the earliest point of any year on record.

What is causing the heat?

The months preceding the region's monsoon, or rainy season, are usually hot but temperatures this year are well above average in many countries. Experts say climate change is causing more frequent heatwaves that are more intense and last longer.

Asia is also warming faster than the global average, according to the World Meteorological Organization, a UN agency. And the El Nino weather phenomenon is playing a role this year, said Milton Speer, a meteorologist and visiting research fellow at the University of Technology Sydney. "The lack of cloud in El Ninos means that temperatures are likely to be higher on average," he told AFP. Sea surface temperatures in the region are currently several degrees Celsius above normal, "which helps keep the temperatures higher than average inland overnight". "So daytime temperatures start climbing from a higher base." There are other factors at play too, including deforestation that reduces shade and increases dry surface area, and the urban heat island effect, where concrete, glass and steel structures absorb rather than reflect heat.

Who is affected?

Extreme heat disproportionately affects children, the elderly and those living in poverty. Children, older people and those with pre-existing conditions or disabilities can overheat more quickly. Those living in poverty also often lack cooling solutions at home or are forced to work in conditions without adequate heat protection. The UN children's agency UNICEF warned this month that 243 million children across the Pacific and East Asia are at risk from heatwaves.

"Child exposure to heatwaves leads to heat stress," said Salwa Aleryani, health specialist for UNICEF's regional East Asia and Pacific office. "Severe issues can develop, such as cardiovascular diseases, organ failure, muscle and nerve dysfunction," she told AFP.

How have countries reacted?

Authorities in several countries asked citizens to stay at home. Hospitals in Nepal were put on standby, while Cambodian officials asked public schools to keep doors and windows open for ventilation.

Measures went further in Bangladesh and the Philippines, with schools closed for days. But many children will not have cooler conditions at home, warned Aleryani. They may also be left unsupervised by parents who cannot afford to stay home from work, and risk serious interruptions to their education. --AFP



An eruption from Mount Ruang volcano is seen from Tagulandang island in Sitara, North Sulawesi, on April 30, 2024. -- AFP

Indonesia volcano erupts, over 6,000 people evacuated

MANADO, Indonesia: Indonesia's remote Mount Ruang volcano erupted several times on Tuesday, authorities said, issuing the highest level of alert and ordering thousands of people to evacuate due to the threat of a tsunami from debris sliding into the sea. The country's volcanology agency had warned the threat from the volcano was not over after it erupted more than half a dozen times this month, sparking the evacuation of more than 6,000 people.

Ruang, located in Indonesia's North Sulawesi province, erupted at around 01:15 am local time on Tuesday (1715 GMT Monday) and then twice more that morning, the volcanology agency said in a statement. The volcano sent a tower of ash more than five kilometers (3.1 miles) into the sky, it added, as well as a fiery column of lava. The national disaster agency BNPB estimated 11,000 to 12,000 people had to be relocated from near Ruang's crater, spokesman Abdul Muhari told a press conference. "Currently local disaster mitigation agency... military and police are evacuating residents," he said. Images released by the agency showed a molten red column bursting into the sky, a large ash cloud spilling from the crater and burning embers near local houses. The disaster agency imposed a seven-kilometer exclusion zone around Ruang after volcanology officials warned locals of "the potential for ejections of incandescent rocks, hot clouds and tsunamis due to eruption material entering the sea". Abdul said a rescue ship and a warship had been dispatched to help move thousands from neighboring Tagulandang island north to Siau island because of the tsunami warning. --AFP

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2024

Gulf Bank records KD 12.9 million in net profit for first quarter of 2024

Al-Kharafi: Bank well positioned for sustainable growth in the years ahead

Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi

- Gulf Bank has showcased a robust operational performance during the first quarter supported by a solid top line growth, and healthy balance sheet indicators.
- The expansion of our loan book during the first three months of 2024 reflects the effectiveness of our strategic initiatives to meet our clients' evolving needs.
- The excellent enhancement in our operating profitability reflects our dedication to strategic growth and financial prudence to maintain our market share.
- We are well positioned for sustainable growth in the years ahead with our firm commitment to innovation, strong financial foundation, and customer-centric approach.

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank K.S.C.P. announced its financial results for the first three months ending March 31, 2024. The bank reported a net profit of KD 12.9 million, a decline of KD 4.4 million or 25.6 percent compared to 2023 first three months net profit of KD 17.3 million.

In addition, Gulf Bank recorded an operating income of KD 48.3 million for the first three months of 2024, representing an increase of 4.1 percent compared to the same period of last year. Moreover, operating profit before provisions and impairments has increased to KD 26.6 million, representing a healthy growth of 6.5 percent compared to the first quarter of 2023.

The decline in net profit for the first three months of 2024 is attributed to the concurrent rise in total provisions and impairments of KD 6.3 million compared to the same period of last year. The increase in total provisions was partially driven by a KD 2 million increase in general provisions as a result of the good year-to-date growth in net loans and advances of 3.6 percent and a KD 4.2 million increase in credit cost, which includes specific provisions and loan recoveries net of write-offs. While this increase in credit cost has impacted short-term results, we are actively implementing prudent risk management protocols to position ourselves for long-term sustainable growth.

As for asset quality, the non-performing loans (NPL) ratio was 1.2 percent as of March 31, 2024, compared to the prior year level of 0.8 percent. Additionally, the Bank continues to have significant non-performing loans coverage ratio of 458 percent including total provisions and collaterals.

Total credit provisions as of March 31, 2024 reached KD 300 million whereas IFRS 9 accounting requirements (ie, ECL or expected credit losses) were KD 170 million. As a result, the bank has a very healthy excess provision level of KD 130 million, above and beyond what is required by the IFRS 9 accounting requirements.

Compared to December 31, 2023, total assets increased by 1.3 percent to KD 7.3 billion, net loans and advances increased by 3.6 percent to KD 5.4 billion, while customer deposits increased by 4.6 percent to KD 4.4 billion and total shareholders' equity reached KD 788 million.

The bank's regulatory Tier 1 ratio of 14.7 percent was 2.7 percent above the regulatory minimum of 12 percent and the Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of 16.8 percent was 2.8 percent above the regulatory minimum of 14 percent. On March 23, 2024, Gulf Bank held its Annual General Assembly Meeting,

Tunisia receives \$1.2bn loan from Islamic finance group

TUNIS: The Saudi-based International Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC) will lend debt-ridden Tunisia \$1.2 billion to help state firms import raw material, Tunisia's economy ministry said in a statement Monday. The loan, payable over three years, will enable Tunisian state-owned companies to help cover the cost of imports such as "crude oil and petroleum products", according to the statement.

Tunisia, whose debt currently hovers around 80 percent of its GDP with a yearly inflation averaging up to 10 percent, heavily relies on imports for food and energy. The North African country entered a recession in the second half of 2023 with a 0.4-percent economic growth for the year. Economists forecast a two-percent growth this year. The loan deal, to be paid back over three years, was signed on Sunday in Riyadh by Tunisian Economy Minister Feryel Ouerghi and Hani Salem Sonbol, the CEO of the ITFC which is a member of the Islamic Development Bank Group.

Tunisia, also a member of the IDB, controls over 100 public companies and subsidizes several essential products such as fuel and basic foodstuffs like sugar and cereals. State-owned companies that will benefit from the loan include Gafsa Phosphate Company, a former flagship of the Tunisian economy that has seen its production collapse since the 2011 revolution due to a lack of investment and bouts of social unrest. Tunisia has endured years of economic hardship made worse by the coronavirus pandemic and the fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

It has also been beset by political tensions since President Kais Saied launched a power grab in July 2021. Last February, parliament passed a controversial amendment allowing Tunisia's central bank to finance the public budget with an interest-free loan of seven billion Tunisian dinars (\$2.2 billion). In October 2022, the International Monetary Fund agreed in principle to lend Tunisia around \$2 billion, but President Kais Saied later rejected it on the grounds that the reforms it required in return were not sustainable. — AFP



Gulf Bank's Chairman Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi

where shareholders approved the distribution of a cash dividend of 12 fils per share for the year 2023, representing a 57 percent cash payout ratio, in addition to a 5 percent bonus shares.

Financial performance and growth

Commenting on Gulf Bank's first quarter 2024 financial results, Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Gulf Bank's Chairman said: "I am pleased to announce that Gulf Bank has showcased a robust operational performance during the first quarter supported by a solid top line growth, and healthy balance sheet indicators. While the first quarter results may reflect a fall in net profit growth compared to the same period of last year, we remain optimistic about the bank's future prospects." He added: "Having said that, the expansion of our loan book during the first three months of 2024 reflects the effectiveness of our strategic initiatives to meet our clients' evolving needs. This upward trajectory in loan growth demonstrates our ability to adapt and thrive in dynamic market conditions solidifying our position in the Kuwaiti market." On the improvement of the Bank's operational profitability, Al-Kharafi stated: "The excellent enhancement in our operating profitability lines, particularly in net interest income, operating income, and operating profit, reflect our dedication to strategic growth and financial prudence, while highlighting our success in maintaining our market share."

Operational efficiency

While Gulf Bank continues its digital transformation journey, it remains consistent in accelerating business development and driving operational efficiencies. Following the completion of implementing phase I of the new core banking system during 2023, the bank is now in the process of launching and implementing phase II of its core banking system. Commenting on this essential digital core banking transformation

Microsoft CEO pledges \$1.7bn AI, investment in Indonesia

JAKARTA: Microsoft's chief executive officer pledged a \$1.7 billion investment in artificial intelligence and cloud computing to help develop Indonesia's AI infrastructure after a meeting with the archipelago's president on Tuesday. Indonesia is Southeast Asia's biggest economy and has a population of around 280 million across its sprawling archipelago, with a growing demand for data centres and AI tech in the region. Satya Nadella held talks with President Joko Widodo, popularly known as Jokowi, at Jakarta's presidential palace before delivering a keynote speech about AI in the Indonesian capital.

G7 agrees to phase out coal-fired power plants by mid-2030s

TURIN: G7 energy and climate ministers agreed a timeframe Tuesday for phasing out coal-fired power plants, setting a goal in the mid-2030s, in a move hailed as significant by some environmentalists but described as "too late" by others. The Group of Seven two-day meeting in Turin is the first big political session since the world pledged at the UN's COP28 annual climate summit in Dubai in December to transition away from coal, oil and gas.

The G7 commits to "phase out existing unabated coal power generation in our energy systems during the first half of 2030s," the final statement read. However it left some wiggle room,

saying nations could follow "a timeline consistent with keeping a limit of 1.5-degrees-Celsius temperature rise within reach, in line with countries' net zero pathways".

It also preserves a place for coal power if it is "abated", meaning its emissions are captured or limited by technology - something panned by many as unproven and a distraction from cutting fossil fuel use. The G7 members are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. Negotiations over a fixed date were reportedly tricky. Some countries, and many environmentalists, had been pushing for a 2030 limit, but Japan - which relies heavily

Waleed Khaled Mandani

- The bank remains committed to harnessing technology to streamline processes, improve accessibility, and deliver tailored financial solutions to our diverse customer base.
- We are in the process of implementing phase II of our core banking system, following the completion of phase I.
- Gulf Bank is fostering long-lasting customer relationships by promoting savings through incentives and rewards to customers and cultivating a culture of fiscal responsibility and wealth accumulation.
- The Al-Danah millionaire account is a pivotal strategy strengthening the bank's current and saving accounts portfolio, thereby optimizing the cost of funds, and expanding its funding channels.



Gulf Bank Acting CEO Waleed Khaled Mandani

initiative, Waleed Khaled Mandani, Gulf Bank Acting CEO said: "Gulf Bank is ready to leverage these foundational changes to drive operational efficiencies and enhance customer experience. The bank remains committed to harnessing technology to streamline processes, improve accessibility, and deliver tailored financial solutions to its diverse customer base."

Customer-centric

As part of Gulf Bank's innovation strategy and focus on customer-centricity, the bank launched its latest initiative, the Kids Savings Account "Neo", aimed at nurturing customer financial literacy and inclusion from a young age. Commenting on this latest offering, Waleed Mandani said: "This initiative demonstrates our dedication to providing innovative solutions that prioritize the needs of our customers at every stage of life."

Moreover, and on the recent increase of the Al-Danah Millionaire account prize to two million dinars, Mandani stated: "The Al-Danah product is a pivotal strategy in strengthening the bank's Current and Savings Accounts (CASA) portfolio, thereby, optimizing the cost of funds and expanding our funding channels." It is worth mentioning that Gulf Bank's CASA was 30.5 percent as of March 31, 2024.

Mandani concluded his remarks by saying: "By promoting savings through incentives and rewards to customers, the bank is fostering long-lasting relationships and cultivating a culture of fiscal responsibility and wealth accumulation".

ESG initiatives

As part of Gulf Bank's comprehensive ESG initiatives, the bank inaugurated its first eco-friendly branch during the first quarter of 2024. The Sabah Al-Ahmad residential area branch is designed with energy-efficient features and sustainable materials, aligning with the bank's environmental stewardship.

"The thing I am really excited to announce today is the expanded announcement of data centre investment, so \$1.7 billion to bring the latest and greatest AI infrastructure to Indonesia," Nadella told a crowd, adding data centers would be built in Indonesia soon. "We are going to lead this wave in terms of the next generation of AI infrastructure that's needed," he said. "Our mission ultimately is to empower every person and every organization in Indonesia to take advantage of this next big AI wave."

He said the tech giant would provide AI training for hundreds of thousands of Indonesians. "I'm very pleased to announce that we at Microsoft are going to train 2.5 million people by 2025 across the ASEAN region. In fact 840,000 right here in Indonesia alone," he said. Microsoft said in a statement the investment would be over four years. Dharma Simorangkir, Microsoft Indonesia's president director, said it "sets a new milestone for Indonesia's digital landscape."

Nadella earlier told Jokowi the tech giant's pledge

Furthermore, Gulf Bank is engaged in promoting environmental consciousness within the community. The bank is actively advocating the use of reusable bags and minimizing plastic consumption at five co-operative societies. Through, these relentless efforts, the bank aims at mitigating its environmental impact and fostering a culture of sustainability within the bank and the broader community.

Positive credit outlook

Gulf Bank continues to be well recognized in terms of its creditworthiness and financial strength internationally. During the year 2023, Moody's Investor Services has affirmed the 'A3' long-term deposit ratings of Gulf Bank and changed the outlook to "Positive" from "Stable". This upgrade is an acknowledgement of Gulf Bank's sound capitalization, improving profitability and strong asset quality.

In addition, Fitch Ratings affirmed the bank's Long-Term Issuer Default Rating at 'A' with a 'Stable' Outlook and a Viability Rating of 'bbb-'. The bank has also an affirmed Long-term Foreign Currency Rating of 'A+' with a 'Stable' Outlook from Capital Intelligence Ratings.

Appreciation

Al-Kharafi concluded his remarks by stating: "Looking forward, we are well positioned for sustainable growth in the years ahead with our firm commitment to innovation, strong financial foundation, and customer-centric approach." He added: "On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank our shareholders for their ongoing trust, and our employees for their commitment and dedication. I would also like to thank the regulatory authorities for their continuous support. Finally, I want to thank our customers for their loyalty, and reiterate our commitment to offering them the best banking experience."

Key financial indicators for Q1 2024

- First quarter 2024 net profit of KD 12.9 million.
- First quarter 2024 operating income of KD 48.3 million, an increase of 4.1 percent compared to same period of last year.
- Net loans and advances grew by 3.6 percent year-to-date to reach KD 5.4 billion.
- Non-performing loan ratio for the first quarter 2024 was 1.2 percent, with a strong non-performance loan coverage ratio of 458 percent.
- Capital ratios as of the first quarter 2024, Tier 1 ratio was 14.7 percent and capital adequacy ratio (CAR) was 16.8 percent.



JAKARTA: This handout picture taken and released on April 30, 2024 by Indonesia's presidential palace shows Indonesian President Joko Widodo (right) greeting Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella at the Merdeka Palace in Jakarta. — AFP

was the "single biggest investment value" in the 29-year history of its business in Indonesia, Minister of Communication and Informatics Budi Arie Setiadi said in a statement. — AFP



VENARIA REALE, Italy: Italy's Environment and Energy Security Minister Gilberto Pichetto Fratin (left), Japanese Minister of Economy Ken Saito (center) and Japan's State Minister of the Environment Tetsuya Yagi (right) attend the final press conference of the G7 Climate, energy and environment at Venaria Reale, near Turin, on April 30, 2024. — AFP

ily on coal - was reluctant to set a date at all. The leaders of the G7 countries will produce their own statement after a summit in southern Italy in June.

The 2015 Paris Agreement saw countries agree to cap global warming at "well

below" 2C above preindustrial times - with a safer limit of 1.5C if possible. To keep the 1.5C limit in play, the UN's climate expert panel has said emissions need to be slashed almost in half this decade, but they continue to rise. — AFP

Business

Dying salmon pose major threat to Norway's vast fish-farm industry

Almost 63m salmon died prematurely last year in underwater sea pens in Norway

OSLO: They are hailed for their omega-3 fatty acids and micronutrients, but Norway's salmon are not in the best of health themselves at the fish farms where they are bred. Almost 63 million salmon - a record - died prematurely last year in the large underwater sea pens that dot the fjords of Norway, the world's biggest producer of Atlantic salmon.

That represents a mortality rate of 16.7 percent, also a record high and a number that has gradually risen over the years - posing an economic and an ethical problem to producers.



TRONES, Norway: Handout picture released in April 2024 and taken in mid-April 2023 by the Norwegian Food Safety Authority at an unnamed fish farm on the Trondelag coast in Norway shows salmon fish that died prematurely. - AFP photos

The salmon succumb to illnesses of the pancreas, gills or heart, or to injuries suffered during the removal of sea lice parasites. "The death of animals is a waste of life and resources," Edgar Brun, director of Aquatic Animal Health and Welfare at the Norwegian Veterinary Institute, told AFP.

"We also have a moral and ethical responsibility to guarantee them the best possible conditions."

Norway's salmon exports exceeded \$11 billion last year, with the 1.2 million tons sold representing the equivalent of 16 million meals per day. The 63 million prematurely dead salmon represent almost \$2 billion in lost income for the industry.

Not so appetizing

Salmon that die prematurely are usually turned into animal feed or biofuel. But according to Norwegian media, some fish that are in dire health at the time of slaughter, or even already dead, do sometimes end up on dinner plates, occasionally even sent off with a label marked "superior". "I see fish on sale that I myself would not eat," a former head of quality control at a salmon slaughterhouse, Laila Sele Navikauskas, told public broadcaster NRK in November.

Eating those salmon poses no danger to human health, experts say. "The pathogens that cause these illnesses in the salmon cannot be passed on to humans," Brun explained. But the revelations damage the salmon's precious image. "If you buy meat in a store, you expect it to come from an animal that was slaughtered in line with regulations and not one that was lying dead outside the barn," said Trygve Poppe, a specialist in fish health.

"Otherwise, as a consumer you feel tricked." The Norwegian Food Safety Authority said it observed anomalies at half of the fish farms inspected last year, noting that, among other things, injured or deformed fish had been exported in violation of Norwegian regulations. In order to maintain its strong reputation, only salmon of ordinary or superior quality is authorized for export. The lower quality fish - which accounts for a growing share of stocks, up to a third last winter - can only be sold abroad after it has been transformed, into fillets for example.

Robert Eriksson, head of the Norwegian Seafood Association which represents small producers - generally considered less at fault - said the irregularities reported at some breeders were "totally unacceptable". "We live off of trust," he said. Taking shortcuts means "you get punished by the market and the economic impact is much bigger than the few extra kilos you sold."

The Norwegian Seafood Federation - representing the biggest fish farming companies, those most often singled out over quality - insists it is addressing the matter but says more time is needed.

"On average, it takes three years to breed a salmon," said the body's director, Geir Ove Ystmark.



GISKE, Norway: An aerial view taken on Feb 5, 2024 shows the Oksebasen fish farm which is operated by the world's largest producer of Atlantic salmon Mowi, in Giske, Norway.

So it's very difficult to see immediate results today, even though we have launched a series of initiatives and measures." It is precisely the speed at which the fish are bred that is the problem, according to fish health specialist Poppe, who criticized the "terribly bad animal conditions" and who has stopped eating farmed salmon. "The salmon are subjected to stress their entire lives, from the time they hatch in fresh water until their slaughter," said Poppe.

"For example, during the first phase in fresh water, the light and temperature is manipulated so they'll grow as quickly as possible," he explained. "In the wild, this phase takes two to six years. When they're bred, it takes six months to a year."

Truls Gulowsen, head of Friends of the Earth Norway, said recent years' higher mortality rates were the result of aggressive industrialization. "We have bred a farmed fish that has poor chances of survival

and which is dying from a combination of stress and bad genes because it's been bred to grow as fast as possible and subjected to a major change in diet."

The Norwegian Seafood Association aims to halve the mortality rate by 2030, and industry giant Salmar has allocated \$45 million to tackle the issue. Among the frequently mentioned possibilities are greater spacing between fish farms, and new technology, including so-called closed facilities.

The latter, where sea water is filtered, would help prevent sea lice but are more costly.

The government insists it is up to fish farms to respect the rules. "Not all producers have the same mortality rates, so it is possible to reduce them," said Even Tronstad Sagebakken, a state secretary at the fisheries ministry. In the meantime, the Norwegian Food Safety Authority says it has not yet received any reports of salmon not fit for export being sold abroad. - AFP

LuLu Kuwait participates in UAE Companies Investment Meet

KUWAIT: LuLu Hypermarket, the leading player in the retail landscape of Kuwait, reaffirmed its dedication to fostering economic cooperation between Kuwait and the UAE at the UAE Companies Investment Meet, held on April 28 at the Regency Kuwait. Organized by the UAE Embassy in Kuwait, the event served as a platform for enhancing bilateral trade relations and exploring investment opportuni-

ties between the two nations. The opening ceremony witnessed the attendance of prominent figures from both nations, including UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade, Dr Thani bin Ahmad Al-Zeyoudi, the UAE Ambassador Dr Matar Hamed Al-Neyadi, and Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Abdullah Al-Jouan, representing His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. Additionally, a host of businessmen, corporate officials, and owners of small and medium enterprises from both countries graced the event.

Among the distinguished attendees was Director of LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait, Mohamed Haris, whose presence represented the company's commitment to furthering economic ties and exploring avenues for collaboration between the two states.

LuLu's active involvement in the event underscored its strategic vision to contribute to the growth and prosperity of the Kuwaiti economy by leveraging synergies with the UAE. With a focus on enhancing trade and investment flows between the two nations, LuLu Hypermarket remains steadfast in its mission to foster mutually beneficial partnerships and drive sustainable economic development.

As the leading retail entity in Kuwait, LuLu continues to explore avenues for expansion and investment, aligning with the broader strategic objectives of both Kuwait and the UAE. Through its participation in events such as the UAE Companies Investment Meet, LuLu Hypermarket reaffirms its role as a catalyst for economic growth and a staunch advocate for bilateral cooperation.

KFH announces the winners of Al-Rabeh draw

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the Al-Rabeh draw with 30 customers winning cash prizes worth KD 1,500 each for the 13th until the 15th week of 2024. Additionally, KFH announced Khaled Al-Dosari as the monthly winner of 1 kilo gram of KFH gold for the month of March 2024 and the bank also announced Nawaf Al-Dhafaeri as the winner of the 1st quarter draw of a prize worth KD 25,000.

The winners of KD 1,500 are: Mefareh Al-Enezi, Abdulrahman Edhedle, Mohammad Mustafa, Mahmoud Al-Rabiah, Ehab Ghazal, Said Younes, Dalal Al-Saddah, Abdullah Al-Rubah, Nadiya Al-Sadeqi, Fatemah Al-Zaid, Dana Al-Foudari, Yousef Mendkar, Salwa Al-Oraifan, Mohammad Al-Harbi, Mohammad Al-Rasheedi, Samah Hazaa, Sally Mohsen, Sami Al-Huwaidi, Dana Al-Azmi, Jarrah Al-Terkait, Aisha Al-Othman, Adel Al-Khuraif, Ahmad Al-Mutairi, Rasha Al-Shammari, Atiyah Abdulmaqsood, Sultan Al-Khaldi, Humood Al-Rasheedi, Khaled Awshan, Jawaher Al-Ajmi and Meshari Al-Rabiah.

The Al-Rabeh campaign provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns 536 winners throughout the year.

The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional products and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the bank's leadership in the local and global markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per the highest quality standards.

The Al-Rabeh account is a salary account available to customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Customers can open Al-Rabeh account in any of KFH's branches in Kuwait, or through the bank's online channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Salary transfer is a prerequisite for customers to enter the draw provided that the transfer of salary to Al-Rabeh account is constant.

Regarding the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer is able to deposit three salaries during the three months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the three months prior to the draw. Ten draws take place on a weekly basis for an amount of KD 1,500 for 10 winners each, 1kg of KFH gold will be drawn monthly for one winner and KD 25,000 for one winner every quarter, reaching a total number of 536 winners during the year. KFH is keen to further meet customers' requirements and aspirations and their increasing needs as well as offer innovative and modern services, therefore achieving customer satisfaction, which is one of the fundamentals at KFH. The Bank has achieved a qualitative shift in the level of financial services by utilizing technology.



Mohamed Haris (right) with dignitaries during the UAE Companies Investment Meet.



Canada's first oil pipeline in decades starts operating

MONTREAL, Canada: The first major new oil pipeline to be built in Canada in decades is set to open on Wednesday, praised by proponents but panned by environmentalists worried about the consequences of more crude production.

The Can\$34-billion (US\$25 billion) Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project was a troubled private sector plan taken over by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government in 2018 to ensure it went ahead. It will carry 600,000 additional barrels per day of oil from Alberta to Canada's Pacific coast for shipping overseas.

Built alongside an existing 1,150-kilometer (715-mile) line erected in 1953 that already moves about 300,000 barrels of oil per day, it was meant to increase market access for the world's fourth largest oil exporter and get a better return for Canadian crude.

But along the way it faced regulatory delays, cost overruns, legal challenges and protests by environmental and some Indigenous groups. On the eve of its opening, University of British Columbia professor George Hoberg said it represents "a big win for Alberta but a huge loss for environmentalists concerned about the climate crisis and possible spills" from the pipeline itself or tankers navigating Canadian waters - with devastating consequences for wildlife including endangered orcas, or killer whales. It also risked delivering "a really big blow" to the Trudeau government's attempts at reconciliation with First Nations who went to court to try to block it but lost, he told AFP.

Contrary to energy transition

Canada ranks among the world's largest per capita emitters of greenhouse gases. According to the latest government data, emissions rose 13.9 percent to 670 megatons per year from 1990 to 2021. And due to its location, Canada is warming faster than the rest of the planet. This has led to devastating droughts and wildfires that last year scorched more than 15 million hectares of forests. University of Moncton environmental studies professor Jean-Philippe Sapinski said the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project "is completely contradictory" with Ottawa's stated commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions by up to 45 percent by 2030.

"If we look at a real ecological transition, if we do something concrete to counter the climate crisis, it is completely useless. It is even counterproductive," he said. Pierre-Olivier Pineau, an HEC Montreal professor specializing in energy policies, said he agrees. "It is not through pipelines that we'll make an energy transition" away from fossil fuels, he told AFP.

To salvage what was then a troubled project, Ottawa nationalized the pipeline, paying Can\$4.5 billion to buy it from Kinder Morgan in 2018. Ottawa intended to offload the conduit once construction was completed, but the costs - estimated in 2017 at Can\$7.4 billion - have ballooned, increasing to Can\$34 billion. Parliament's budget officer estimated in 2022 that the project had become a "net loss" for Canada. But Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland insisted this "great national project" will add a quarter of a percentage point to Canada's gross domestic product in the second quarter. "It's good for the Canadian economy and for Canadian oil producers," concluded Pineau. Until now, almost all Canadian oil has been sold to the United States at a discount, mainly because of a lack of pipeline capacity and other infrastructure to ship landlocked Alberta province's growing output. - AFP

HSBC announces surprise retirement of chief executive

HONG KONG: Global bank HSBC announced Tuesday the shock departure of chief executive Neil Quinn, who will retire after overhauling the group in an "intense" five-year tenure weathering a COVID fallout, simmering geopolitics, and shareholder pressure to spin off Asia assets. Quinn, 62, who streamlined HSBC to focus more on Asia, has decided to pursue a portfolio of business interests that allow him to have more time with family, HSBC said in a statement alongside quarterly results. "I wanted to get a better balance for me personally and for my family to make sure I can spend more time with them," Quinn told journalists following the announcement.

"We've created a more focused business and I truly believe we have built a strong platform for the bank's next phase of development and growth. That's why I feel this is the right time to step back," he said.

HSBC said Quinn oversaw a "successful transformation" of the firm and record profits under his stewardship, which also saw him slash 35,000 jobs in the wake of the COVID pandemic. "We all know how challenging the world has been over the past five years. There isn't one particular event or incident, in fact the last 12 months of last year were extremely positive in terms of the financial performance of the bank," Quinn said.

He will continue as CEO to ensure a smooth transition until his successor begins, while the lender has already begun a process which will consider internal and external candidates. - AFP

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2024



Palestinian Mahdi Karira works on a puppet at his workshop.



Palestinian Mahdi Karira displays one of his puppets.



Palestinian Mahdi Karira with one of his puppets.

Gaza puppet maker turns tins into toys in ruins of war



Palestinian Mahdi Karira works on a puppet at his workshop in Deir el-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip. — AFP photos



On a cinder block work table in the war-torn Gaza Strip, puppet maker Mahdi Karira is busy turning old tin cans into figurines. He hums as he works, knowing his makeshift marionettes will put a smile on the faces of children displaced by the more than six-month war in the coastal Palestinian territory. "These puppets can make things around us beautiful," he said, surveying his handiwork.

Before the war, Karira had a whole store of brightly-colored puppets and often took them to perform in theatres. Now, he performs in camps for displaced people after Zionist bombardment forced him to flee his home in Gaza City to Deir Al-Balah, in the center of the narrow strip. Several puppets are suspended along the workshop walls, their bodies topped by expressive human faces carved onto wood or tin cans, their limbs hooked to strings which Karira uses to make them walk and talk.

With Gaza under siege, new materials are hard to come by, so he makes do with debris, fishing line

and old sardine tins stamped with the United Nations logo, which he brings to life with a touch of paint. "Unfortunately, after the displacement, there were no more puppets, no more theatre," he told AFP. "I left all my work in Gaza City," in the territory's north. "There aren't many raw materials to work with - only cans of all shapes and sizes around us."

Puppets tell 'beautiful things'

UNICEF, the UN children's agency, estimates the war in Gaza has displaced around 850,000 children in Gaza. Many are sheltering in camps around Deir Al-Balah, where childhood fun is a distant memory. "I try to make shows and performances to bring joy to the children in the displacement camps, so we remain steadfast on this earth despite the aggressions," Karira said in reference to the Zionist entity's air and ground campaign in Gaza, sitting beside his pliers and a painted puppet head. As the war rumbles on around him, Karira said it was vital to keep up his craft.

"The most important thing is to remain faithful to your work by creating your art," he said. "Each of us has his trade, his talents, and his art that allows him to continue to have an activity despite the aggression." The war broke out after Hamas militants' unprecedented October 7 attack which resulted in the deaths of about 1,170 people in the Zionist entity, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of a Zionist official figures. The Zionist entity's retaliatory offensive has killed more than 34,450 Palestinians in Gaza, most of them women and children, the health ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory says.

The territory's cultural heritage has also been devastated - from arts centers and museums to historic buildings. As he watches Gaza reduced to rubble, Karira said the puppets "can tell beautiful things, tell our history and stories to children." — AFP



Palestinian Mahdi Karira works on one of his puppets at his workshop.



Palestinian Mahdi Karira displays one of his puppets.



Amazon Purr-rime: Cat accidentally shipped to online retailer

A curious cat that sneaked into an open box was shipped across the United States to an Amazon warehouse after its unknowing owners sealed it inside. Carrie Clark's pet, Galena, vanished from her Utah home on April 10, sparking a furious search

that involved plastering "missing" posters around the neighborhood. But a week later, a vet hundreds of miles (kilometers) away in Los Angeles got in touch to say the cat had been discovered in a box - alongside several pairs of boots - by a warehouse worker at an Amazon center. "I ran to tell my husband that Galena was found and we broke down upon realizing that she must have jumped into an oversized box that we shipped out the previous Wednesday," Clark told KSL TV in Salt Lake City.

"The box was a 'try before you buy,' and filled with steel-toed work boots."

Clark and her husband jetted to Los Angeles, where they discovered Amazon employee Brandy Hunter had rescued Galena - a little hungry and thirsty after six days in a cardboard box, but otherwise unharmed.

"I could tell she belonged to someone by the way she was behaving," said Hunter, according to Amazon. "I took her home that night and went to the vet the next day to have her checked for a microchip, and the rest is history." — AFP



Lifestyle



Students have lunch in the municipal Burle Marx school's kitchen.



A cook works in the municipal Burle Marx school's kitchen.



A cook serves food to the students in the municipal Burle Marx school.

RIO DE JANEIRO TESTS NEW RECIPE AGAINST CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Chicken with potatoes, carrot-and-cabbage salad: it looks like a detox meal, but it's the menu at a school cafeteria in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which is seeking new ways to fight childhood obesity. Nearly one-third of children in Brazil are obese, an epidemic city health officials and community leaders are seeking to address in innovative ways, enlisting school cafeterias and taking their message of healthful eating to the street. "Cake? There's no cake here," laughs cook Neide Oliveira as she chops onions for the 650 students of Burle Marx public school in the Curicica neighborhood on Rio's west side.

Additive-packed snacks and cookies are also out, after city officials banned ultra-processed foods from schools this year. Instead, students are discovering classic Brazilian fruits and vegetables that are often overlooked these days, like yams, okra and persimmons - which many kids initially mistook for tomatoes. Judging from how students devour their lunch, the program is having an impact. "I like everything they make here, and it's good for my health. At home I eat a lot of junk food, like pizza and hamburgers," says 15-year-old Guilherme.

'Epidemic'

"Childhood obesity is an epidemic, not just in Brazil, but worldwide," says Marluce Fortunato, nutritionist for the Rio city government. The city is responding with a program at public and private schools, asking teachers to educate students on healthy eating habits. Thirty-one percent of Brazilian children and teens are overweight or obese. A recent study by the Desider-

ata institute found more than 80 percent of five- to 19-year-olds reported eating at least one ultra-processed food the previous day, such as sausages, soda and pastries.

"Science has shown these products are very detrimental to our health and are responsible for 70 percent of chronic diseases worldwide," pediatrician Daniel Becker told AFP. And in children,

mass distribution and cheaper prices, says Becker. Sitting next to Guilherme, his friend Lucas, 14, is feasting on his chicken, rice and beans. But he admits that after school he regularly buys chips outside.

Fortunato says schools need parents' help. "It's easier to educate young children. Once a person's way of thinking is set, it's a challenge to introduce

etables - and fell in love. "They're not just healthful, they're tasty," she says. "My seven-year-old granddaughter already eats better" than previous generations, she beams. Perreira is one of 160 women involved in a project called Organic Favela, launched 13 years ago to transform eating habits in the poor Babilonia neighborhood. The project runs workshops for residents, and also

erary prize last year, the Jabuti, in the creative economy category.

'Sweet poison'

At the national level, a high-visibility ad campaign launched in March seeks to raise awareness of the health risks of ultra-processed foods, enlisting celebrities and experts to spread the word. The campaign, called "sweet poi-



A teacher has lunch at the municipal Burle Marx School.



Students leave the school canteen after eating lunch at Municipal Burle Marx School.

they can lead to a double-barreled problem: obesity combined with malnutrition, which can damage learning ability and attention span, he says.

Temptation just outside

But changing eating habits is a challenge. Ultra-processed foods are made with ingredients designed to "addict the tastebuds," and have a market advantage over natural products given their

new concepts," she says. She mentions the example of a father who complained to the school because his son started asking for natural juices at home, which are more expensive than their sugary, additive-heavy counterparts.

'Barbie eggs'

Still, some adults manage to change. At age 60, grandmother Vera Lucia Perreira discovered organic veg-

uses creative approaches, like healthful recipes painted in graffiti on neighborhood streets.

Founder Regina Tchelly also works with schools. Her mission: get children to have five colors of natural foods on their plates. "We teach people to make avocado butter" and "Barbie eggs" - dyed red with beets, she says. The 42-year-old entrepreneur is the author of a cookbook that won Brazil's top lit-

son" ("doce veneno," in Portuguese), wants the government to tax ultra-processed foods and use the proceeds to subsidize healthful ones. "It's hard to change, but that doesn't mean people have to be prisoners of their ideas," says Perreira. "We have to open their minds to look differently at food, for the sake of our future." — AFP



Vegetables, rice, and cooking oil are seen in the municipal Burle Marx school's kitchen.



A cook works in the municipal Burle Marx school's kitchen.



Regina Tchelly, founder of the Favela Organica initiative, waters her plants at the Babilonia favela in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



Sliced watermelon is set out for the students' dessert at the municipal Burle Marx school.

'Persepolis' author wins top Spanish prize

French-Iranian artist Marjane Satrapi, whose graphic novel "Persepolis" tells the story of a girl growing up in post-revolutionary Iran, was Tuesday awarded Spain's prestigious Princess of Asturias communications and humanities prize. The prize jury praised the 54-year-old for her "essential" role in "the defense of human rights and freedoms".

"Satrapi is a symbol of women's civic commitment. Thanks to her audacity and her artistic production, she is considered one of the most influential people in the dialogue between cultures and generations," it added. Born in Iran, Satrapi recounts in "Persepolis" her years as an outspoken teenager chafing at the Islamic revolution and its restrictions imposed on women, especially for one from a progressive family like hers. It also told of the hardships of the Iran-Iraq war. At 14, her parents sent her to school in Vienna to avoid arrest over her defiance of the regime. She later returned to Tehran but left for France in 1994, embarking on her career as an author, film director and painter.

Her animated film adaptation of "Persepolis" won her a nomination at Academy Awards in 2008. The 50,000-euro (\$54,000) award is one of eight Asturias prizes covering the arts, science and other areas handed out yearly by a foundation named for Spanish Crown Princess Leonor.

Past winners of the communica-

tions and humanities prize include US feminist icon Gloria Steinem, Italian novelist Umberto Eco and Japanese video game designer Shigeru Miyamoto, the creator of "Super Mario Bros". The awards will be handed out at a ceremony hosted by Spain's King Felipe VI in October. —AFP



French-Iranian graphic novelist and illustrator Marjane Satrapi poses in front of the central part of an Olympic triptych tapestry created for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, designed from a drawing by Satrapi in Paris. - AFP

Iran rapper banned from phone calls after death sentence

Iranian authorities have deprived rapper Toomaj Salehi, sentenced to death after supporting protests, of his right to make telephone calls from jail, his social media accounts run by supporters said on Tuesday. Salehi, 33, who performs under the name Toomaj, was last week sentenced to death in a verdict seen by activists as retaliation for his music backing nationwide protests that erupted in 2022. The rapper, a prominent figure for youth in Iran even before his arrest, was convicted on the sharia charge of "corruption on Earth" by a Revolutionary Court.

His lawyers plan to appeal the verdict while he remains jailed in Dastgerd prison outside the central city of Isfahan. "Toomaj's phone privileges at Isfahan's Dastgerd prison were cut off. This means he has zero contact with his family and the outside world," said the artist's official account on X, formerly Twitter, which has been run by an administrator since his incarceration. "Furthermore, in a move meant to inflict maximum psychological pressure on him, all prisoners at Dast-

erd have been forbidden from speaking to him, and have been threatened with severe punishment if they do," it added.

"This is a gross violation of Toomaj's human rights, and must immediately stop." German MP Ye-One Rhie, who is following Toomaj's case, wrote on X: "To be clear: That's torture." Protests were held across the world at the weekend in cities including in Toronto, Paris and Sydney, urging Iran to spare the rapper's life and release him.



Rapper Toomaj Salehi

Toomaj was arrested while in hiding in October 2022 during the peak of the protest movement sparked by the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old arrested by Iran's morality police for an alleged breach of strict dress rules for women. Activists accused Iran of torturing him during his arrest after state media published a video purporting to show the rapper blindfolded, with bruising on his face, apologizing for his support of the protests. — AFP



A worker pushes a wheelbarrow loaded with grass inside the deer and ostrich enclosure at the Manila Zoo.



A worker feeds a Bengal tiger with bloodsicle to cool off inside an animal enclosure at the Manila Zoo amidst a heat wave.



A multi-colored Stork feeds in a makeshift pond at the Manila Zoo.

‘Bloodsicles’, baths keep Philippine zoo animals cool as heatwave hits



A Bengal tiger licks a bloodsicle to cool off inside an animal enclosure at the Manila Zoo amidst a heat wave.--AFP photos

A Philippine zoo is giving tigers frozen treats made of animal blood and preventing lions from mating during the hottest time of the day as a heatwave scorches the country. Unusually hot weather has sent temperatures in the capital Manila to a record high in recent days and forced schools across the archipelago nation to suspend in-person classes. As people flock to air-conditioned shopping malls and swimming pools for relief from the extreme heat, animals at Manila Zoo are also trying to cool off.

Preventing heat stroke, particularly among the big cats, was the “main priority”, zoo veterinarian Dave Vinas told AFP on Tuesday when the mercury hit 37 degrees Celsius (98.6 degrees Fahrenheit) in the city. Water is splashed on the walls and ground of concrete enclosures throughout the day to help lower the temperature inside. “Bloodsicles” made from frozen ground beef or chicken, animal blood and vitamins are given to the big cats to lick. Tigers and lions are also regularly sprayed with water and take dips in pools inside their pens.

Too hot to mate

Wendell, a five-year-old Bengal tiger weighing almost 400 kilograms (882 pounds), pants non-stop as he soaks for hours in a shallow pool. “Like the tiny cats we have at home, they need to sleep at least 12-16 hours a day. But at this time since it’s really hot they are swimming to relieve the heat from the body,” Vinas said. Gab, a lioness, looks bored as she sits on an elevated concrete platform after zoo keepers locked her male companion Diego in another pen to prevent them from mating at the hottest part of the day.

“We don’t want to expose them to the mating part in this heat,” Vinas said. “We don’t want to trigger any heat stroke.” Water is also poured over the enclosures housing snakes and turtles to help regulate their body temperature. While icicles and baths were normal during the hotter months of March, April and May, Vinas said this year’s heat was the most intense he had experienced. “Even if they get good ventilation, the temperature every year gets worse and worse,” he told AFP. “We just find ways to make it better for the animals.”—AFP

On Sundays in Ciudad Bolivar, one of Bogota’s poorest neighborhoods, residents are treated to the incongruous sight of tourists riding the cable car that on weekdays transports thousands of workers to their jobs. A 15-minute ride on the TransMi-Cable takes the visitors from one end of the district to the other, looking out on the rickety homes clinging precariously to the mountainside, many painted in happy, bright colors. The tourists alight at the El Paraiso (The Paradise) lookout point, which offers an unparalleled view over the Colombian capital from its southernmost periphery.



A man riding a motorcycle is pictured in front of graffiti of Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez during a tour of the Ciudad Bolivar neighborhood in Bogota.

They then visit the “Calle del Color” (Street of Color), which boasts a series of murals that tell the history of the impoverished neighborhood and its residents, as well as paying tribute to Colombia’s rich array of plants and animals. “We wanted to remove some of the stigma attached to Ciudad Bolivar, using art,” Luisa Sabogal, a 24-year-old inhabitant of the neighborhood and co-creator of the Bogota Colors project, told AFP. Sabogal and her colleague May Rojas started their project in 2016, summoning dozens of local and international street artists to paint neighborhood walls and the facades of homes.

It seems to be working: the area now attracts about 400 tourists a month and conditions for the locals has improved with the creation of new businesses to sell food and drink and offer guided tours. There is even the “Self-Built City” museum. “The street where the graffiti is used to be called



“TransMiCable” cable car carriages pass above Ciudad Bolivar neighborhood.

the ‘road of crime’. It used to be a street where they ... murdered, robbed,” Andres Santamaria, director of the District Tourism Institute (IDT) told AFP. “This year we haven’t had a single crime” in the area, he said. Ciudad Bolivar has some 660,000 inhabitants of whom more than half live in poverty, according to official data.

Mostly foreigners

The inauguration of the TransMi-Cable cable car in 2018 has forever changed Ciudad Bolivar, many of whose residents work in other parts of Bogota. What used to be an 80-minute ride on local buses via narrow, winding, mostly unpaved roads to exit the neighborhood is now a quarter-of-an-hour by

air, according to the International Finance Corporation, a World Bank body that supported the project.

The cable car can transport 7,000 people an hour in 163 cabins—some 20,000 residents per day. And it is a major part of the attraction for visitors looking for a bird’s-eye view of the high-altitude city of seven million people nestled in the mountains. Resident Maria Sandoval opened a small shop four months ago to sell tamales—a traditional dish of meat and corn—and told AFP “almost half” her sales are thanks to tourism. “The goal is that Ciudad Bolivar becomes one of the main tourist sites of Bogota” through investment in local businesses and infrastructure, said Santamaria.

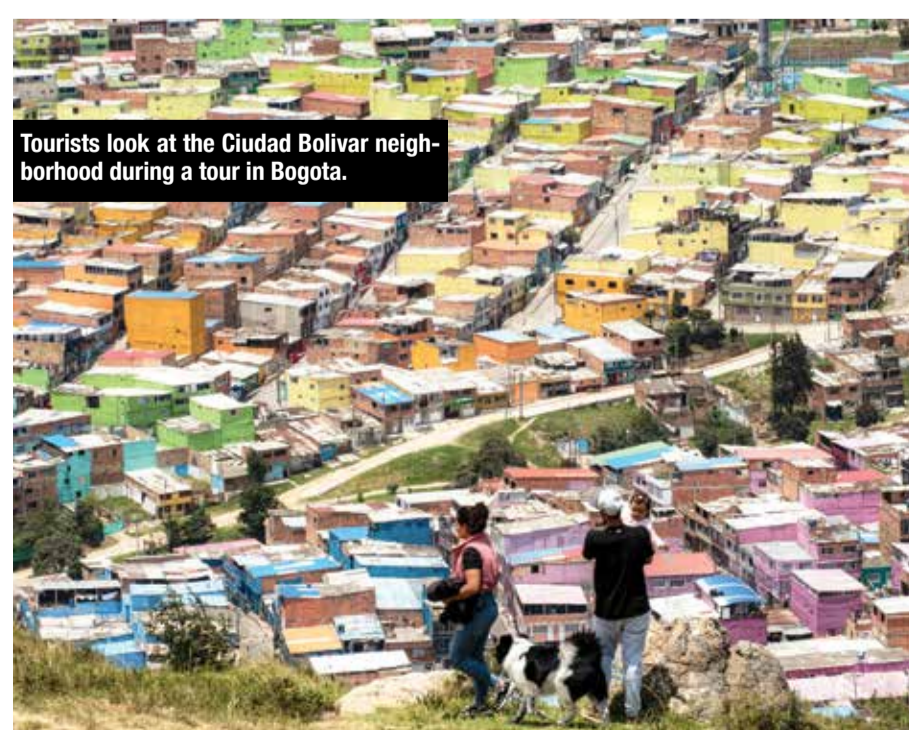


The city is building a tourist center for the neighborhood, and training 40 official guides—up from only one today. For now, most of the visitors are foreigners. Residents of more upmarket parts of the capital tend to avoid the region that had the city’s highest homicide rate in 2023, according to official data. “I’m worried to take pictures of the graffiti... to take out my cellphone,” said 30-year-old Tomas Velasquez from Chapinero, an upper-middle-class neighborhood in northern Bogota. —AFP

A woman passes in front of a graffiti during a tour of the Ciudad Bolivar neighborhood.



The tourist guide May Rojas (center) talks with tourists during a tour of the Ciudad Bolivar neighborhood. — AFP photos



Tourists look at the Ciudad Bolivar neighborhood during a tour in Bogota.



A tourist takes pictures of a graffiti during a tour of the Ciudad Bolivar neighborhood.

Sports

Salt, Chakravarthy shine as Kolkata hammer Delhi in heatwave-hit IPL

Players drenched in sweat and fans brave the intense heat

KOLKATA: Phil Salt's attacking 68 and bowling figures of 3-16 by Varun Chakravarthy helped Kolkata Knight Riders hammer Delhi Capitals by seven wickets at a hot and humid Eden Gardens in the IPL on Monday. Chakravarthy, a mystery spinner, led Kolkata's disciplined bowling to restrict Delhi to 153-9 as players, who remained drenched in sweat, and fans braved the intense heat in the colonial-era capital.

Players from all the 10 IPL teams are keen to impress their national selectors with just one day left for countries to name their teams for the T20 World Cup in June. The in-form Salt, an England wicketkeeper-batsman, led the chase with an opening stand of 79 with Sunil Narine and the two-time champions reached their target with 3.3 overs to spare. "It is high-risk but it is also about putting the odds in your favour and not taking the risks you don't want to," Salt said of his attacking game. "You just have to keep backing yourself and keep taking the right options."

The mercury in the afternoon soared above 41 degrees Celsius (106 degrees Fahrenheit) for the third time this month, forcing the normally bustling streets to stay empty at noon. But the sports-mad city witnessed a near-packed house at the 66,000 capacity stadium for the evening game and their home team did not disappoint with their sixth win in nine matches to move closer to booking a play-off spot. Most of India's eastern states and southern peninsula have remained under government heatwave alerts since last week, with relief not expected for several more days.

Paceman Archer recalled to England squad for T20 WCup

LONDON: Paceman Jofra Archer was Tuesday recalled to England's squad for the defence of their T20 World Cup crown after a year out of action. The 29-year-old, who has endured a string of injuries since his international breakthrough in 2019, has not played competitive cricket for a year but has recovered from a right elbow injury. He takes his place in a 15-man provisional squad captained by Jos Buttler for the tournament that starts on June 1 in the West Indies and the United States.

The same group will play take on Pakistan in a four-match T20 series beginning at Headingley on May 22. All the players who are currently featuring in the Indian Premier League will return in time for the series against Babar Azam's men. Archer has managed just 15 T20 appearances for England since making his international debut five years ago but is still considered a potential game-changer.

Another factor in England's favour is that he grew up in Barbados so is knowledgeable about Caribbean conditions. Veteran seamer Chris Jordan, also born in Barbados, returns to the squad alongside uncapped spinner Tom Hartley but there is no place for Chris Woakes, a World Cup winner in both the 20-over and 50-over formats. Test captain Ben Stokes, who was part of the England squad who surrendered their 50-over title meekly in India last year, ruled himself out of the T20 World Cup in an effort to regain full fitness to play as an all-rounder.

England begin the defence of the title they won in Australia in 2022 against Scotland in Barbados on June 4. Managing director of England men's cricket Rob Key said Archer was "desperate" to play on his home island. "Jofra's a bowler that is just so special you do everything you can to try to get him back playing and we've sort of taken the longer road this time but as always with Jofra, it's fingers crossed until he's out there playing," said Key.

"It's like when you're waiting for something really good to happen, you don't quite believe it until he's there but he's tracking well at the moment. "The next step is when he gets into that Pakistan series. It's going to be full match intensity, how he keeps going through there but at the moment we're doing everything we can and he's in a good spot." All teams are allowed to make changes to their squads until May 25, after which any alteration will require approval from the International Cricket Council. — AFP

India's Pant returns to T20 World Cup after car crash

NEW DELHI: Rishabh Pant was named on Tuesday in India's squad for the T20 World Cup in June, his first return to international cricket after a horror car crash 16 months ago. The 26-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman has impressed with his return to elite cricket this year, scoring 398 runs from 11 games in the ongoing Indian Premier League. He will be among a 15-member squad headed to the United States and West Indies for the tournament starting June 1.

Rohit Sharma will lead the side with under-fire vice-captain Hardik Pandya, with veteran wicketkeeper KL Rahul making way for Pant's return. Pant had termed his comeback to the game as "nothing short of a miracle" after a road crash in December 2022, when his Mercedes rammed into a barrier, flipped and caught fire near New Delhi. "The kind of accident I had, I'm lucky to be alive," he said in December. "I think it was very challenging, especially the first part I would say more from a physical point of view... there was a lot of pain to be endured."

The crash left him with a damaged ligament in his right knee, a hurt wrist and ankle, and abrasions to his back. He fought back after an intensive rehabilitation program and time on crutches at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru. Pant was reinstated as captain of Delhi Capitals for the ongoing season after Australia opener David Warner led the team in his absence last year. His first match back earned him

'Learn from mistakes'

Delhi elected to bat first but lost regular wickets including Prithvi Shaw for 13 and fellow opener Jake Fraser-McGurk, out for 12 off left-arm quick Mitchell Starc. Skipper Rishabh Pant attempted to resist the slide in his unconvincing knock of 27 before he was dismissed by man of the match Chakravarthy. Chakravarthy rattled the middle and lower-order to make Delhi slip to 111-8 before number nine Kuldeep Yadav claimed an unbeaten 35.

"I think that (batting first) was a good option but as a batting unit, we did not bat well enough. 150 was definitely below par," said Pant. "That is part and parcel of cricket. We have a long break ahead, where we can learn from our mistakes." Salt, who moved into the top five batsmen this IPL season with 392 runs, put the chase on track along with fellow opener Narine as the two clobbered 23 runs off the first over from Lizaad Williams.

He reached his fourth half-century of the season in 26 balls with a six off Khaleel Ahmed but fell to spinner Axar Patel after his 33-ball knock laced with seven fours and five sixes. Skipper Shreyas Iyer, who made 33, and Venkatesh Iyer, who hit the winning six in his 23, steered the team home in an unbeaten stand of 57. The match was a complete contrast to the previous game at the venue when Punjab Kings chased down an IPL record of 262 on another hot day. — AFP



KOLKATA: Kolkata Knight Riders' Venkatesh Iyer (right) plays a shot as Delhi Capitals' wicketkeeper and captain Rishabh Pant (left) fields during the Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Delhi Capitals at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on April 29, 2024. — AFP

Al-Kharafi excels again in horse showjumping

KUWAIT: Kuwait Riding Center rider Ali Jassim Al-Kharafi continues his excellent performance in the showjumping sport both locally and abroad due to the sound preparations, caring for the horses, training camps and the major family support since starting practice of this sport, he said.

Al-Kharafi is at the top of the equestrian sport with 150 points way ahead of his competitors and is guaranteed to win the league title for the third consecutive season becoming the only rider to win the league championship since its launch.

The club has several excellent riders who compete for the top 5 places such as Ghazi Al-Jraiwi and Yara Al-Hindi, besides having an upcoming generation who will continue the successful run of the club such as Hussein Ahmad Al-Kharafi, Ali Ahmad Al-Kharafi, Fatima Al-Khinaini, Faisal Al-Khinaini, Mohammad Al-Mulaifi, Mohammad Al-Refae, Badra Al-Awadhi, Ghaneema Al-Marzouq, Dalal Safar and Abdullah Al-Hamad.

The eighth and final round of the third season of the local league will be held on Saturday during which champions will be recognized and the season will come to a close.

S Africa back Nortje for T20 World Cup

JOHANNESBURG: Anrich Nortje's raw pace and proven quality earned him a place in South Africa's squad for the T20 World Cup, head coach Rob Walter said when he announced a 15-man squad on Tuesday. The tournament will be played in the United States and West Indies from June 1 to 29. Nortje, 30, has not played an international match since suffering a back injury during a one-day series against Australia in September 2023 and has struggled for form in the current Indian Premier League. His seven wickets have cost 42 runs each and he has conceded 13.86 runs an over.

But Walter said he backed the quality of the player who was South Africa's leading bowler at the 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia. "He has

a standing ovation from the crowd after a 51 off 32 balls. Pant has played for India a total of 129 times in all three formats since 2017.

'Going to cheer him'

Batting mainstay Virat Kohli and Suryakumar Yadav have also been named to the squad, while Shubman Gill was among four reserves. Star all-rounder Pandya is coming back into the T20 team after an ankle injury sustained during last year's ODI World Cup at home forced him to sit out the Afghanistan series in January.

Pandya has struggled with consistency in a tough IPL so far after he replaced veteran Rohit Sharma as captain of Mumbai Indians. He has been relentlessly booed by the crowd during his appearances after failing to match the form of his resoundingly popular successor, prompting frustration from the Mumbai camp. "I am sick and fed up of (people) looking to pinpoint individuals," batting coach Kieron Pollard said after one instance this month. "This is an individual that is going to represent the country in less than six weeks' time, and all are going to cheer him and want him to do well."

Squad: Rohit Sharma (capt), Hardik Pandya (vice-capt), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Reserves: Shubman Gill, Rinku Singh, Khaleel Ahmed and Avesh Khan. — AFP



Rishabh Pant



Ali Jassim Al-Kharafi seen with his teammates

another month before the World Cup and I have no doubt he will hit his straps," said Walter. "It's good to see that his speed is up. The one thing that Anrich has that separates him from others is raw pace, not many guys can bowl at 150 (kilometers an hour)." He said he had picked bowlers who he believed would be able to strike in the early stages of matches. "Taking the top four wickets in the first 10 overs is a large factor in winning games," he said.

Nortje, Gerald Coetzee, Kagiso Rabada and Marco Jansen will spearhead South Africa's fast bowling attack but Walter also named three specialist spin bowlers in Keshav Maharaj, Tabraiz Shamsi and Bjorn Fortuin for what he said are likely to be varied conditions in the USA and the Caribbean. South Africa have been drawn in Group D of the 20-team tournament. Their first three matches, against Sri Lanka, Netherlands and Bangladesh, will be at the custom-built Nassau County International Stadium near New York.

Their final group match against Nepal will be

in Saint Vincent in the West Indies. The match between South Africa and Sri Lanka on June 3 will be the first to be played at the new stadium, which will feature a drop-in pitch imported from Adelaide, Australia. It is incredibly exciting to be going to a new venue which has literally been created for the World Cup," Walter said of playing in New York. "It creates a level playing field because no one really knows what we're going to get. The ability to respond quickly to conditions will be imperative."

South Africa have played in all eight previous T20 World Cups but have only advanced from the group stages twice. They reached the semi-finals in 2009 and 2014. Quinton de Kock and David Miller will be playing in their fifth T20 World Cups, while fast bowler Kagiso Rabada will make his fourth appearance. South Africa's squad includes two players uncapped at T20 international level, wicketkeeper-batsman Ryan Rickelton and fast bowler Othniel Baartman. — AFP

Ex-England cricketer Panesar to stand for UK election

LONDON: Former England cricketer Monty Panesar is to stand at the next UK general election for the fringe Workers Party of Britain, its leader George Galloway said on Tuesday.

Galloway, a left-wing firebrand who was re-elected to parliament in March after tapping into anger over the Zionist-Hamas war, said Panesar was one of 200 candidates the party is putting up for the vote.

Left-arm spinner Panesar, 42, played 50 tests for England, taking 167 wickets between 2006 and 2013. Born Mudhsuden Singh Panesar in Luton, north of London, to Sikh parents who emigrated from the Indian Punjab, he became a firm fan favourite and a distinctive figure in the field in his black patka.

He will stand in the Ealing Southall constituency in west London at the vote, which is expected to be held later this year. To be elected, he will have to overturn a 16,084 majority set by Virendra Sharma, from the main opposition Labour party, at the last national poll in 2019.

Galloway told LBC radio that Panesar "will be our candidate in Southall", which is a majority Sikh area. "Monty, of course, was a great left-arm spinner so we could do with him," he said.

Wealth gap

Panesar said he wanted to stand up for the working class and address Britain's wealth gap. "When I played for England there was so much support from the fans and the whole nation when they put me where I am today," he told the domestic Press Association news agency.

"It's my turn now to actually help the working-class people, whatever problems they have. The gap between the rich and the poor is getting bigger and bigger," Panesar said Galloway's party was "more aligned" with the working class than the Labour party under Keir Starmer, which is traditionally the home of blue-collar voters.

Galloway, a former Labour lawmaker, is hoping to tap into what he sees as disaffection with the Conservative government and other mainstream parties.

Starmer is widely expected to win the election, but Galloway has condemned him for his stance on Israel's military action against Hamas in Gaza and is hoping to exploit Labour divisions on the issue.

At Galloway's own election, the Labour candidate withdrew after touting a conspiracy theory that Zionist entity allowed Hamas to carry out its deadly attack on October 7 last year. The Workers Party has set out a 10-point programme, including a call for "an end to imperialist wars and financial domination, starting with withdrawal from NATO".

Galloway said voters were rejecting the "Tweedledee, Tweedledum politics" of the Tories and Labour, as well as "culture war" issues over "race and gender, wokery and greenery and quackery". — AFP

Sports

Leicester secure Championship title, celebrate EPL promotion

Vardy scores twice as Leicester thrash Preston 3-0

LONDON: Jamie Vardy scored twice as Leicester celebrated their promotion to the Premier League in style on Monday with a 3-0 win at Preston that secured the Championship title. The Foxes' return to the top flight was sealed after Leeds' shock 4-0 capitulation at QPR on Friday. Enzo Maresca's men needed victory at Deepdale to guarantee beating Ipswich to top spot with a game to spare and did so with ease, thanks in large part to their 37-year-old captain. Vardy was one of the heroes of Leicester's memorable Premier League triumph in 2016 and part of the side that also lifted the club's first FA Cup just three years ago.

He played a central role in another night to savor for the travelling fans as he took his tally for the season to 20 goals. "We knew it was going to be a tough game but we got the job done. Celebrating with the fans is great," said Vardy. "How could you not love scoring goals? Especially the second one, scoring in front of the fans - you can't get a better feeling than that." Vardy opened the scoring when his mishit effort found the far corner on 36 minutes before smashing into an unguarded net after Wout

Faes' shot came back off the post. Kasey McAteer set the seal on the title party when he headed in Abdul Fatawu's cross 23 minutes from time.

After retaining much of the squad that were surprisingly relegated last season, Leicester desperately needed to return to the riches of the Premier League at the first attempt with the club running up huge losses. They were charged in March by the Premier League for alleged breaches of profit and sustainability rules (PSR) relating to their last three years in the top flight. If found guilty, Leicester could start life back in the top flight with a points deduction.

The battle to join them in the Premier League next season is set to go to the final day of the Championship season on Saturday. Leeds sit second on goal difference ahead of Ipswich, who have a game in hand away at Coventry on Tuesday. Ipswich then host Huddersfield, who are practically relegated, on the final day while Leeds face Southampton at Elland Road. Only the top two are automatically promoted, while teams that finish from third to sixth go into the play-offs to determine the third promotion spot. — AFP



Jamie Vardy celebrates after scoring for Leicester.

30 years after his death, F1 recalls Senna with awe and gratitude

PARIS: Thirty years after his death at the San Marino Grand Prix, Ayrton Senna is still adored in Formula One, a sport his fatal accident reshaped. The 34-year-old Brazilian was leading at Imola on May 1, 1994, when he went off the track at the Tamborello curve and smashed into a concrete wall. It was the second death of the weekend.

Since then, only one driver, Frenchman Jules Bianchi in Japan in 2015, has died in a Formula One crash. In the 2013 film "1: Life on the Limit", British journalist Maurice Hamilton observed that Ayrton Senna's death "was broadcast into the living rooms of millions of people who didn't know much about motorsport but knew who he was and wanted to know who the culprit was".

Investigations into Senna's death laid the blame for the crash on the steering column on his Williams. In the collision, the right front tyre tore off and flew into his head. A suspension arm also pierced his helmet. The day before, in qualifying, Austrian driver Roland Ratzenberger had died in a crash. Senna commandeered a course car to rush to the scene. Formula One's doctor, Sid Watkins, wrote later in his book 'Life at the Limit' that he told the distraught Senna: "Ayrton, why don't you withdraw from racing tomorrow."

"In fact, why don't you give it up altogether? What else do you need to do? You have been world champion three times, you are obviously the quickest driver. Give it up and let's go fishing," Watkins wrote that Senna replied: "Sid, there are certain things over which we have no control. I cannot quit, I have to go on." Senna had already hurried to a stricken driver the previous

day when his young compatriot Rubens Barrichello crashed. Watkins prevented the driver choking on his own tongue. "Three big crashes," said Frederic Vasseur, now Ferrari team boss. "I think that shocked F1." "I don't know if it was a trigger, but I think it's true that it's often when there's an accident that we change. After Jules, we made the halo, for example," he said, alluding to the hoop above the cockpit that now protects drivers' heads. While Formula One had already begun to pay more attention to safety, thanks to the initiative of drivers such as three-time world champion Jackie Stewart, Senna's death prompted renewed efforts to improve cars, equipment and circuits.

'It wasn't easy'

Senna's fierce rival and sometime team-mate Alain Prost remains inextricably linked with the Brazilian. The Frenchman had retired as a driver at the end of the previous season with a final world championship title and became a broadcaster. He said he got to know Senna in that period. "I keep the last six months in mind," Prost told Motorsport.com in 2018. "That's when I knew Ayrton much more than ever before. "I understood who he was and why he was acting sometimes." When Senna crashed, Michael Schumacher, in his third season, was just a few meters behind.

In 2000, when asked about his feelings after equaling Senna's then record of 41 Grand Prix victories, the German broke down in tears. Lewis Hamilton also has emotional memories of the fateful day. He said that, aged nine, he was helping his father Anthony repair his kart at a British junior race meeting. "Someone told him that Ayrton had died," Hamilton recalled at Imola in 2020. "And I remember I had to walk away from my dad because he would never let me cry in front of him so I had to go to a different place. It wasn't easy. "I remember trying to channel that sadness into my driving and I think I won that weekend, but the following weeks were very tough." — AFP



DONINGTON: (FILES) Brazilian driver Ayrton Senna waves the Brazilian flag after winning the European Grand Prix at Donington Park in this file photo. Thirty years after his death at the age of 34 on the Italian Imola circuit on 1 May, 1994, the Brazilian Ayrton Senna is still adored, and his death has helped to improve safety in Formula

Today's Matches
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 Borussia Dortmund v Paris Saint 22:00
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Terzic repays Dortmund faith before PSG semis

BERLIN: Borussia Dortmund coach Edin Terzic faces Paris Saint-Germain in Wednesday's Champions League semi-final first leg enjoying a rare spell of certainty in the job. Dortmund's progression to the last four would have been scarcely believable to anyone watching the 2-0 loss at PSG which opened their Champions League campaign in September. A string of domestic setbacks including a German Cup exit in December had Terzic on the ropes.

He only survived a crisis meeting shortly before Christmas because of Dortmund's improved Champions League form. Terzic's side qualified first in a group including PSG, last year's semi-finalists AC Milan and Saudi-backed Newcastle United. Reaching the semi-finals with wins over PSV Eindhoven and Atletico Madrid has all but guaranteed Terzic will be in the Dortmund dugout next season. While not all the doubters have been silenced, getting past PSG would make Terzic just the third Dortmund manager, after club legends Ottmar Hitzfeld and Jurgen Klopp, to take the club to the Champions League final.

Terzic's story is the kind the Dortmund hierarchy, not to mention the club's fans, find appealing. He was born in Menden, near Dortmund, in 1982, just two years after his parents had moved to Germany from the former Yugoslavia. The life-long Dortmund fan attended his first game in 1991 at the Westfalenstadion against Duisburg, aged just nine.

"I don't remember much from my childhood, but that was super impressive," Terzic told German football magazine 11Freunde in May 2021. Pictures from the 2012 German Cup final show a boyish Terzic among tens of thousands of Dortmund fans in Berlin's Olympic Stadium. On that day, Dortmund thumped rivals Bayern Munich 5-2 to seal a league and cup double in what was the pinnacle of Klopp's reign. — AFP



DORTMUND: Dortmund's German head coach Edin Terzic gives a press conference on April 30, 2024 in Dortmund, western Germany, on the eve of the UEFA Champions League semi-final first leg football match between Borussia Dortmund and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG). — AFP

US, Mexico withdraw joint bid for 2027 Women's World Cup

LOS ANGELES: The United States and Mexico withdrew their joint bid for the 2027 Women's World Cup on Monday, just weeks before FIFA is due to vote to award the tournament at a meeting in Bangkok. In a joint statement from the US and Mexico football federations, the two governing bodies said they would now switch focus towards mounting a successful bid for the 2031 tournament.

The shock decision comes as FIFA officials prepare to hold a vote at the global governing body's Congress in Bangkok on May 17 to decide the 2027 hosts. The US and Mexico withdrawal leaves two rival bids vying for the tournament - a joint bid from Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands and a solo bid from Brazil. The end of the US-Mexico bid came after FIFA said earlier on Monday that the 2027 tournament hosts would for the first time be decided by an open vote when the FIFA Congress convenes in Thailand next month. The US had been bidding to stage the women's football flagship event for the third time after hosting the tournament successfully on its own in 1999 and 2003.

Had the US-Mexico bid for 2027 been successful, it would have meant another large-scale sporting event taking place in North America in what has become a crowded calendar for the region. The United States, Mexico and Canada are already gearing up to stage the men's 2026 World Cup, while Los Angeles is preparing to host the 2028 Olympics.

The United States is also due to host next year's expanded FIFA Club World Cup, and is also staging this year's 16-team Copa America. US Soccer said waiting until 2031 would give tournament organizers more breathing space to plan for the tournament while absorbing lessons from the region's staging of the 2026 men's World Cup. "Hosting a World Cup tournament is a huge undertaking - and having additional time to prepare allows us to maximize its impact across the globe," US Soccer President Cindy Parlow Cone said in a statement. "I'm proud of our commitment to provide equitable experiences for the players, fans and all our stakeholders. "Shifting our bid will enable us to host a record-breaking Women's World Cup in 2031 that will help to grow and raise the level of the women's game both here at home as well as across the globe." — AFP

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Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
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Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
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I, Aboobakkar Izan Iqbal Patte, holder of Indian Passport No. U0610168 having permanent address Karnataka, India 574231 residing in Kuwait at present hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (Given name) Aboobaker Izaan and (Surname) Iqbal. (#5199, 29/04/2024)

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Nuggets oust Lakers, LeBron in thriller as Thunder seal sweep

Top-seeded Boston Celtics dominate Miami 102-88



DENVER: Rui Hachimura #28 of the Los Angeles Lakers drives against Jamal Murray #27 of the Denver Nuggets in the third quarter during game five of the Western Conference First Round Playoffs at Ball Arena on April 29, 2024 in Denver. — AFP

MIAMI: Jamal Murray nailed a last-gasp jump shot as the defending champion Denver Nuggets sent LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers crashing out of the NBA playoffs with a series-clinching 108-106 victory on Monday. Murray's sublime go-ahead bucket with four seconds remaining settled another pulsating battle between the Western Conference rivals and wrapped up a 4-1 series win for Denver, who now face Minnesota in the next round. Murray finished with 32 points while team-mate Nikola Jokic had 25 points, 20 rebounds and nine assists as the Lakers' bid to overturn a 3-0 series deficit came up short in front of 19,861 fans at Denver's Ball Arena.

NBA icon James meanwhile finished with 30 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds to lead the Lakers scoring in what was the final act of his 21st season in the NBA. Afterwards, James declined to be drawn on his future plans, saying he would now spend time with his family before preparing for this summer's Olympics. Asked if Monday's defeat may have been his last game for the Lakers, James smiled and replied: "I'm not going to answer that." Lakers defensive stalwart Anthony Davis, who appeared troubled by a shoulder injury for much of the game, had 17 points with 15 rebounds and four assists.

"They're a hell of a team," Lakers coach Darvin Ham said of Denver after the defeat. "They're defending champs for a reason. I've been saying it the

entire year, and the entire series, they know how to gut out wins, they've been there before." Nuggets coach Michael Malone meanwhile lavished praise on game-winner Murray, who had also nailed a buzzer-beater in game two of the series. "For Jamal to add to his playoff lore by having two game-winners in a series is just incredible," Malone said. "The kid's a warrior man. I can't say enough good things about Jamal Murray. The bigger the moment, the kid just continues to shine."

Thunder roll, Celtics on brink

Elsewhere Monday, the Oklahoma City Thunder sealed a 4-0 series sweep of the New Orleans Pelicans to book their place in the NBA playoffs second round. Western Conference top seeds Oklahoma City finally got the better of New Orleans with a late scoring burst in the fourth quarter to complete a 97-89 road victory in Louisiana. The Pelicans led by five points with just over eight minutes remaining before Oklahoma City responded with an 18-2 run to close out victory in a hard-fought contest that saw the lead change hands 19 times. Jalen Williams and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led the Thunder scoring with 24 points apiece while Chet Holmgren and Josh Giddey each scored 14 and Luguentz Dort 11.

It was the Thunder's first playoff series win since 2016 and leaves them facing a Western Conference

semi-final against either the Los Angeles Clippers or Dallas Mavericks. "This was probably our hardest game," Williams said afterwards. "We weren't hitting shots but I think defensively we locked in down the stretch. "We're all together through thick and thin, through the ups and downs of the season. We've hung in there together and now you see the result."

Elsewhere on Monday, Derrick White scored 38 points as the top-seeded Boston Celtics dominated Miami 102-88 on the road to take a 3-1 lead in their best-of-seven series. After a 20-point win over Miami in game three Saturday, Boston picked up where they left off with another emphatic performance over last season's Eastern Conference champions. White set the tone for Boston with an electric first-quarter display, rattling in 16 points in the opening frame - including four three-pointers - to help the Celtics take a 10-point lead heading into the second quarter.

Boston kept up the pressure to open up a 53-36 half-time advantage. The Celtics stretched the lead to 28 points at one stage in the third quarter, and even though Miami rallied in the fourth, narrowing the deficit to 13 points with just over five minutes remaining, Boston's grip on the lead never looked in serious jeopardy. The win means the Celtics can clinch their place in the second round, where they will face either Orlando or Cleveland, with a victory in game five Wednesday back in Boston — AFP

Nadal keeps his clay dream alive



MADRID: Spain's Rafael Nadal celebrates after winning against Argentina's Pedro Cachin during the third round of the 2024 ATP Tour Madrid Open tournament tennis match at Caja Magica in Madrid on April 29, 2024. — AFP

MADRID: Rafael Nadal said he is doing his best to "keep dreaming" after he extended his stay at the Madrid Open by winning a three-hour tussle with Argentina's Pedro Cachin 6-1, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3 on Monday. Contesting his home tournament one last time before retirement, the five-time champion gave the world number 91 his shirt after Cachin asked him for a memento from the match.

"Some moments good, some moments not good. I found a way to be through. I think in the third set with some mistakes I was still able to be a bit unpredictable," Nadal said of his roller-coaster third-round victory. "Now I'm enjoying. Let's see how I wake up tomorrow. Playing at home means everything to me, just try my best to keep dreaming." Nadal's reward is a Tuesday last-16 clash with the 30th-seeded Jiri Lehecka, who beat the Mallorcan in a practice session a week ago.

The 37-year-old has been dealing with physical issues, which have limited him to eight matches this season. Asked if it would surprise him if he managed to beat Lehecka on Tuesday, Nadal said: "Yes, more so after today's match. I will face a player who is playing at a very high level, who has a very powerful serve." While Nadal has already beaten a higher-ranked opponent this week - number 11 Alex de Minaur - he believes the quality of Lehecka's ball "is another step up". Top-seeded Jannik Sinner beat world number 72 Pavel Kotov 6-2, 7-5. Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik beat American Ben Shelton 3-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 to reach the fourth round, where he will face number three seed Daniil Medvedev. — AFP

Lewandowski's treble fires Barcelona to Valencia win

BARCELONA: Robert Lewandowski hit a second-half hat-trick to power Barcelona to an entertaining 4-2 win over 10-man Valencia on Monday in La Liga. The champions' victory denies leaders Real Madrid the chance to take the crown by simply beating Cadiz next Saturday. Los Blancos are 11 points clear of Barcelona with five matches remaining. Fermin Lopez sent the hosts ahead before Valencia striker Hugo Duro levelled and Pepelu netted from the spot to turn the game round.

Valencia goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili was sent off late in the first half for handball and Lewandowski equalized soon after the break before adding another two late on. It rained all day in drought-ridden Barcelona and the threat of a soaking left the Olympic Stadium half empty, with an attendance of 30,000. The small crowd might also have been a response to last weekend's Clasico defeat, which laid out the red carpet for Real Madrid to whisk away Barcelona's title, as well as the detested Monday night slot.

La Liga rescheduled the game at only a week's notice, meaning many could no longer attend. Those who were present enjoyed a surprisingly entertaining clash, with Barca coach Xavi Hernandez triumphant in his first match after deciding to stay in charge next season. "I think the team did well... we lacked calmness, tranquility, but I'm satisfied with the team's attitude," Xavi told DAZN. Visitors Valencia, eighth and striving for European football next season, carved out the best early chances.

Hugo Duro's flick from close range was saved by Marc-Andre ter Stegen. On-loan Real Madrid winger Peter Federico dragged a shot wide when barreling through on goal. Barcelona took the lead when Lopez headed home from Raphinha's whipped cross. Valencia were quickly level after a grievous error by Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen, who ran out of his box to try and intercept a long ball. He got there first but botched his attempted dink over Duro's head and the striker controlled the ball and held off Ronald Araujo to roll home.

It soon got worse for Barcelona, with Araujo - crucially sent off in the Champions League quarter-final defeat by Paris Saint-Germain - foolishly giving away a penalty by felling Federico. Valencia midfielder Pepelu fired the penalty down the middle to put Los Che ahead. The game turned Barcelona's way shortly before the break when Valencia's goalkeeper erred. Mamardashvili mis-controlled the ball on the edge of



BARCELONA: Barcelona's Polish forward #09 Robert Lewandowski (center) fights for the ball with Valencia's Spanish defender #03 Cristian Mosquera during the Spanish league football match. — AFP

his box, giving it away to teenager Lamine Yamal.

As the youngster tried to round the goalkeeper, the Georgian touched the ball with his arm outside the area and, after a VAR review, was dismissed. Replacement Jaume Domenech saved Raphinha's free-kick, but could not keep out Barcelona's equalizer, early in the second half. Lewandowski headed home from a corner to start Barcelona's comeback. —AFP