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Zionists ignore US Rafah warning

Strikes continue despite US weapons 'pause' • Hamas urges halt to deadly aid airdrops



GAZA: Displaced Palestinians arrive in vehicles carrying their belongings to set up shelter after returning to Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on May 9, 2024. — AFP

GAZA: Smoke rose from strikes on Gaza's crowded southern city of Rafah Thursday after US President Joe Biden vowed to stop supplying artillery shells and other weapons to the Zionist entity if a full-scale assault goes ahead. It was the starkest warning yet from the United States, the Zionist entity's main military provider, over the civilian impact of its war against Hamas.

An AFP correspondent and witnesses on Thursday reported Zionist strikes on several parts of Rafah, where the United Nations said 1.4 million people were sheltering. "The tanks and jets are striking," Tarek Bahlul said on a deserted Rafah street. "Every minute you hear a rocket and you don't know where it will land." The Zionist entity has already defied international objections by sending in tanks and conducting what it called "targeted raids" in eastern Rafah, the city it says is home to Hamas' last remaining battalions.

In an interview with CNN on Wednesday, Biden warned he would stop some US weapons supplies to the Zionist entity if it carried out its long-threatened Rafah assault. The Zionist entity on Thursday called Biden's comments "very disappointing". Biden told CNN: "If they go into Rafah, I'm not supplying the weapons that have been used... to deal with the cities. We're not gonna supply the weapons and the artillery shells that have been used."

The fresh warning came after his administration paused delivery last week of 1,800 2,000-pound (907-kilo) bombs and 1,700 500-pound bombs as the Zionist entity appeared ready to attack Rafah. "Civilians have been killed in Gaza as a consequence of those bombs," Biden said. "It's just wrong." Ties between the allies have become increasingly strained as Biden and other top Washington officials criticize the Zionist entity over its conduct of the war.

Pro-Palestinian protests have flared at universities across the United States with an intensity not seen for decades. The Zionist entity's offensive has killed at least 34,904 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the territory's health ministry. The United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said 80,000 people have fled Rafah since Monday, but "nowhere is safe".

On Tuesday, the Zionist entity seized Rafah's border crossing into Egypt, which had been the main entry point for aid. The White House condemned the aid disruption, and the defense secretary later confirmed Washington had paused the bomb shipment. In the Zionist entity's first reaction to Biden's threat, its UN ambassador Gilad Erdan called it a "very disappointing statement". "If (the Zionist entity) is restricted from entering an area as important and central as Rafah where there are thousands

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Minor jailed for 5 years

KUWAIT: The criminal court on Thursday sentenced a Kuwaiti minor to five years in jail after convicting him of joining the Islamic State terrorist group and plotting to blow up a Shiite worship place in Kuwait. The 16-year-old boy, whose name was not released, told the judge that although he became a member of the group, the plots did not reach the execution stage. The court on Monday adjourned until June 4 the case of three Tunisians accused of joining Islamic State and plotting attacks on US military bases in Kuwait.

April passenger traffic 1.1m

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation reported that Kuwait International Airport saw over 1.1 million passengers in April, marking an 11 percent increase compared to the same period last year. Aircraft movement rose by 13 percent and air cargo activity climbed by 10 percent. Abdullah Al-Rajhi, deputy director general for aviation safety and air transport, noted arrivals totaled 564,638, while departures amounted to 618,242. The airport facilitated 10,113 aircraft movements, up from 8,983 in April of the previous year. Additionally, air cargo reached 18.2 million kilograms. Top destinations included Dubai, Cairo, Jeddah, Istanbul and Doha. — KUNA

Hot weekend forecast

KUWAIT: Kuwait Meteorological Center forecast a hot weekend with moderate nights, expecting scattered rainfall by Saturday night and windy conditions by Sunday. Yasser Al-Bloushi, head of the maritime forecast department, anticipated warm northwesterly winds shifting southeasterly on Saturday. Temperatures on Thursday ranged from 32 to 34 degrees Celsius, dropping to 22-25 C at night. Friday will be hotter, with temperatures reaching 36-38 C during the day and cooling to 25-27 C at night. Saturday remains hot, with coastal humidity and southeasterly winds. Temperatures will soar to 39-41 C during the day but decrease to 25-26 C at night. — KUNA

Zionists destroy bedouin homes in Negev desert

NEGEV: Zionist authorities destroyed around 50 homes belonging to bedouins in the Negev desert on Wednesday, an AFP journalist reported, with the Zionist entity's far-right national security minister saying they were "illegal constructions". Bulldozers flattened the houses in the Wadi al-Khalil village, sparking anger among members of its 500-strong community.

"There are more than 500 people here. (Now) the children and the women have nowhere else to go," said resident Sleiman Abu Asa. "They are

demolishing our homes, leaving us stranded outside," he added as police were deployed to monitor the operation. "We don't deserve this. We've sought a solution for years, hoping for a fair resolution, yet the state has obstructed all our options."

The Zionist entity considers the homes built in Wadi al-Khalil to be illegal. Far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir reiterated this in remarks posted online Wednesday. The Wadi al-Khalil homes are "illegal constructions", he said, warning anyone who "violates the law in the Negev" desert. The destruction, he said, was "an important step" indicating the government's authority would not be challenged. "The police will fight anyone who seizes land and tries to build another reality on the ground," said Ben Gvir.

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Zionist security forces stand near camels as they demolish the bedouin community of Wadi al-Khalil comprised of 300 individuals in the southern Negev desert near the town of Hura on May 8, 2024. — AFP

North Africa ultras use stadiums to back Palestinians

CASABLANCA: In North Africa, where political speech is often harshly policed, football stadiums have long been an exception. Now, fans are using that small freedom to express solidarity for the Palestinians amid the Gaza war. As early as Oct 8 — the day after Hamas launched an attack on the Zionist entity — supporters of Raja Club Athletic in Casablanca revived an old chant.

"You for whom my heart is saddened," goes the song which spread throughout the Arab world. "Our tears have been flowing for years. Palestine, my beloved, the Arabs are asleep. You, the most beautiful country, must resist." In Algiers, dramatic choreographed fan displays, known as tifos, depicted giant figures in the traditional keffiyeh scarf associated with the Palestinian cause and calls for a "free Palestine".

"The Palestinian question unites everyone" in the region, said Abderrahim Bourkia, a Moroccan sociologist who has studied diehard "ultra" football fans. "The ultras generally place themselves on the side of the oppressed, so for them, it goes without saying to sing about Palestine."

Continued on Page 6



CASABLANCA: People walk past a mural painted by the ultra supporters of Wydad AC football club on April 5, 2024. — AFP

Scientists win World Food Prize for work on Global Seed Vault

PARIS: Scientists Geoffrey Hawtin and Cary Fowler, who on Thursday received the prestigious World Food Prize for "their work to preserve the world's heritage of seeds", are on a mission. Their vocation is to safeguard as many seeds as possible so that one day the world can benefit from their genetic characteristics. Their work is all in the

name of protecting global food security.

Hawtin and Fowler helped set up a world reserve of seeds dug into a glacier on the Norwegian archipelago Svalbard in the Arctic — where 1.25 million samples are now stored for preservation in the cold. It was for this work they were named the 2024 winners of the World Food Prize, awarded to individuals who have increased the quality, quantity, or availability of food worldwide.

The goal is always to conserve as many agricultural seeds as possible, 75-year-old British-Canadian agronomist Hawtin told AFP. "What actually changed a little bit since it opened in 2008 is the material going into it," he said. After mainly collecting seeds from "domesticated" plants like wheat and

barley, the reserve is now welcoming more wild species that are more or less related to cultivated plants. The latter mainly "have genes that are particularly interesting with climate change", he said.

The domestication of plants is "the result of thousands of years and countless experiments," said Fowler, a 74-year-old American seed specialist and the US Special Envoy for Global Food Security. It would be "arrogant" to think that current genetic engineering tools, even the most sophisticated, could reproduce those experiments, he added. That would be "a more expensive way of getting the diversity that we already have contained in the seeds in the seed banks".

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Local

Bait Al-Othman Museum reflects Kuwait's past, present and future

Gulf Cooperation Council undersecretaries meet



Museum's Deputy President Hussain Al-Qattan receiving the certificate at the 22nd meeting of the GCC Undersecretaries Responsible for Antiquities and Museums. — KUNA photos



A group photo from the 22nd meeting of the GCC Undersecretaries Responsible for Antiquities and Museums in Doha.

KUWAIT: Bait Al-Othman Museum reflects Kuwait's beautiful past to current and future generations through its display of antique memorabilia and artifacts' collections, said Abdullah Al-Othman Heritage Center Director Anwar Al-Refai. In a statement to KUNA, Al-Refai highlighted the success of the museum's unique collection of rare cultural artifacts showcased to visitors, which led to the museum's increased popularity. This came during the recent 22nd meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Undersecretaries Responsible for Antiquities and Museums, in collaboration with the GCC General Secretariat in Doha, Qatar.

Al-Refai added that the museum was praised for providing a platform to present Gulf Arab heritage and cultural legacies. Al-Refai, who is also the Director of the Heritage Team, underscored the team's efforts in focusing on cultural, civilizational, and human heritage that accentuate the authentic identity of Kuwait. The Heritage Team is composed of Kuwaiti history, anthropology, and heritage enthusiasts and researchers aiming to preserve Kuwait's forefathers' legacies while also emphasizing the hardships and harsh conditions

previous generations endured.

Furthermore, the Heritage Team believes in communicating these legacies with current generations, sharing social, cultural, and anthropological aspects through reviving Kuwaiti customs and heritage lost to time and modernization. It is through the hardships Kuwait's forefathers' endured that current generations are able to flourish; therefore, their past efforts and adversities should be commemorated.

The Heritage Team, a volunteer-led effort under the auspices of Sheikh Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah founded on October 19, 2010, had been appointed by the Council of Ministers to initiate its mission of collecting and recording past Kuwaiti heritage with Bait Al-Othman Museum as its headquarters. The museum was inaugurated in 2013 by the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, with Bait Al-Othman being considered a Kuwaiti architectural marvel. Bait Al-Othman was built in the late 1940s in Hawally, designed as a traditional Kuwaiti house with multiple (hosh) courtyards at the center and a (divaniya), which is a reception hall, elaborated Al-Refai.

Bait Al-Othman was significant for a



Bait Al-Othman Museum



structure of its sort being erected outside Kuwait City's parameters, leading it to be looked after and preserved by Kuwait's National Council for Culture,

Arts, and Letters (NCCAL) for many visiting enthusiasts. The late owner of Bait Al-Othman, Abdullah Abdullatif Al-Othman, born in 1897, was a prom-

inent Kuwaiti figure who prospered in many fields and aspects available to him at the time while also being a benefactor to the poor and needy. — KUNA



The Office of the Assistant Dean for Planning, Consulting, and Training at the College of Engineering and Petroleum organizes a training program for gas manufacturing engineers.

KU organizes integrated program for engineers

KUWAIT: The Office of the Assistant Dean for Planning, Consulting, and Training at the College of Engineering and Petroleum held the "Integrated Training Program" for oil sector employees. The "Integrated Training Program for Gas Manufacturing Engineers" was launched on Sunday, April 21, 2024, and was organized by the Office of the Assistant Dean for Planning, Consulting, and Training at the College of Engineering and Petroleum.

The training program was inaugurated by the Acting Assistant Dean for Planning, Consulting, and Training, Dr. Abdullah Al-Ajmi, who welcomed the participants in the training course and wished them success, indicating that this course is provided by a group of faculty members at the college. "The most prominent objectives are to increase acquaintance and communication between participants from the oil sectors in Kuwait, namely KOC, KNPC, KIPIC, KGOC, and KPC, and to enhance knowledge and relationships between engineers in various oil subsidiaries," he said.

The Acting Head of the Petroleum Engineering Department, Dr. Mabkhout Al-Dosari, welcomed the participants, noting that this training course was requested by the participating oil companies in cooperation with the College of Engineering and Petroleum. He added that a case study will be made by the engineering companies for the participants in this course in cooperation with the faculty members, with the aim of solving any current problem in the work environment.

The 3-week training course was lectured by a number of faculty members from the Department of Petroleum Engineering, namely Dr. Adel Al-Sharqawi, Dr. Osama Al-Omar, Dr. Firas Al-Rahimani and Dr. Fahd Al-Mudaris, and from the Department of Chemical Engineering, Prof. Dr. Hisham Al-Toni, Prof. Dr. Haitham Lababidi, Dr. Badier Al-Busairi, Dr. Suleiman Al-Qallaf, Dr. Essam Neck, Dr. Mohammed Al-Ajmi, Dr. Yousef Al-Shamlan, Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Herz, Dr. Mohammed Al-Hajri and Dr. Farah Al-Dawish.



KUWAIT: The Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College commander Major General Pilot Fahd Fahman, received the representative of the secretary-general of the United Nations and Resident Coordinator in Kuwait, Ghada Al-Taher. The Ministry of Defense said in a press statement on Thursday that the representative of the secretary-general of the United Nations delivered a lecture and praised the effective role of Kuwait and the support of the United Nations. The statement explained that this lecture comes within the framework of the training program of the joint command and Staff Course No. 28. — KUNA photos



DOHA: The 33rd Doha International Book Fair kicked off Thursday under the slogan "Knowledge Builds Civilizations." - KUNA photos

33rd Doha Int'l Book Fair opens

DOHA: The 33rd Doha International Book Fair kicked off Thursday under the slogan "Knowledge Builds Civilizations," with the participation of about 515 publishing houses from 42 countries, including Kuwait. Oman is participating as the guest of honor in this exhibition, with a special pavilion and a diverse cultural program that highlights the authentic Omani heritage, intellectual and literary production, and presents a group of

popular and artistic performances.

The program of activities accompanying the Doha International Book Fair includes a group of workshops in various cultural, social, and professional fields, in addition to a photo exhibition under the title "Read" in the Qatar Photography Centre's pavilion. Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman, inaugurated the Expo. Omani Minister of Culture, Sports, and Youth, Dhi Yazan bin Haitham Al-Said, Qatari Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad, Egyptian Minister of Culture Dr. Nevin Al-Kilani, and a number of other officials participated in the opening. — KUNA



Kuwait promotes interfaith dialogue, preaches tolerance

Interfaith conference emphasizes importance of family preservation

DOHA: Director of the Center for the Promotion of Moderation Director of Kuwait's Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Dr. Abdullah Al-Shreika, said his ministry was keen on participating in the 15th Doha Conference for Interfaith Dialogue, which concluded on Wednesday evening. The two-day event shed light on the roles of faiths in cementing the coherence of family and society and protecting man against delinquencies that run counter to the teachings of Islam.

The conference provided a platform for religious scholars to exchange experience and cooperate for the benefit of humanity, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, he said, noting that such cooperation bears fruit in the combat against narcotics and other social menaces. Kuwait plays an effective role in advancing the cause of moderation, tolerance, and coexistence among the various segments of society, he affirmed.

Based on the noble values of Islam, the Kuwaiti legislation ensures the rights of everybody and the coherence of the social texture, Dr. Al-Shreika said, affirming that Kuwait is the country of humanity where everybody enjoys dignity, security, and safety. He expressed gratitude to the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue for organizing the just-ended conference.

The 15th Doha Conference on Interfaith Dialogue underlined the importance of preserving the family system and strengthening its foundations, as it is the fundamental cornerstone of society. In their final communiqué, the conferees stressed that preserving the family system can only be achieved by making religious teachings and values a guide for family life, elevating the importance of virtuous values and ethics, highlighting their role and impact in directing hu-

man behavior, and maximizing family cohesion.

The statement affirmed the centrality of education as a vital path to achieving a healthy upbringing for future generations who shape the future. The conference called for activating the role of families in preventing their children from engaging in morally incorrect practices and achieving self-awareness within the family unit by restructuring parental roles and responsibilities. This involves building emotional and social bonds between parents and their children to create a harmonious family environment, free from conflicts and negative interactions that distort the image of family in the minds of the young.

The statement also highlighted the importance of official institutional attention to social family services, particularly for vulnerable families, deepening the understanding of their role not only in providing financial support but also in equipping them with beneficial knowledge to confront the challenges they face. Furthermore, the statement emphasized the adoption and support of civil and voluntary institutional initiatives aimed at protecting and strengthening the family structure, integrating family dialogues into educational programs and curricula, conducting independent studies, and conducting specialized research in various educational institutions to establish this role theoretically and practically by hosting families to develop a culture of dialogue among them.

The conferees underscored the important role of educational institutions, especially universities, in supporting and fortifying families against ideologies and philosophies that undermine societies, civilizations, and humanity as a whole, whether through curriculum design that shapes student awareness or through scientific studies and re-

search to address all family-related issues.

They stressed the importance of partnerships among various entities related to family and society and the need to find scientific methods to discuss issues concerning society and family. In their communiqué, they also highlighted the activation of family roles through engaging programs designed to train parents to address contemporary challenges hindering the preservation of family identity and threatening its cohesion.

They called on official media institutions to enhance their role within the scope of social responsibility, adopting media campaigns to raise societal awareness about the importance of preserving family systems and familial bonds. They cautioned about the dangers posed by destructive ideas to solid family structures and unity, urging adherence to religious and moral values and showcasing the importance of family and the need to preserve its cohesion for the stability of communities and nations.

They strongly cautioned against the risks of wars and conflicts affecting families, especially those affecting children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, highlighting the human rights violations they endure during such crises. "This necessitates the international community to enforce international laws that criminalize and penalize perpetrators of these violations and to take serious and prompt action to end armed conflicts and provide urgent humanitarian aid to affected families and civilians," reads the communiqué.

It underscored the need to dedicate an objective study to the challenges faced by minority families, whether related to identity, integration, coexistence with diverse cultures, or conscious integration into



Director of the Center for the Promotion of Moderation, Dr. Abdullah Al-Shreika with the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue, Dr. Ibrahim Al-Nuaimi. — KUNA

the societies in which they live. In a news conference, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID), Dr. Ibrahim bin Saleh Al-Nuaimi, announced Qatar's hosting of an international conference to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family. The conference, organized by the institute, will take place from October 29-31 of the coming year. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Saleh Al-Sabah received on Thursday Director General of the Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, accompanied by the visiting representatives of the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA). — KUNA

Kuwait's economic activity 'falls 2.2%'

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced on Thursday that the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) estimated real economic activity in Kuwait had fallen by 2.2 percent in 2023. A press release by the CBK revealed that number came from the IMF report following their delegation's visit to Kuwait from April 30 to May 7, which came to convey preliminary findings. It indicated that the IMF said the oil sector contracted by 4.3 percent due to an OPEC+ production quota cut in May, and the non-oil sector expanded by only 0.8 percent amid subdued domestic demand growth.

The IMF delegation added that the economy "is projected to contract by a further 1.4 percent in 2024,

with oil production falling by another 4.3 percent due to the OPEC+ quota cut in January. The non-oil sector is expected to expand by 2.0 percent as domestic demand growth picks up, compared to 3.6 percent average growth for the GCC." The IMF report commended the CBK for its measures, saying, "Given prudent financial regulation and supervision by the CBK, banks have maintained strong capital and liquidity buffers, while their profitability has rebounded from pandemic lows, and non-performing loans remain low and well provisioned for.

It is crucial to preserve the CBK's independence in implementing its mandate." "Financial stability has been maintained in spite of tighter financial conditions. Growth in credit to the nonfinancial private sector continued to fall in 2023 to only 1.8 percent as bank lending rates rose in response to gradual policy rate hikes by the CBK broadly in line with global monetary policy tightening, which helped control inflation," stated the IMF report. — KUNA



Officers pose for a group photo. — KUNA

National Guard equips personnel in all fields

KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the National Guard Lieutenant General Engineer Hashem Al-Rifai affirmed on Thursday the Guard leadership's keen-

ness to equip armed personnel with knowledge and experience in all fields to advance the National Guard and its role in protecting the nation. This came in a press release issued by the National Guard during the graduation ceremony of the Advanced Infantry Course for Officers, in which army officers from Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar participated, with the presence of several senior commanders and officers in the Army.

Al-Rifai conveyed to the graduates the greetings of the leadership, represented by His Highness Sheikh

Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. He praised the participation of army officers from Bahrain and Qatar and their honorable representation of their military institutions, which strengthens cooperation between Gulf states. The officers' performance during the course shows the leadership skills they have acquired and their ability to plan, implement, and work in teams, Al-Rifai added, noting the leadership's directives to improve education and training with the best curricula and training methods. — KUNA

GCC's Red Crescent societies strengthen joint coordination

DOHA: Deputy Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Anwar Al-Hasawi said on Thursday the meeting of the heads of GCC Red Crescent societies strengthened joint coordination of social and relief services. Al-Hasawi added in a statement to KUNA, following the conclusion of the 20th meeting of the Committee of Heads of Red Crescent Authorities and Societies in the GCC held in Doha, that the meeting discussed collective work to help the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and Syrian and Yemeni refugees in accordance with international humanitarian law.

He praised the GCC General Secretariat for the Human and Environmental Affairs sector and its role in coordination, consultation, and support of joint work with Red Crescent authorities and societies in the GCC. He pointed out that several decisions were discussed, aimed at increasing cooperation, joint work, and unifying positions in regional and international organizations, in addition to joint training and workshops.

In another development, the Arab League on Thursday affirmed its unwavering support for the Palestinian media, stressing the necessity to protect Palestinian journalists in the Gaza Strip and the



20th meeting of the Committee of Heads of Red Crescent Authorities and Societies in GCC. — KUNA

West Bank, in line with international humanitarian law. The league assistant secretary general, Ambassador Ahmad Khatabi, said in a statement marking "the world day of solidarity with the Palestinian media" that the illegitimate measures against the Palestinian media and other outlets constitute a breach of international covenants.

He indicated the International Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in the aftermath of World War II, and various international pledges for safeguarding freedom of opinion. He called on various international organizations to campaign to bring the culprits of offenses against Palestinian journalists to account.

Khatabi affirmed that according to Resolution 58 issued by the Arab ministers of information in September 2022, May 11 has become the day for solidarity with the Palestinian media, which has also coincided with the occupation's assassination of the Palestinian journalist Shirin Abu Aqleh.

Aqleh was fatally shot while covering incidents in the occupied territories for the Al-Jazeera network. Elaborating, Khatabi affirmed that 142 journalists were among the 34,000 martyrs who had fallen in Gaza since last October. The figure exceeds the whole number of journalists who have lost their lives in various hot spots throughout the world since 2023. — KUNA

Kuwaiti graduate shines at Weill Cornell University

DOHA: Kuwaiti graduate Dr. Turki Al-Mutairi won first position in the graduating class of 2024 from Weill Cornell Medical University in Qatar. Al-Mutairi, in a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Wednesday after the graduation ceremony held by the university in Doha, expressed his happiness with his academic excellence, winning first place with honors and excellence throughout the years of study at the university.

He joined the university in 2018 as part of a program consisting of six academic years, including two years of pre-medicine, pointing out that he chose to specialize in anesthesiology after graduating from the university. He indicated that he is scheduled to enroll this summer in the residency program for doctors (American Board) in anesthesiology.

Al-Mutairi dedicated his academic excellence to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to the Kuwaiti people and the state of Qatar, where he studied. For his part, ambassador of Kuwait to Qatar Khalid Al-Mutairi, in a similar statement to KUNA, expressed his happiness that Dr. Turki Al-Mutairi received honors and excelled throughout his years of study.

He added that this is not strange for Kuwaitis, as they have always recorded achievements and climbed to the podium in all forums, whether local, regional, or international. Ambassador Al-Mutairi expressed his thanks and appreciation to Kuwait's wise leadership for taking care of students abroad. He also expressed his thanks to the Cultural Office in Dubai.

During the graduation ceremony, Dr. Al-Mutairi received many awards, namely academic excellence in the fields of health, fatigue, and illness; excellence in patient care and the medical profession; and excellence in professional brilliance in the basic science curriculum. He also received excellence awards in anesthesia, resuscitation, critical cases, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, surgery, and the clinical curriculum. Cornell Medical University in Qatar was established in 2001 in partnership between Cornell University and the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development. — KUNA



Dr. Turki Al-Mutairi with his father.

KDIPA hosts WAIPA steering committee meeting

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) hosted, on Thursday, the periodic meeting of the Steering Committee of the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) at its premises. The meeting capitalizes on KDIPA's mandated role and its commitment to enhance Kuwait's presence in the international community by building mutually beneficial partnerships and engaging in joint collaboration in economic, investment, and developmental areas.

A KDIPA press release said that the association headed the meeting in its capacity as the Vice President of the newly elected Steering Committee, with the participation of several of the Executive Regional Directors of the Steering Committee as well as members of WAIPA's Permanent Secretariat. The Steering Committee members started with a courtesy meeting with Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Director General of KDIPA.

Afterwards, they resumed their meeting by reviewing global developments and updates relating to WAIPA's first quarter Q1 Plan of Activities and Budget 2024, as well as the arrangements for upholding the upcoming 28th WAIPA General Assembly and World Investment Conference (WIC 28) during the period November 25-27, 2024. The WAIPA Steering Committee members concluded their meeting by deliberating on and undertaking the needed decisions on several pertinent agenda items relating to coordinating efforts and collaboration mechanisms to increase initiative, global FDI-related studies, organizing regional events, and developing communications and media channels.

The World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) was established in 1995 in Geneva, Switzerland. Kuwait had joined it in 2006, but currently Kuwait, represented by KDIPA, holds the post of Vice Presidency of WAIPA for the new term (2023-2025); previously, KDIPA was elected as the Executive Director for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region within WAIPA's Steering Committee for the previous term (2021-2023). — KUNA

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: Photo shows a view of high-rise buildings in Kuwait City including the Al-Hamra tower (right) - the tallest skyscraper in Kuwait and one of the top 10 tallest towers in the world, and the National bank of Kuwait headquarters. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

UAE Embassy recognizes Zain for role in enhancing local business landscape

Company recently sponsored UAE Companies Investment Meet

KUWAIT: Zain was recognized by the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Kuwait for its role in enhancing the local business landscape. The recognition came during the ceremony held to honor sponsors and supporters of the UAE Companies Investment Meet, which the Embassy recently organized under the title Unlocking Kuwait's Potential. The ceremony was held at the Embassy's headquarters, attended by UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Mutar Al Neyadi, Kuwait Finance House Acting Group CEO Abdulwahab Issa Al Rushood, and Zain Kuwait Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al Khashti.

Zain expressed its appreciation to the Embassy for this recognition, which acts as a testament to the company's efforts to foster sustainable growth and enhance the business landscape. The event contributed to achieving economic diversifica-

tion, promoting competitiveness, and positioning Kuwait on the regional map as an investment hub. Zain strongly believes that Kuwait's private sector is a key strategic partner to local developmental goals and remains a main pillar of success, as it plays a prominent role in promoting diversification, enhancing productivity, and fostering long-term sustainable growth. This has led Zain to support this event, which contributed to achieving these goals.

The UAE Companies Investment Meet aimed to enhance Kuwaiti-Emirati bilateral relations, diversify commercial partnerships in the Kuwaiti market and support their growth, explore promising investment opportunities to achieve sustainable growth, and offer space for exchanging ideas and expertise. It was joined by 20 UAE-based companies from across the market's most vibrant sectors.



UAE Ambassador Dr Mutar Al Neyadi honors Waleed Al Khashti in recognition of Zain's support.



Al Neyadi, Al Rushood, and Al Khashti with Zain and Embassy officials.

Campaign targets school graduates

KUWAIT: The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education, Lamia Al-Melhem, announced the launch of the electronic campaign of the Ministry of Higher Education. The event will start on Sunday and continue until the end of July 2024. Al-Melhem said in a press statement on Thursday that the campaign targets Kuwaiti high school graduates and those holding foreign high school certificates who meet the conditions of the ministry and wish to enroll in foreign scholarship programs.

She added that the campaign comes within the directives of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, to invest all available resources so as to raise awareness and guide the students and their parents on requirements and mechanisms. She pointed out that the campaign comes before the announcement of the scholarship plan for the academic year 2025-2024 in order to respond to students' inquiries and communicate with them directly, in addition to directing them on how to enroll in distinguished universities.

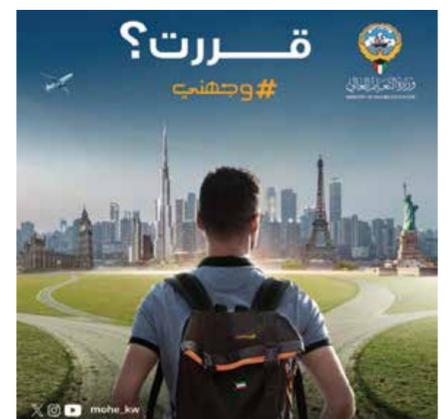
For the third year in a row, the campaign is working within a systematic action plan under the supervision and implementation of the minister's media adviser and the media team, with the participation of the Missions Department, the guidance and counseling section at the Ministry. The campaign includes three main stages: (1) Introducing students to the missions of the Ministry of Higher Education. (2) Guiding them with the mission plan, its conditions, and the regis-

tration mechanism (3) Meeting with the accepted students and guiding them to the post-admission procedures.

Al-Melhem pointed out that the campaign will be present at the Avenues Complex from May 20 to 23, inviting students wishing to study abroad to make inquiries about foreign missions. She stressed the importance of following the official social media accounts of the Ministry to see important announcements and information. — KUNA



Lamia Al-Melhem



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STURTEVANT: US President Joe Biden speaks about his Investing in America agenda, at Gateway Technical College in Sturtevant, Wisconsin. — AFP

Biden threatens to stop weapon supplies if Zionists invade Rafah

'Civilians have been killed in Gaza as a consequence of those bombs'

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden said Wednesday he would stop US weapon supplies to the Zionist entity if it attacks Rafah in southern Gaza, his most direct warning to date over the prosecution of the war against Hamas. In an interview with CNN Biden also deplored the fact that civilians had been killed by the dropping of US bombs on the Palestinian territory.

His fresh warning came after the US last week halted a shipment of huge American bombs to the Zionist entity as it appeared ready to proceed with a major attack on Rafah -- a city packed with Palestinian civilians sheltering near the Egyptian border. "If they go into Rafah, I'm not supplying the weapons that have been used... to deal with the cities," Biden said. "We're not gonna supply the weapons and the artillery shells that have been used."

Biden, a self-described Zionist, had long resisted stopping any of the \$3 billion in weapons the United States sends each year to the Zionist entity -- and pushed Congress for an increase in the wake of the October 7 attack by Hamas that triggered the major Zionist retaliation. But US officials say privately that his hand was forced after Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made clear he would go ahead with an assault on Rafah, defying Biden's public appeals to spare the city.

Under increasing pressure from the left of his own party to limit arms shipments, the Biden administration paused delivery last week of 1,800 2,000-pound (907 kilogram) bombs and 1,700 500-pound bombs.

"Civilians have been killed in Gaza as a consequence of those bombs," Biden said. "It's just wrong." Biden may worry about alienating centrist voters if he shifts too far, while Netanyahu knows he needs US support at a time of wide global anger against the Zionist entity. "We're not walking away from Zionist's security," Biden insisted in the CNN interview. "We're walking away from the Zionist's ability to wage war in those areas."

Incremental pressure

The Biden administration has previously taken smaller steps to show displeasure with Netanyahu, including imposing sanctions on extremist Zionist settlers and letting through a UN Security Council resolution that supported a ceasefire. Major US interventions in the past have changed Zionist behavior. In 1991, the Zionist entity begrudgingly attended the Madrid conference that led to a peace process with the Palestinians after then-president George W. Bush held up US loan guarantees to build settlements.

In 1956, heavy US pressure including economic threats forced the Zionist entity as well as Britain and France to give up their grab of the Suez Canal from Egypt. But experts questioned if the Zionist entity could be persuaded this time as it sees its war in existential terms after October 7, the deadliest attack ever on the country. "I cannot imagine American displeasure with the prospect of a Rafah invasion doesn't loom large in the Zionist gov-

ernment's calculus," said Jon Alterman, senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "At the same time, Zionists have other calculations, too," he said.

Will the Zionist entity listen?

Raphael Cohen, director of the strategy and doctrine program at the RAND Corporation research group, noted that the Zionist entity dialed back air strikes and opened border crossings after Biden voiced anger last month following a Zionist strike that killed seven aid workers. "Despite Netanyahu's rhetoric, the Zionist entity takes American pressure quite seriously," he said. But avoiding a Rafah invasion "functionally means leaving at least four battalions of Hamas fighters plus its senior leadership intact and over 100 hostages in Hamas hands," he said.

"From a Zionist entity strategic perspective, that's probably a nonstarter and it also may fracture Netanyahu's coalition." Even with the pause of US shipments, the Zionist entity is believed to have a significant weapons stockpile. It has a major domestic defense industry and the Biden administration has repeatedly shipped weapons that fall beneath the threshold for congressional notification. Ari Tolany, who follows the arms trade for the progressive Center for International Policy, doubted the halt would have "an immediate operational impact" but said it sent a message to the (Zionist entity) not to drop 2,000-pound bombs, as it already has in the war. —AFP

Girl's hearing restored after gene therapy

LONDON: An 18-month-old British girl who was born completely deaf is believed to be the youngest person to have their hearing restored after undergoing groundbreaking new gene therapy. Several medical teams around the world including in China and the United States have been trialling similar treatments with good results for hereditary deafness that focuses on a rare genetic mutation. But UK ear surgeon Manohar Bance said the toddler, Opal, was the first person in the world to receive therapy developed by US biotech firm Regeneron and "the youngest globally that's been done to date as far as we know".

Opal was treated at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, part of Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, in eastern England. Bance called the results of Opal's surgery "spectacular—so close to normal hearing restoration. So we do hope it could be a potential cure". He said it came on the back of decades of work and marked "a new era in the treatment of deafness".

The little girl, from Oxfordshire in south central England, has a genetic form of auditory neuropathy, which is caused by the disruption of nerve impulses travelling from the inner ear to the brain. Auditory neuropathy can be caused by a fault in the OTOF gene, which is responsible for making a protein called otoferlin. This enables cells in the ear to communicate with the hearing nerve.

To overcome the fault, the "new era" gene therapy from Regeneron delivers a working copy of the gene to the ear. Bance said that following surgery last September, Opal's hearing was now "close to normal" with further improvement expected. A second child received the gene therapy in Cambridge with positive results seen six weeks after the surgery.

China has been working on targeting the same gene though Bance said theirs used a different technology and slightly different mode of delivery. Medics in Philadelphia have also reported a good outcome with a type of gene therapy on an 11-year-old boy. Opal was the first person to take part in a gene therapy trial being carried out in Cambridge by Bance. The trial consists of three parts, with three deaf children, including Opal, receiving a low dose of gene therapy in one ear only.

A different set of three children will get a high dose on one side. Then, if that is shown to be safe, more children will receive a dose in both ears at the same time. Up to 18 youngsters from the UK, Spain and the United States are being recruited to the trial and will be followed up for five years. —AFP

Empty streets and 'fear' in Gaza's Rafah since Zionist incursion

RAFAH: Displaced Gazan Marwan Al-Masri, sheltering in Rafah, said on Wednesday "life has completely ceased" since Zionist tanks and troops entered the city's east, sending desperate Palestinians fleeing north in the besieged territory. More than 1.4 million people had crammed into Rafah, a city on the Gaza Strip's southern border with Egypt, as Zionist forces pushed their way southward from the coastal territory's north during months of war against Hamas militants.

Many in Rafah have been displaced multiple times during the seven-month war, and are now heading back north after Zionist forces called for the evacuation of the city's eastern part, which hosts tens of thousands of people. "Life has completely ceased in the downtown area of Rafah," said 35-year-old Masri, who has been displaced from northern Gaza. "The streets are empty of people, and markets are in a state of paralysis", he told AFP.

"We all feel fear of any advancement in the invasion, as happened in the eastern areas, which are now completely empty of residents". Masri said he and his relatives "are all tense and frightened" by the incessant shelling that they feel is getting closer to them. Ibtihal Al-Arouqi, who was displaced from Al-Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza, said she has found herself once again homeless.

"We emerged from under the rubble of our house in Al-Bureij, and now due to intense shelling in Rafah, my children and I are in the street", she said.



GAZA: This handout image shows an aerial view of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt in the southern Gaza Strip. — AFP

The 39-year-old said that only two weeks ago she gave birth to Caesarean section. "We don't know where to go. There is no safe place", Arouqi added. She spoke from west Rafah, where many Palestinians remain. While it is relatively calmer than the city's heavily bombarded east, the west has also been hit by shelling, an AFP journalist reported.

Both Arouqi and Masri said incessant shelling has filled the air with dust and smoke that make it hard to breathe. "The situation in Rafah is chaotic," said Mohammed Abu Mughaiseb, a medical coordinator for Doctors Without Borders (MSF) charity in Rafah. Himself displaced from Gaza City, he described "people carrying their things, mattresses, blankets, kitchen items on trucks" to flee east Rafah. But

"there's no space anymore in the west of Rafah," Abu Mughaiseb told AFP. The city's Al-Najjar hospital was "closed, evacuated by the medical team to avoid what happened in Al-Shifa or Nasser", he added, referring to two other Gaza medical facilities raided by Zionist forces during the course of the war.

Caught between Zionist shelling from the east, an Egyptian border to the south and the Mediterranean to the west, many fleeing Rafah went north. They headed towards the nearby city of Khan Yunis as well as Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza, where thousands of tents filled up the coast. Ahmed Fadel, 22, is one of many retracing his steps, returning to the northern parts of Gaza he had fled earlier on in the war. —AFP

International

Putin says nuclear forces 'always' on alert in Victory Day speech

Moscow would not tolerate any Western threats

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin on Thursday warned his nuclear forces were "always" on alert and added that Moscow would not tolerate any Western threats, during an address on the annual Victory Day parade. In a defiant speech on Red Square before thousands of soldiers dressed in ceremonial attire, Putin heaped praise on his army fighting in Ukraine and accused "Western elites" of fomenting conflicts around the world.

"Russia will do everything to prevent a global clash, but at the same time we will not allow anyone to threaten us. Our strategic forces are always on alert," Putin told the crowd. "Dear friends, Russia is now going through a difficult, crucial period. The fate of the Motherland, its future depends on each of us," he said. The May 9 parade marks the Soviet Union's defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II and has become Russia's most important public holiday as Putin puts the country firmly on a combat footing.

Putin has used nuclear rhetoric throughout the conflict but has grown increasingly belligerent since last year, pulling out of a nuclear test ban treaty and a key arms reduction agreement with the United States. Earlier this week, he ordered the Russian military to hold nuclear drills involving the navy and troops based near Ukraine, raising fears he could use the powerful weapons on the battlefield.

In comments recorded on Tuesday but released by the Kremlin after the parade, Putin vowed to modernize his army's weaponry and said Russia would use whatever foreign parts it could get to make them. "Modern military technology is changing very fast. If we want to be successful, we always have to be one step ahead," he said in a meeting with army commanders.

'Russia is with you'

Putin has repeatedly framed the current fight

against Ukraine as an existential battle against "Nazism", a message he reiterated in his address Thursday. "We bow our heads before the memory of civilians killed by barbaric shelling and terrorist attacks by neo-Nazis," he said. "Those on the front line, on the line of contact -- are our heroes. We bow before your steadfastness and self-sacrifice, selflessness. All Russia is with you," he continued.

Russia's border regions including Belgorod have been hit by repeated deadly Ukrainian attacks since the conflict began, including on Thursday when overnight aerial bombardment injured eight people. Security in the capital was tight ahead of this year's parade, amid repeated Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory and after an Islamic State attack on a concert hall near the capital in March killed dozens. Other parts of Russia including the western Kursk and Pskov regions cancelled their parades due to security concerns.

The parade featured columns of Russian military equipment, although was notably scaled back compared to past years as Moscow mobilizes its resources for the Ukraine front. "We come to see it every year," said 44-year-old Yelena Melikhova, who watched the procession of military equipment heading to Red Square. "It's very touching, very exciting." Svetlana Sycheva, 48, who watched the parade said she was filled with "pride". "Even in such difficult times we have the opportunity to rejoice, and to feel the emotions that we have just experienced," she told AFP.

'We will win'

Russia often invites representatives from countries it deems "friendly" to the event, though attendance had dwindled even before it sent troops into Ukraine in early 2022 amid a stand-off with the West. Nine world leaders attended Thursday's parade -- the heads of ex-Soviet republics Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,



MOSCOW: In this pool photograph distributed by the Russian state agency Sputnik, Russia's President Vladimir Putin and foreign leaders lay flowers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier by the Kremlin wall after the Victory Day military parade in central Moscow. — AFP

Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan -- as well as the leaders of Cuba, Laos and Guinea-Bissau.

The 71-year-old Putin has ruled Russia since the turn of the century, securing a fresh six-year mandate in March after winning presidential elections devoid of all opposition. Russia's army held off a much-hyped Ukrainian counter-offensive last year, and it has since

made gains on the front lines as Kyiv struggles with ammunition and manpower shortages. Thursday's festivities come two days after Putin vowed at a lavish inauguration to deliver "victory" to Russians. "We are a united and great nation, and together we will overcome all obstacles, realize everything we have planned, and together, we will win," he said. —AFP

'Constant terror' in key Darfur city as fighting closes in

PORT SUDAN: Sudanese shop owner Ishaq Mohamed has been trapped in his home for a month, sheltering from violence in El-Fasher, the last major city in the country's vast Darfur region not under paramilitary control. For more than a year, Sudan has suffered a war between the army, headed by the country's de facto leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), commanded by his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

Experts have warned the northeast African country is at risk of breaking apart. According to the United Nations, Sudan "is experiencing a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions", with famine threatening and more than 8.7 million people uprooted—more than anywhere else in the world. Among the war's many horrors, Darfur has already seen some of the worst. Now, experts and residents are bracing for more. "We're living in constant terror," Mohammed told AFP by telephone, as the UN, world leaders and aid groups voice fears of carnage in the North Darfur state capital of 1.5 million people. "We can't move for the bombardments," Mohammed said.

The RSF has seized four out of five state capitals in Darfur, a region about the size of France and home to around one quarter of Sudan's 48 million people. "We're under a total siege," another resident, Ahmed Adam, told AFP in a text message that got through despite a near-total communications blackout in Darfur. "There's no way in

or out of the city that's not controlled by the RSF" he said. For months, El-Fasher was protected by a fragile peace. But unrest has soared since last month when the city's two most powerful armed groups—which had helped to keep the peace there—pledged to fight alongside the army. Since then, El-Fasher and the surrounding countryside have seen "systematic burning of entire villages in rural areas, escalating air bombardments... and a tightening siege", according to Toby Harward, the UN's deputy humanitarian coordinator for Sudan.

'Large-scale massacre' warning

At least 23 communities in North Darfur have been burned in apparent arson, Yale University's Humanitarian Research Lab found in a report last week. The war's overall death toll, however, remains unclear, a factor "that captures just how invisible and horrific this war is", Tom Perriello, US special envoy for Sudan, told a congressional committee on May 1.

While figures of 15,000-30,000 have been mentioned, "some think it's at 150,000", Perriello said. UN experts reported up to 15,000 people killed in the West Darfur capital El-Geneina alone. Members of the non-Arab Massalit ethnic group in El-Geneina last year were targeted for killing and other abuses by the RSF and allied militias, forcing an exodus to neighboring Chad, which the UN says is hosting more than 745,000 people from Sudan. The International Criminal Court, currently investigating ethnic-based killings primarily by the RSF in Darfur, says it has "grounds to believe" both sides are committing atrocities in the war.

As El-Fasher is home to both Arab and African communities, an all-out battle for control of the city causing massive civilian bloodshed "would lead to revenge attacks across the five Darfur states and beyond Darfur's borders", said Harward. In late April, United States ambassador to



SUDAN: Sudanese security forces patrol in a commercial district in Gedaref city, eastern Sudan on April 3, 2024. — AFP

the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield warned that El-Fasher "is on the precipice of a large-scale massacre".

Eyewitnesses report fighting "is now inside" the nearby Abu Shouk camp, established 20 years ago for people displaced by ethnic violence committed by the Janjaweed militia, which led to ICC war crimes charges. The Janjaweed later evolved into the RSF. "Everyone who hasn't managed to leave is trapped at home," camp resident Issa Abdelrahman told AFP. "People are run-

ning out of food, and no one can get to them."

According to UN experts, the RSF has repeatedly besieged and set fire to villages and displacement camps in Darfur. Their siege of El-Fasher has halted aid convoys and commercial trade, Harward said. Shortages have also hit the El-Fasher Southern Hospital—the city's only remaining medical facility, where personnel are "completely exhausted", a medical source told AFP. — AFP

Zionists destroy bedouin homes...

Continued from Page 1

Before the Zionist entity's creation in 1948, the Negev desert was home to approximately 92,000 bedouins. But only 11,000 remained within the Zionist entity's borders after the 1948 Arab-Zionist War, according to Adalah, an advocacy group for Arab minorities in the Zionist entity. Many of them refused to be resettled in the cities, and bedouins have continued to face difficulties in Zionist society ever since.

Today there are around 300,000, half of whom

live in cities and half in villages not recognized by the Zionist entity, according to Adalah. These villages lack most basic services, such as garbage collection. According to Arab activist Taleb El-Sana, a total of 48 homes were flattened by Zionist bulldozers on Wednesday, "leaving children and women homeless".

"An entire village was wiped out just because its inhabitants are Arab" and "under the pretext of unlicensed construction", he said. According to Sana, the Zionist entity "doesn't allow (bedouin) citizens to obtain building permits and then "demolishes their homes under the pretext of a lack of permits". "We don't deserve this," said Abu Asa. "We have sought a solution for years, hoping for a fair resolution but the state has obstructed all our options," he added. — AFP

to unload maritime aid deliveries but the work has been delayed by heavy seas. "The platform is expected to be ready by the time the ship arrives in order for the aid to be unloaded and distributed to Palestinians in need," Cyprus government spokesperson Yiannis Antoniou said.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said the pier will "significantly increase" the volume of aid reaching Gaza but said it was not a "substitute" for greater land access via the Zionist entity. Hamas called for an end to aid airdrops Thursday after two Palestinians were killed when an aid pallet crashed into a warehouse after its parachute failed to open. At least 21 people have now been killed in Gaza airdrops by Arab and Western air forces that have gone wrong, according to the Hamas authorities.

The Zionist entity and Hamas negotiating teams left Cairo Thursday after what the Egyptian hosts described as a "two-day round" of indirect negotiations on the terms of a Gaza truce, Egypt's state-linked Al-Qahera News reported. Efforts by Egyptian, Qatari and US mediators "are ongoing to bring the two sides' points of view closer," the outlet said, citing a high-level Egyptian source.

The talks had begun with some optimism after Hamas announced it had accepted a draft truce plan put to it by Egyptian and Qatari mediators but the Zionist entity said the draft was "far" from what it had agreed and there were no further reports of any breakthroughs. At a makeshift refugee camp in Rafah, Mazen Al-Shami said she was fed up. "We have no money and we don't have the means to move from one place to another again and again. We have no means at all," Shami said. — AFP

North Africa ultras use stadiums to...

Continued from Page 1

Banners at stadiums across North Africa have denounced the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. There have also been vows to "avenge the (Palestinian) children" as well as support for the "resistance fighters in the heart of the tunnels" — a reference to Hamas' tunnels under Gaza.

Supporters interviewed by AFP in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia used pseudonyms and covered their faces to conceal their identities. Seif, a 28-year-old member of the Zapatista Ultras, who support Esperance Sportive of Tunisia, said the Palestinian issue added to other more local ones, citing Tunisian corruption and the death of teenaged supporter Omar Laabidi who drowned during a police chase in 2018.

Throughout the region, political dissent in football stadiums takes place against a backdrop of repression and a lack of freedom of assembly and expression, according to human rights groups, which only

Scientists win World Food...

Continued from Page 1

Hawtin said that while gene editing had a huge role to play, the "problem is what to edit". "There are tens of thousands, if not more, genes that in some way or another affect the plant's response to just the climate change, which could be heat, which can be cold, which can be drought, which can be flooding," he said. He said he doubted that even artificial intelligence could allow "the full level of understanding" needed for such an approach. He nevertheless predicts the rise of digital seed banks where more and more information detailing the genetic characteristics of plants will be stored.

Both men began their careers in the 1970s. The aim then was not yet to adapt to climate change but to produce as much wheat, maize and rice as possible. "There were famines in Ethiopia and in India and, most of the

worsened following the Arab Spring. Algeria, which saw massive pro-democracy protests in 2019 that ousted former president Abdelaziz Bouteflika, later banned large-scale demonstrations.

As in Morocco, pro-Palestinian rallies have been allowed by the authorities, but only under significant oversight by the police. Hamza, an ultra for Wydad AC, said if his group were to organize a pro-Palestinian rally, "the authorities would stop it from the get-go". "It's much simpler to say it in a stadium," he said, where the "crowd effect" allows you to "let loose", the 21-year-old communications student added.

Mohamed Jouili, a sociology professor at the University of Tunis, said politics and sports have always been linked. The ultras "want to show that they're doers and not merely a reckless group of football fans — that they, too, have a viewpoint on society". Abdelhamid, an Algerian member of the group Amor e Mentalita which supports MC Alger, said ultras were "not politicians", but "the truth always comes out of the stadium". "Those at fault better repent... because the stadium knows everything and nothing can be hidden from it," he told AFP, standing in front of a fresco reading "Free Palestine" in Algiers' historic Casbah neighborhood. — AFP

concern then was for filling people's stomachs," Fowler said. To achieve this, experts at the time recommended concentrating on seeds with the highest yields and making massive use of fertilizers and pesticides.

Since then, they have understood the importance of developing more durable agricultural systems and enlarging the range of crops grown, said Fowler. As the Special Envoy for Global Food Security, he promotes the use of traditional crops in Africa. Often neglected by research programs in favor of corn, wheat and rice, they are potentially more nutritious and better adapted to the environment. Hawtin began his career in the Middle East, meeting with farmers and collecting vegetable seeds in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Lebanon and Jordan and then cross-referencing them. Not wanting to just throw them away, he started to keep them.

Three decades later, the war in Syria forced the Aleppo seed bank, where the agronomist had once worked, to "evacuate" its samples with urgency. Many of them went to the Svalbard seed bank. Some, including vegetable seeds collected by Hawtin and his team, have already been withdrawn from the reserve to join collections in Morocco and Lebanon. — AFP

Zionists ignore US Rafah...

Continued from Page 1

of terrorists, hostages and leaders of Hamas, how exactly are we supposed to achieve our goals?" he said on public radio.

The Zionist entity's military said Wednesday it was reopening another aid crossing into Gaza, Kerem Shalom, as well as the Erez crossing into north Gaza. But it was unclear if aid was entering the territory where, according to the World Food Program's chief, famine has already begun. UNRWA said the Kerem Shalom crossing — which the Zionist entity shut after a rocket attack killed four soldiers on Sunday — remained closed. Late Wednesday, the army said a soldier was lightly wounded when rockets again targeted Kerem Shalom.

The Hamas authorities' "emergency committee" in Rafah said Thursday the Zionist entity's "control of the Rafah crossing and its closure, along with the halt of aid and fuel supplies, threatens to exacerbate the humanitarian, environmental and health catastrophe". It dismissed as "nothing but lies" the Zionist entity's description of its Rafah operation as "limited".

A US container ship loaded with aid for Gaza left Cyprus Thursday in a new test of a maritime corridor to get relief into the besieged Palestinian territory, the Cyprus government said. US military engineers have been assembling a temporary pier for installation on the Gaza coast

International

School's out: How climate change threatens education

April marked the 11th straight month of record global heat

BANGKOK: Record-breaking heat last month that prompted governments in Asia to close schools offers fresh evidence of how climate change is threatening the education of millions of children. The arrival of seasonal rains has now brought relief to some parts of the region, but experts warn the broader problem remains, and many countries are poorly prepared to handle the impacts of climate change on schooling. Asia is warming faster than the global average, and climate change is producing more frequent, longer, and more intense heatwaves. But heat is not the only challenge.

A warmer atmosphere holds more moisture, which can result in heavy rains and flooding. This can damage schools or put them out of commission while they are used as shelters. Hot weather can also drive wildfires and spikes in air pollution, which have caused school closures everywhere from India to Australia. "The climate crisis is already a reality for children in East Asia and Pacific," the UN children's agency UNICEF warned last year.

Mohua Akter Nur, 13, is living proof of that claim, sweltering in a one-room home in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka after her school closed. Intermittent electricity means she cannot even rely on a fan to cool the cramped dwelling. "The heat is intolerable," she told AFP last month. "Our school is shut, but I can't study at home."

Poorest hit hardest

April marked the 11th straight month of record global heat, and the pattern is clear in Bangladesh, said Shumon Sengupta, country director for NGO Save the Children. "Not only are the temperatures higher, the duration of the high temperatures is much longer," he told AFP. "Previously, few areas used

to have these heatwaves, now the coverage of the country is much higher," he added. Schools across much of Asia are simply not equipped to deal with the growing consequences of climate change.

Bangladesh's urban schools can be sturdy, but are often overcrowded, with little ventilation, said Sengupta. In rural areas, corrugated metal roofs can turn classrooms into ovens, and electricity for fans is unreliable. In Bangladesh and elsewhere, students often walk long distances to and from school, risking heatstroke in the process.

But closing schools comes with serious consequences, "particularly for children from poorer, vulnerable communities who do not have access to resources such as computers, internet and books," said Salwa Aleryani, UNICEF's health specialist for East Asia and the Pacific. Those children "are also less likely to have better conditions at home to protect them during heatwaves". They may be left unsupervised by parents who cannot afford to stay home, and school closures put children at higher risk of child labor, child marriage and even trafficking, said Sengupta.

'Wake up to this'

Climate change also threatens schooling indirectly. UNICEF research in Myanmar found that crop shortages caused by rising temperatures and unpredictable rain caused families to pull children from school to help with work or because they could no longer afford fees. Some wealthy countries in the region have taken steps to protect children's education in the face of a changing climate. In Japan, fewer than half of all public schools had air conditioning in 2018, but that figure jumped to over 95 percent by 2022 after a series of heatwaves.

Romania opens first crowdfunded cancer hospital

BUCHAREST: At Romania's new crowdfunded children's cancer hospital, one-year-old Eric Ivan eagerly walked up and down the corridor, his mother holding his hands to steady him. The bright, attractive building is a far cry from the drab facilities next door - and stands out as the first hospital in Romania financed exclusively through donations. No less than 350,000 people and almost 8,000 companies contributed to it with the drive led by a civil group, frustrated by the inadequate facilities in the EU country with the lowest public spending on health.

"Romanians just need things to believe in," said Oana Gheorghiu, who co-founded the Give Life Association that collected the money. For Carmen Uscatu, the group's other co-founder, the new hospital is proof that "anything is possible".

'Radical change'

Out of the total raised, some 20 million euros came from two- and four-euro text messages, according to Give Life. The new facility is a "slap in the face of politicians who didn't want and couldn't do anything for healthcare in this country", actor and musician Tudor Chirila, one of its donors, wrote on Facebook. Founded in 2012, Give Life helps build health infrastructure throughout the country. The Bucharest project was born in 2015 when the two women saw children with cancer and their families queuing outside a single toilet in the Marie Curie state hospital.

Xi in Hungary to celebrate 'new era' with Orban

BUDAPEST: Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Hungary on Thursday seeking a "new journey" with Beijing's closest European Union ally amid divisions with the West over the Ukraine war and global trade. The state visit to Hungary is the last leg of Xi's European tour, his first to the continent since 2019. In recent years, the Central European country of 9.6 million people has attracted a flood of major Chinese projects, mostly related to the manufacture of electric vehicles and batteries.

Hungarian President Tamas Sulyok warmly received Xi and his wife Peng Liyuan with military honors in the courtyard of the presidential palace in Budapest on Thursday morning. The Chinese leader arrived in the Hungarian capital on Wednesday night after wrapping up his visit to Serbia, and later attended a state dinner with Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Budapest was decked out with Chinese flags and placed under tight security, while Tibetan flags were hidden from sight.

In an op-ed published in Hungary's pro-government Magyar Nenzet daily ahead of his arrival, Xi praised a "long-standing friendship" he described as "as mellow and rich as Tokaji wine", referring to the renowned Hungarian vineyards region. "We have gone through hardships together and defied power politics together amid volatile international situations. "Our bilateral relationship is at its best in history, and has embarked on a golden voyage... On the new journey of the new era, China looks forward to working closely with our Hungarian friends," he wrote.

Deepening ties

Frequently at loggerheads with Brussels, Orban has been pursuing an eastwards foreign policy since his return to power in 2010, seeking closer economic ties with Russia, China and other Asian countries. The nationalist premier remained committed to his strategy even as tensions between Western nations and Bei-



BANGKOK: This picture shows air conditioning units on the facade of a residential building in Bangkok on May 1, 2024. - AFP

Not all impacts can be mitigated, however, even in developed economies.

Australian authorities have repeatedly closed schools because of wildfires, and research has found long-term impacts on learning among students whose communities were worst affected. Developing countries in the region need help to invest in upgrad-

ing infrastructure, said Sengupta, but the only real solution to the crisis lies in tackling the root cause: climate change. "It's very important for government and policymakers to really, really wake up on this," he said. "The climate crisis is a child crisis. Adults are causing the crisis, but it's children who are impacted the most." — AFP



NEW YORK: File photo shows Former US President Donald Trump attending his trial for allegedly covering up hush money payments linked to extramarital affairs, at Manhattan Criminal Court in New York City, on May 7, 2024. — AFP

With cameras absent, US public tunes out of Trump trial coverage

WASHINGTON: It ought to have been appointment TV as Stormy Daniels served up salacious details of her alleged tryst with Donald Trump in the sensational first-ever prosecution of a former president. Yet with New York state rules walling off the Republican billionaire's hush money trial from the world's television cameras, what should have been the trial of the century has turned into something of a ratings flop. "The trial is not receiving the attention it should - given its historic nature and importance - because there are no cameras in the courtroom, plain and simple," said Karen Conti, a Chicago-based legal analyst and trial lawyer who handled the final death row appeals of serial killer John Wayne Gacy.

Trump, who denies wrongdoing, is accused of falsifying accounts to cover up the reimbursement of a hush money payment by his lawyer to Daniels in order to limit potential damage to his 2016 election campaign. Live images and audio are banned, meaning the adult film actress' vivid account Tuesday of the encounter was only heard by those in the courtroom, forcing television networks to figure out creative approaches to keep viewers interested.

One tactic favored by CNN and liberal-leaning cable network MSNBC has been on-screen scrolls of text updates from the dozens of journalists watching from a spillover room, setting the scene and remarking on Trump's demeanor and jurors' reactions.

Meeting the moment

Networks - particularly the conservative-leaning Fox News - have also relied on Trump making some of his own drama as he turns up each day, turning to cameras outside the room to excoriate the judge and cast the case as politically motivated. Meanwhile, a panel of cable news anchors and experts has typically been on hand to litigate every aspect of the case, contextualizing the evidence they are receiving second-hand and offering analysis of the tactics of both sides.

But the stark truth, according to analysts, is that anchors reading aloud from text scrolls and studio debates simply cannot compete with live images of Trump himself and have not met the moment. "People are far more willing to be drawn into a court case when they have visuals," said David Triana, a public relations consultant in Orlando, Florida. "I think not being able to see reactions, in real time, from Donald Trump and other witnesses... has negatively affected the impact that this case should have on the public."

Chip Stewart, a media professor at Texas Christian University, says reports of Trump falling asleep in court provide an illuminating example of how the lack of cameras has deprived the public of the full story. "Without photo or video evidence, he was able to turn to his usual claim that reporters were lying about it," he told AFP. "Imagine a front page or websites or the nightly news leading with a photo of Trump sleeping during his own criminal trial." — AFP



BUCHAREST: Ivan, 41, and her one-year-old son Eric diagnosed with neuroblastoma, are pictured in one of the recreation rooms at the newly built crowdfunded children's hospital in Bucharest, Romania. - AFP

At first, the idea was just to modernize the oncology wards, but the project expanded into constructing a completely new building next to the old one. Eric, diagnosed last year with neuroblastoma, started his treatment in the old hospital building before moving to the new one for his chemotherapy. For Eric's mom, 41-year-old Ildiz Ivan, this was a "radical change" from where she had had to take Eric for treatment before.

"He has more space to run around, to play," she told AFP, seated in a bright playroom equipped with bouncy balls and a play kitchen. "If it weren't for the doctors and nurses, I'd feel right at home." With a capacity of 140 beds, the new building includes oncology, haemato-oncology, surgery, intensive care and

neurosurgery units. It also has playrooms, a cinema, a radio studio and even an observatory on the roof. And the Give Life organization donated the whole facility to the state.

Haematologist Madalina Schmidt was among the doctors welcoming the new hospital. The conditions there were "much better", she said. And because the children and their parents are happier, interactions between the doctors and their patients are also easier, said Schmidt, 49, who moved to Bucharest from the eastern city of Iasi this year to work in the new facility.

Far from done

Since 2015, Romania - besieged by political instability - has had no less than 12 health ministers. "Incompetence, lack of vision, and at times corruption" have infected the state health-care system, said Gheorghiu. In 2020, the nation of 19 million people had the lowest average health expenditure per inhabitant in the EU, according to the latest Eurostat data.

While many doctors are leaving the country, patients also have to put up with dilapidated and overcrowded hospitals. Most of the country's hospitals were built before 1970 and "no longer meet the requirements of current regulations", a recent Court of Accounts report said. So Gheorghiu and Uscatu are far from done. They are already raising money for another new building to house other departments of the old hospital. They want to transform the grounds into a medical campus. "We can't stop here," Uscatu said. They want to bring the survival rate of children with cancer in Romania, currently 70 percent, closer to the 81-percent EU-wide average. Uscatu wants to get to the point where parents no longer have to look abroad to get the treatment they need for their sick children. "It's not just about a hospital, but about an entire system," Gheorghiu said. — AFP

Canada regularization of undocumented migrants in jeopardy

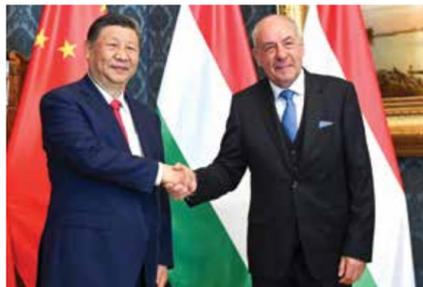
MONTREAL: Canada offered hope for thousands of undocumented migrants with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promising a major regularization program. But in just a few months, political winds changed, leaving dreams of residency in jeopardy. "I had a lot of hope but now I don't know what to think. It's very hard," Nina, a Colombian migrant to the country, told AFP. The 50-year-old landed in Canada with her young daughter in 2008. "Here, I found peace. I was fleeing the violence of my country and family violence," she said. But then, in 2015, she was asked to leave Canada.

"I wanted to kill myself. I don't know how I will cope with all this. My daughter has become Canadian, my life is here," she said, struggling to keep her emotions in check. The government's latest statements have created confusion among undocumented migrants and the associations that support them, after years of regularization talks with officials. There are between 100,000 and one million undocumented migrants in Canada, like Nina, according to different estimates. Immigration Minister Marc Miller continues to promise in the coming months an "ambitious" program for people who have been in the country "sometimes for years with children who grew up here." But, he told AFP, it "won't be for everyone."

Canada is no longer "exempt from the toxic rhetoric on immigration that is affecting all Western countries," he lamented. According to the last census in 2021, 23 percent of the population was foreign-born. Polls, however, have shown a discernible shift in public opinion on immigration. After years of broad support for Canada's open immigration policy, Abacus Data found that 67 percent of recent respondents considered immigration levels in Canada to be either too high or much too high. — AFP

jing increased over human rights violations, the Covid pandemic, trade and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Xi's three-day visit to Hungary marks 75 years of diplomatic relations between the two nations.

Since Hungary began to promote itself as a global hub for EV manufacturing in 2022, several new Chinese businesses have sprung up all over the country. According to the Hungarian government, the two countries are expected to sign at least 16 different agreements promoting their cooperation in rail and road infrastructure, nuclear energy and the automotive industry. Xi will meet Orban for talks later on Thursday before delivering a statement to the press. The Chinese leader is due to leave Hungary on Friday afternoon.



BUDAPEST: Chinese President Xi Jinping (left) shakes hands with his Hungarian counterpart Tamas Sulyok prior to their official talks in Blue Hall of presidential palace in Budapest, Hungary on Thursday. — AFP

Earlier this week, the Chinese leader kicked off his trip in France, a visit that was cordial but also highlighted tensions between Beijing and the EU over the war in Ukraine and global trade. While French President Emmanuel Macron pressed a message to Beijing not to support Russia's war against Ukraine and to accept fairer trade, Hungary would provide "a friendlier destination for Xi", said political scientist Ja Ian Chong of the University of Singapore. In Hungary, a country with close ties to both Moscow and Beijing, Xi will be able to "avoid tough conversations and awkward questions", he added. — AFP

FRIDAY, MAY 10, 2024

Air India cancels 85 budget flights after sick leave strike

Dozens of cabin crew calling in sick at the last minute



HYDERABAD: Visitors gathered near an Air India Express Boeing 737-8 aircraft during the 'Wings India 2024', an exhibition and conference on civil aviation, at the Begumpet Airport in this file photo. — AFP

MUMBAI: Air India's budget carrier subsidiary cancelled 85 flights on Thursday, a day after its operations were severely disrupted by dozens of cabin crew calling in sick at the last minute. The airline was taken over by Indian conglomerate Tata Group in 2022 after a government effort to privatize the heavily indebted carrier. Media reports linked the sudden mass sick leave to simmering staff discontent over new policies on hiring and promotion imposed by its new ownership.

Air India Express said in a statement that it had made "every possible effort to minimize the inconvenience caused to our guests" but had been forced to cancel 85 flights on Thursday. "We urge our

guests booked to fly with us to check if their flight is affected by the disruption before heading to the airport," it added. More than 90 other flights had been "disrupted" since Tuesday by the resulting staff shortages, the airline said in a separate statement on Wednesday, without clarifying whether they had been delayed or cancelled.

Chief executive Alok Singh said Wednesday that the airline had been forced to curtail its flight schedules over the coming days. "Since last evening, over 100 of our cabin crew colleagues have reported sick prior to their rostered flight duty, at the last minute, severely disrupting our operations," Singh said. "This act is certainly not representative of the

2,000-odd cabin crew colleagues in the company who continue to respond to the call of duty."

Media reports said the budget carrier had sacked at least 20 staff. An Air India Express spokesperson said Thursday that the airline taken "appropriate steps against certain individuals", but did not provide further details. "We are taking appropriate steps against certain individuals as their actions have caused grave inconvenience to thousands of our guests," the spokesperson said. New Delhi airport saw chaotic scenes on Wednesday as agitated passengers waited for updates on delayed and cancelled flights, according to Indian media reports. — AFP

High hopes for carbon capture

PARIS: Capturing carbon dioxide (CO2) from the atmosphere to store underground "sounds too good to be true", a climate expert told AFP, yet the technology to increase its capacity tenfold is already being tested. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognizes carbon capture and storage among the solutions for eliminating CO2, without giving it a central place in its models. "The small DACCS (direct air capture with carbon storage) ecosystem gets more diverse...but we're not exactly sure where this will lead to" in the fight against climate change, said Oliver Geden, an IPCC member and specialist on carbon dioxide removal.

Even if the capacity to capture CO2 reaches two billion tons in 2050, compared with just 10,000 today, as suggested by optimistic projections in a report by the University of Oxford, experts are categorical: we must first massively reduce emissions of greenhouse gases like CO2 into the atmosphere and consider carbon capture and storage only for emissions that

can't be eliminated. Companies like Microsoft, Amazon, Airbus and even Lego are already paying upwards of \$1,000 per ton of CO2 captured and stored - in the form of carbon credits - to offset their emissions.

How it works

Molecules of CO2 in the air pass through large fans and are absorbed by a liquid filter or deposited on a solid filter. Once the filters are full, the fans close and the filters are heated to high temperatures upwards of 120 degrees Celsius for solid filters and 900 degrees Celsius for liquid filters in order to release pure CO2.

This heating requires substantial use of energy and the development of these technologies on a large scale depends on the availability of electricity or heat from renewable energy. While the chemical compounds can be reused, the environmental impact of their large-scale production has yet to be studied. The CO2, in a compressed gaseous form or dissolved in large volumes of water, is then transported and injected into porous rock located hundreds of meters (several thousand feet) below the surface.

Three commercial facilities are



BRISBANE: A flux chamber, used to give a reading of how fast carbon dioxide is being removed from the atmosphere, is seen inside the laboratory at Heirloom Carbon in Brisbane, California. — AFP

operational but only Orca in Iceland stores CO2 rather than reusing it as an ingredient in synthetic fuels, construction materials or soft drinks. Since 2021, Orca has been absorbing 4,000 tons of CO2 per year - the equivalent of a few seconds of global emissions.

Its neighbor Mammoth, also developed by the Swiss start-up Climevents with Icelandic partners and unveiled on Wednesday, will absorb up to 36,000 tons per year. In compar-

son, two billion tons of CO2 is "eliminated" each year primarily through reforestation and forest protections, according to the University of Oxford. That compares to the 40 billion tons emitted worldwide last year. Nearly 30 projects have been commissioned in the United States, United Kingdom, Iceland, Gulf states and Kenya with a capacity to store close to 10 million tons of CO2 by 2030, according to the International Energy Agency. — AFP

iPad 'Crush' ad causes uproar amid AI anxiety

SAN FRANCISCO: An ad for the new iPad Pro caused an uproar Wednesday for showing an industrial-sized hydraulic press crushing objects linked to human creativity - such as a record player and trumpet - into a sleek tablet. Social media users immediately criticized the ad, which was posted on X by Apple CEO Tim Cook, as painfully tone-deaf at a time when the creative community is worried about its future with the emergence of generative AI.

"The destruction of the human experience. Courtesy of Silicon Valley," wrote actor Hugh Grant on X. Set to the song "All I ever need is you" by Sonny and Cher, the one-minute ad titled "Crush" sees the pile of creative artifacts, also including a piano and paint cans, explode under the pressure of Apple's press. "I'm not sure 'wanton destruction of all the good and beautiful things in this world' was really the vibe you were trying for," wrote X user Judd Baroff on X. The ad links to viral TikTok videos of industrial presses and other machines that are watched by millions on the platform.

Many critics pointed to the iconic 1984 commercial that launched the first Mac computer and depicted Apple as a hammer-throwing rebel against a monolith big brother. "Forty years ago, Apple released the 1984 commercial as a bold statement against a dystopian future. Now you are that dystopian future. Congratulations," wrote X user Yuval Kardov. Apple did not immediately answer AFP's request for a comment. The ad comes as ChatGPT and Dall-E creator OpenAI, as well as other AI giants, are facing lawsuits from artists and publishers saying that their material was used to train AI models without permission. — AFP

Philippine economy grows 5.7 percent

MANILA: The Philippine economy grew slightly less than expected in the first three months of the year, data showed Thursday, owing to persistent inflation and a widespread drought. The 5.7 percent expansion in January-March was well down from the 6.4 percent posted in the same period last year earlier but a slight improvement on the previous three months, national statistician Dennis Mapa told reporters.

The reading was also below the median analysts' forecast of 5.9 percent, which Ser Percival Reyes of the Ateneo Center for Economic Research and Development told AFP was "quite disappointing". "Actually this was anticipated by the government, inflation and the extreme heat, but the economic effects

came out to be extreme," Reyes said. Large areas of the country were hit by an El Nino-induced drought during the period, ravaging farms, before it was hit by extreme heat in the past two months. The agriculture sector grew 0.4 percent, a sharp slowdown from the 2.2 percent growth logged in the first quarter of 2023, pushing up food prices.

But while the reading was below the government's 6-7 percent target, Economic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan hailed the data as proof of the country's economic "resilience". He added that goal was still within range. "Construction slowed down, no doubt affected by prolonged periods of extreme heat," Balisacan said. "Household spending also slowed due to elevated prices of major food items and the heatwave." The 4.6 percent increase in household consumption was the slowest since the third quarter of 2010, excluding the pandemic years. Mapa said the growth was driven by financial activities, wholesale and retail trade and manufacturing. — AFP



MANILA: Men pull a trolley of agricultural products along a street in Manila. — AFP

Burgan Bank celebrates graduation of aspiring employees from KGDP

In line with its dedicated human capital development strategy

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank recently celebrated two of its talented and high-performing employees for completing the one-year Kuwait Graduate Development Program (KGDP) in collaboration with the Kuwait Institute for Banking Studies (KIBS) under the umbrella of the bank's dedication of human capital development and advancement of Kuwaiti talents.



Naqeeb Amin

The graduation ceremony was held in the presence of Burgan Bank's management, including Naqeeb Amin, General Manager - Human Resources and Development, Naser Al-Qaisi, General Manager - Retail, as well as Rana Al-Nebari - Director General at KIBS along with Waleed Al-Khubeezi, Executive Director, Organization and Administration Sector at CBK. Burgan Bank's participation in the KGDP is a testament to its continued support towards employees and the holistic development of its human capital.

On this occasion, Naqeeb said: "It is a very proud moment for all of us across the Bank to celebrate the graduation of two of our most talented and aspiring employees, whose determination and commitment

set an example for other talented candidates across Burgan. Year after year, Burgan Bank strives to lead with innovation and excellence, primarily due to the exceptional dedication of our talented employees, whose growth and development remain one of our top strategic objectives throughout the year."

In honor of the Burgan graduates' remarkable performance throughout the program, Mohammed Ahmed Al-Asfour was selected to deliver the ceremonial graduation speech on behalf of all graduates from across different banks. Today, KGDP is considered one of the most expansive and highly-regarded academic programs that equip and prepare future leaders in the banking and financial industry in Kuwait.

Throughout their one-year program, the Burgan graduates gained wide domestic and international exposure to the latest technologies, theories, and practices in topics such as anti-financial-crime (AFC), cyber security, and digital trends. They also achieved wider practical experience during their two-month field rotation across Burgan's peer banks in Jordan.

It is worthy to note that Burgan Bank appreciates the opportunities IBS and CBK offer to the Kuwaiti youth as it is essential to the prosperity of Kuwait's future. As a certified Great Place to Work®, Burgan Bank remains committed to the holistic growth and development of its employees across all departments and levels, which manifests in the different partnerships the Bank has with leading academic institutions as well as



its adoption to state-of-the-art development software and technology.

The Bank also continues to invest in fostering a positive and inclusive work environment where every employee is motivated to explore new horizons in their personal and professional growth. This comes as part

of Burgan's commitment to increasing the number of qualified calibers in the Kuwaiti banking and financial markets, enabling its employees to grow with confidence toward leadership positions that better impact the future of banking and propel it towards international acclaim.

Bank of England holds rate at a 16-year high

LONDON: The Bank of England on Thursday kept its main interest rate at a 16-year high, but hinted at a cut over the summer as UK inflation cools further and the country looks set to exit recession. "We need to see more evidence that inflation will stay low before we can cut interest rates," BoE governor Andrew Bailey said after the central bank left borrowing costs at 5.25 percent, the highest level since 2008. Signaling that a rate cut was on the horizon, two members of the bank's nine-strong Monetary Policy Committee

(MPC) voted at the May meeting for interest rates to be cut by 0.25 percentage points.

The BoE maintained borrowing costs for a sixth meeting in a row, mirroring a wait-and-see approach by the US Federal Reserve and European Central Bank (ECB). Thursday's decision came on the eve of official data expected to show that the UK economy has exited a mild recession ahead of a general election due this year. The BoE on Thursday voiced confidence that the UK economy had grown in the first quarter, which would signal the end of a short-lived recession.

Rate cut looms

"The bank is still on track for summer easing," Yael Selfin, chief economist at KPMG UK, said following the rate decision. UK annual inflation fell less than expected in March - the last official reading - to 3.2 percent. This is well down compared with late 2022, when

the rate reached a four-decade high above 11 percent as energy and food prices soared following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However, the UK inflation rate remains above the Bank of England's two-percent target, prolonging a cost-of-living crisis. "We've had encouraging news on inflation and we think it will fall close to our two-percent target in the next couple of months," Bailey said Thursday. "I'm optimistic that things are moving in the right direction."

Later addressing journalists, Bailey said that in order for inflation to stay around the target, the BoE would "likely... need to cut bank rate over the coming quarters". Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at Hargreaves Lansdown, concluded that while "a June rate cut can't now be ruled out... August remains more probable". She noted that "even though inflation is soon expected to reach the target... the bank is expecting that it will creep back up again to around 2.5 percent later this year".

Pound drops

The pound dropped against the dollar and euro following Thursday's decision, further boosting exporters and multinationals on London's benchmark FTSE 100 index. The FTSE hit a fresh record high, as did Frankfurt, with markets forecasting rate reductions in the coming months also from the ECB and the Fed. Despite the upbeat sentiment, a leading international organization last week said that the UK would expand by only 0.4 percent this year because of the inflation situation and stubbornly-high interest rates.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) projected also that the UK would perform worst among the Group of Seven major economies next year. Britain may have new leadership by then, with polls widely indicating that the main opposition Labour party is on course to win an upcoming general election after 14 years of rule by the Conservatives, currently led by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. — AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 9 MAY 2024

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No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance										Valuation Multiples *				
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	860	848	862	846	16	26,078,296	-10	-1.17%	-0.40%	846	860	13.4	1.68	3.9%	1.03
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	253	252	255	248	7	42,104,776	-2	-0.79%	-5.84%	252	256	14.3	1.21	4.6%	1.29
104	Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait	Banking	243	267	270	242	28	10,244,322	45	20.32%	20.32%	260	273	13.0	1.09	3.3%	0.92
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	162	165	166	162	4	55,431,513	4	2.48%	13.30%	164	167	15.8	0.61	3.0%	1.07
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	181	181	183	178	5	11,383,932	0	0.00%	10.49%	176	185	19.0	0.65	3.2%	1.31
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	720	736	738	716	22	59,311,113	19	2.65%	10.50%	725	745	21.4	2.13	2.5%	1.15
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	587	592	595	587	8	5,562,639	4	6.80E-03	4.59%	579	593	31.6	2.49	1.3%	1.14
201	Kuwait Investment	Financial Services	180	182	186	178	8	5,292,319	3	1.68%	43.31%	178	287	13.7	0.83	5.4%	2.05
204	National Investments	Financial Services	252	250	257	245	12	6,752,833	-2	-0.79%	4.60%	248	257	27.4	1.01	6.1%	2.10
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	128	127	131	125	6	26,098,369	0	0.00%	20.95%	126	132	NM	0.73	0.0%	0.95
212	Arzan Financial Group	Financial Services	203	193	204	193	11	8,320,467	-10	-4.93%	-8.10%	192	195	22.5	1.22	1.0%	1.25
222	Aayan Leasing and Investment	Financial Services	172	171	176	170	6	16,658,770	0	0.00%	-1.72%	171	176	9.2	1.16	4.4%	1.64
252	Al Imtiaz Investment	Financial Services	47.9	48.3	49.0	46.5	2.5	8,305,479	1.3	2.77%	-14.51%	47.7	49.1	NM	0.32	0.0%	1.35
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	218	220	221	216	5	12,145,797	3	1.38%	7.32%	220	229	18.1	1.38	1.3%	1.14
404	Salhia Real Estate	Real Estate	433	462	464	432	32	4,675,518	53	13.08%	13.08%	460	480	16.5	1.47	3.1%	0.55
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	786	799	804	782	22	8,988,518	13	1.65%	0.47%	778	799	17.0	1.81	1.7%	0.97
418	The Commercial Real Estate	Real Estate	133	136	137	130	7	19,259,822	3	2.26%	33.33%	133	137	16.4	0.80	3.0%	0.60
501	National Industries	Financial Services	214	226	226	214	12	21,614,370	12	5.61%	10.78%	217	226	20.5	0.99	2.2%	1.61
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	1,255	1,214	1,260	1,210	50	1,613,163	-40	-3.19%	-7.33%	1,202	1,245	12.4	1.14	5.2%	1.10
506	HEISCO	Industrials	845	843	846	830	16	521,184	-4	-0.47%	2.80%	832	846	21.4	2.06	3.6%	0.94
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	675	668	678	664	14	2,313,673	-4	-0.60%	14.19%	655	677	14.1	1.39	8.9%	0.90
603	Aglility	Industrials	315	305	315	303	12	51,795,122	-11	-3.48%	7.69%	298	330	9.4	0.44	6.5%	1.58
605	Zain	Telecommunications	487	478	489	478	11	23,718,486	-10	-2.05%	-5.72%	468	480	9.6	1.67	7.3%	0.58
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	2,901	2,872	2,910	2,851	59	636,245	-24	-0.83%	-11.28%	2,866	2,964	9.4	4.16	11.6%	0.66
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	209	209	212	209	3	976,010	-2	-0.95%	16.11%	206	210	NM	0.93	0.0%	1.26
654	JAZEERA	Consumer Discretionary	1,131	1,058	1,131	1,055	76	1,352,923	-60	-5.37%	-23.83%	990	1,100	38.4	9.23	2.6%	1.30
813	GFH Financial Group	Financial Services	85.2	85.6	86.9	84.5	2.4	12,404,906	-0.5	-0.58%	12.19%	84.0	86.3	9.7	1.01	5.7%	1.39
821	Warba Bank	Banking	175	180	181	174	7	16,031,731	5	2.58%	2.58%	169	181	22.9	0.99	1.5%	1.07
822	Kuwait Telecommunications	Telecommunications	544	546	548	537	11	2,664,305	-17	-3.02%	-3.02%	530	548	16.7	2.23	6.4%	0.71
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	740	753	765	740	25	1,401,855	18	2.45%	30.96%	750	770	20.4	2.12	2.7%	0.41
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	507	495	509	494	15	2,864,194	-10	-1.98%	-2.94%	485	499	30.8	2.00	4.0%	0.77
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	1,964	1,987	1,997	1,961	36	757,578	-11	-0.55%	15.26%	1,971	2,005	24.6	7.36	3.7%	1.36
830	AL GHANIM	Consumer Discretionary	1,102	1,120	1,144	1,090	54	2,122,269	20	1.82%	6.06%	1,069	1,123	10.8	3.72	6.2%	0.78

* As of end of week closing

Business

NBK opens registration in NBK Aspire Summer Internship Program for 2024

Bank delivering its social responsibility towards the young generation

KUWAIT: Underscoring its social responsibility by showing support to the young generation and students, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has announced opening registration for NBK Aspire Summer Internship Program for 2024, targeting students between the age of 14 and 18 years, which is scheduled to kickstart on June 30.

The program's curriculum for this year is divided into 4 two-week sessions, which include training courses and workshops delivered in cooperation with Creative Confidence. The first session scheduled from June 30 to July 11, 2024 focuses on integrity at work, whereas the second session scheduled from July 14 to 25 includes trips to NBK's different divisions. The third session is from July 28 to August 8 addresses cybercrime and the "Let's Be Aware" banking awareness campaign by familiarizing students to cybercrime and how to protect themselves from financial fraud, and finally the last session from

August 11 to 22, 2024 focuses on training, development and sustainability.

The program also includes a set of training and study materials that include working group mechanisms, creative thinking, optimal self-expression, customer-dealing skills, as well as service quality concept. This aims to qualify and empower students, and to provide them with the opportunity to benefit from the advanced, up-to-date training and academic materials provided in the program. These courses also include tours for participants to give them a closer look at the work mechanism in the bank's divisions and branches.

Commenting on this, Yaqoub Al Baqer, NBK Public Relations Senior Manager at National Bank of Kuwait, said, "NBK Aspire Program's goal is to encourage students during their summer vacation to receive training and engage in the banking business experience. It also reflects the bank's steadfast commitment to deliver its social responsibility by



Al Baqer: The program's goal is to encourage students to engage in the banking business experience during their summer vacation

empowering and upskilling the young generation to play an active role in the future."

"In light of the program's resounding success over the past years, NBK always seeks to enhance

its content with the aim of developing participants' personal skills, such as training on presentation skills, and devising solutions for problem solving," he added. "NBK shows steadfast commitment to supporting the youth and students and developing their skills and experience through the most advanced training programs, which translates in upskilling and qualifying them to actively contribute to the success of public and private sector institutions in the future, thus promoting sustainability among national cadres," he noted.

It is worth mentioning that since founding, NBK has fostered corporate social responsibility culture as a cardinal principle for serving the community at large. To this end, it contributed large investments in social support, and introduced many meaningful programs in areas including education, healthcare, training and recruitment of national talent, social support and welfare programs as well as environmental and sports initiatives.



SHANGHAI: Ships sail across the Huangpu river in Shanghai. — AFP

Chinese trade beats expectations in April

BEIJING: Chinese exports returned to growth last month while imports smashed expectations, data showed Thursday, providing a much-needed boost to the country's leadership as it tries to steer the economy out of a long-running slump. Overseas shipments expanded 1.5 percent on-year in April, slightly beating forecasts in a Bloomberg survey and a strong turnaround after a shock 7.5 percent plunge in March.

Meanwhile, imports surged 8.4 percent, far better than the 4.7 percent estimated in the Bloomberg survey, providing hopes that demand in the world's number two economy could be improving. The figures from Beijing's General Administration of Customs (GAC) come as authorities struggle to spur an economic recovery that has sputtered since the country emerged from stringent COVID control measures in late 2022.

China continues to fight a crisis in its debt-ridden property market, with home prices sliding in recent months, while retail sales have been hit by poor domestic demand. A global slowdown is also weakening demand for the country's products overseas. But Zhiwei Zhang, President and Chief Economist at Pinpoint Asset Management said "weak domestic demand led to deflationary pressure, which boosts China's export competitiveness". "This is actually good news for the global economy given the inflation pressure many central banks are fighting against," he said. — AFP

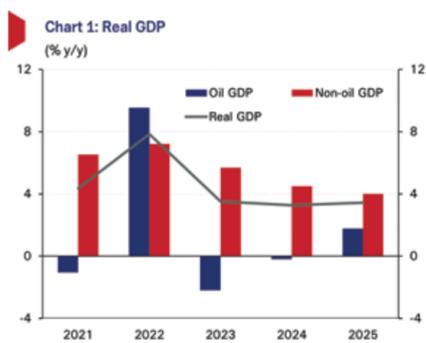
US revokes some licenses for exports to China's Huawei

WASHINGTON: The United States has revoked some export licenses that allowed companies such as US chip firm Qualcomm to supply Chinese tech giant Huawei, the Commerce Department confirmed on Wednesday. The move adds pressure on Huawei, which has long been caught in an intense technological rivalry between Beijing and Washington over US fears it could be used for Chinese espionage operations. It came after Republican lawmakers urged President Joe Biden's administration to block all export licenses to the company following the release of a new computer powered by a chipset by US chip giant Intel.

"We continuously assess how our controls can best protect our national security and foreign policy interests, taking into consideration a constantly changing threat environment and technological landscape," said a Commerce Department spokesperson. "We are not commenting on any specific licenses, but we can confirm that we have revoked certain licenses for exports to Huawei," the spokesperson added in a statement to AFP. Sanctions in 2019 restricting Huawei's access to US-made components dealt a major blow to its production of smartphones - and meant that suppliers need a license before shipping to the company.

Qualcomm confirmed Wednesday that the Commerce Department "revoked certain export licenses for Huawei in our industry, including one of our licenses." "We will continue to comply with all applicable export control regulations," the company said. A Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesperson said Beijing "firmly opposes" the move. "China will take all necessary measures to firmly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese firms," the spokesperson added, calling US export restrictions "economic coercion." — AFP

NBK Economic Insight



Non-oil growth to be sustained at high rate

KUWAIT: Economic growth is set to remain robust, with strong demand underpinned by the ongoing property market expansion, solid performance by the financial sector, booming tourism, attractive foreign investment climate and capacity expansion initiatives in the hydrocarbon sector alongside renewables.

The non-oil sector grew a very solid 5.9 percent y/y in H1 2023, driven by tourism-related sectors, finance, trade, and logistics. The PMI gauge points to activity remaining strong since (despite disruptions to Red Sea trade), and we look for non-oil growth to reach a still impressive 4-5 percent in 2024-25, only slightly down on last year. Notably, credit growth (5.3 percent in 2023) has not been the main driving force behind non-oil growth post-pandemic, perhaps helping to extend the economic cycle in the face of high interest rates.

The government will continue to provide very active support for the business climate, reflecting commitment to its various diversification and development plans including UAE 2031 (doubling GDP in 10 years), Abu Dhabi 2030 (private sector-driven, knowledge-based economy) and D33 (dramatically expand Dubai's trade and investment). The business impact of the introduction of corporation tax in mid-2023 so far seems to have been well absorbed, reflected in a region-leading gain in Dubai's stock market last year (+22 percent).

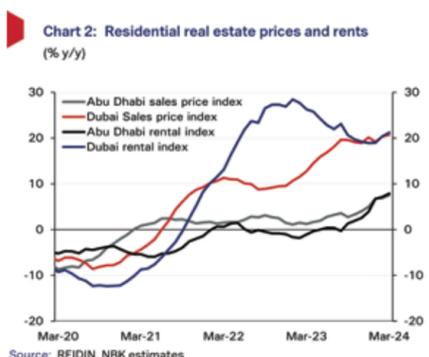
In the near term, oil sector growth will be minimal with OPEC+ cuts rolled over in H2 2024, resulting in a mild decline in oil GDP this year then a modest rise (output at 2.96mb/d) in 2025. ADNOC's crude oil production capacity reportedly increased 4 percent to 4.85mb/d at the end of 2023, leaving scope for rapid growth in future if global market conditions allow. Completion of the Crude Flexibil-

Benin urges Niger cooperate over crude exports

COTONOU: President Patrice Talon on Wednesday demanded Niger's military rulers collaborate and reopen their side of the border if they want Benin to let ships load Nigerian crude exports at its Seme port. Benin has eased trade restrictions on its side of the Niger border since sanctions were imposed on Niamey following a coup in July last year that ousted President Mohammed Bazoum. But Talon said military leaders in its northern neighbor were treating Benin like an "enemy" and not cooperating to restore ties and formally normalize trade rather than allow informal border crossings.

Landlocked Niger runs a pipeline from its oilfields to Benin's Seme port on the Atlantic coast to export its crude. "If you want to load your oil in our waters, you must consider that Benin is not an enemy country and that the territory of Benin cannot be the subject of illicit trafficking or informal exchange," Talon said in a declaration released by the presidency. "If tomorrow the Nigerian authorities decide to collaborate with Benin in a formal manner, the boats will be loaded."

The Benin president did not directly state Niger's oil shipment loadings had been stopped or blocked. In December, Benin lifted its suspension of imported goods transiting to Niger through the port of Cotonou, that had been part of sanctions imposed by the



ity Project this year will allow the Ruwais refinery to process 420kb/d of heavier and sour feedstock while unlocking higher-value crude for export. Natural gas output is also being expanded under a plan to achieve gas self-sufficiency by 2030, including associated gas from higher oil output.

Property market shows resilience

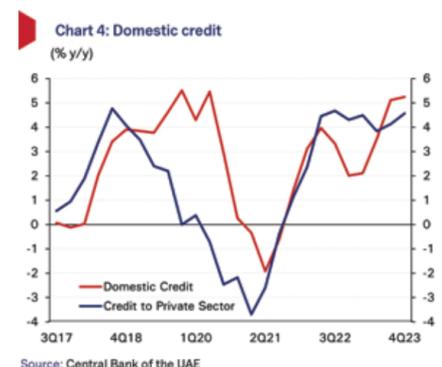
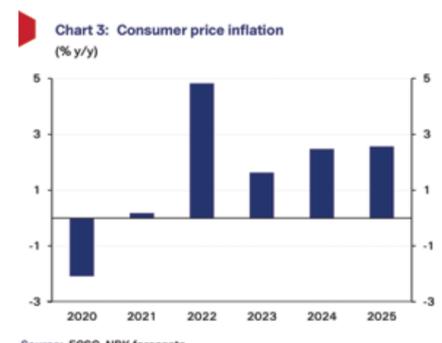
After slowing earlier in 2023, indicators of real estate activity have reaccelerated, with residential prices and rents in Dubai for example up 20 percent y/y as of March 2024. Strong economic growth, a rising population and improved long-term residency and visa regulations are likely underpinning demand. Although the property market has proved highly durable, we still expect this buoyancy to fade over the forecast period as moderating economic growth, higher pricing and supply additions take a toll.

However, tighter real estate financing regulations versus previous cycles and relatively modest post-pandemic credit growth should limit the wider impact of any market correction. Meanwhile, CPI inflation is projected to pick up in 2024-25 to 2.5 percent on average from 1.6 percent in 2023, on strong domestic demand and an expected increase in fuel prices. Rising housing rents (which account for 35 percent of the CPI basket) will also be a supporting factor for inflation.

External positions

A combination of lower oil revenues and rising welfare spending (subsidies and social benefits) narrowed the fiscal surplus in 2023 to an estimated 4.6 percent of GDP, from 9.9 percent in 2022, despite the introduction of the 9 percent corporate income tax in mid-2023 (which it is estimated could eventually yield revenues of 1.5 percent of GDP per year).

We expect the budget surplus to continue declining to 3.5 percent in 2024-25 mainly on lower oil revenues. Strong non-oil growth and new revenue streams (non-oil revenues estimated at 38 percent of all revenues in 2024) will offset part of the expected increase in welfare and capital spending, given rise in the 2024 federal (+1.6 percent to AED63.1 billion) and Dubai (+17.2 percent to AED79.1 billion; +5.8 percent to AED83.7 billion in 2025) budgets. Ac-



ording to IMF figures, government debt will remain low by international standards at around 30 percent of GDP in 2024-25, though rising to around 55 percent once GRE debt is included.

Near-term fresh debt issuance is unlikely to be high given budget surpluses and elevated interest rates, but the federal government may issue more dirham-denominated debt to help develop domestic capital markets. The external finances meanwhile remain very comfortable with sizeable current account surpluses (7-8 percent of GDP in 2024-25), strong credit ratings (S&P: AA; Moody's: Aa2) and sovereign wealth assets (ADIA & Mubadala) estimated at \$1.07 trillion by the SWF Institute and central bank gross reserves of \$190 billion in 2023.

Risks include oil prices

Strong economic growth and successful diversification are reducing the UAE economy's exposure to oil shocks versus the past. Nevertheless, higher-than-forecast oil prices would still boost government finances and investment, while prospects would also be helped by a pick-up in global growth and/or rapid cuts in interest rates. A severe drop in oil prices, rising regional geopolitical tensions that hurt trade and regional supply chains, as well as a sharper-than-expected property market downturn are key downside risks.



COTONOU: Boats loaded with passengers and goods moor on a shore near the Dantokpa market, one of the largest open-air markets in West Africa. — AFP

West African regional bloc ECOWAS following the coup. The closure of its northern border with Niger hit Benin's government revenues and also impacted the cost of food goods. Talon last year had been among the most vocal regional leaders calling

for relations to be swiftly re-established between his country and neighboring Niger. Niger - one of the world's poorest countries - has been able to sell crude on the international market for the first time via Seme port. — AFP

FRIDAY, MAY 10, 2024



Bayt Al-Husseinan House of heritage

By Mahmoud Zakaria

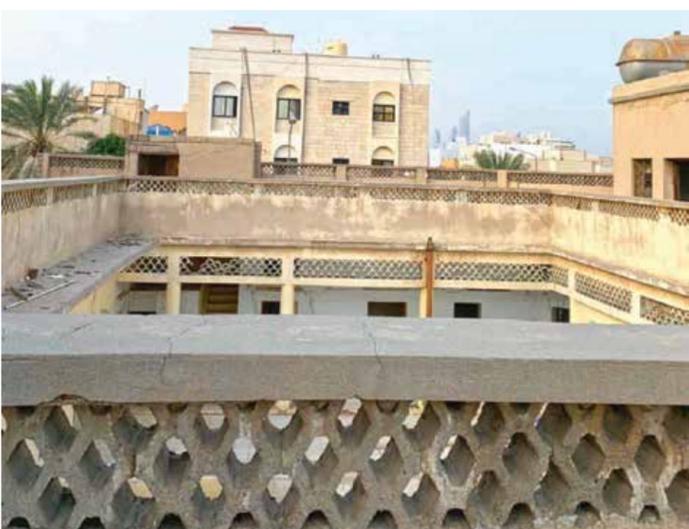
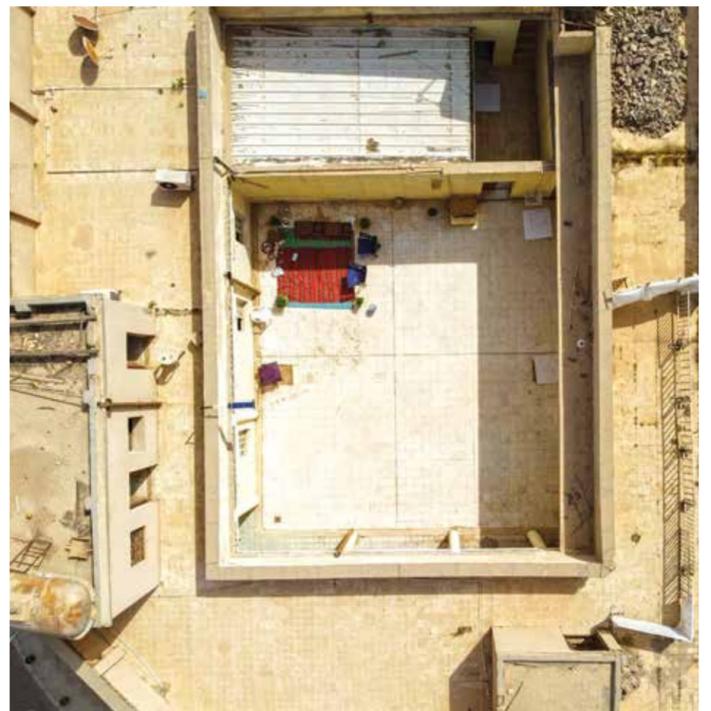
Bayt Abdul Rahman Al-Husseinan in Faiha has become a journey through Kuwait's history. Although built in 1958, it has retained its heritage form, with features such as the diwaniya, liwan and hallway that reflect the lifestyle of Kuwaitis in the past. The heirs of Abdul Rahman Al-Husseinan had decided to demolish and rebuild the house, but relented due to Kuwaitis' nostalgia for the past.



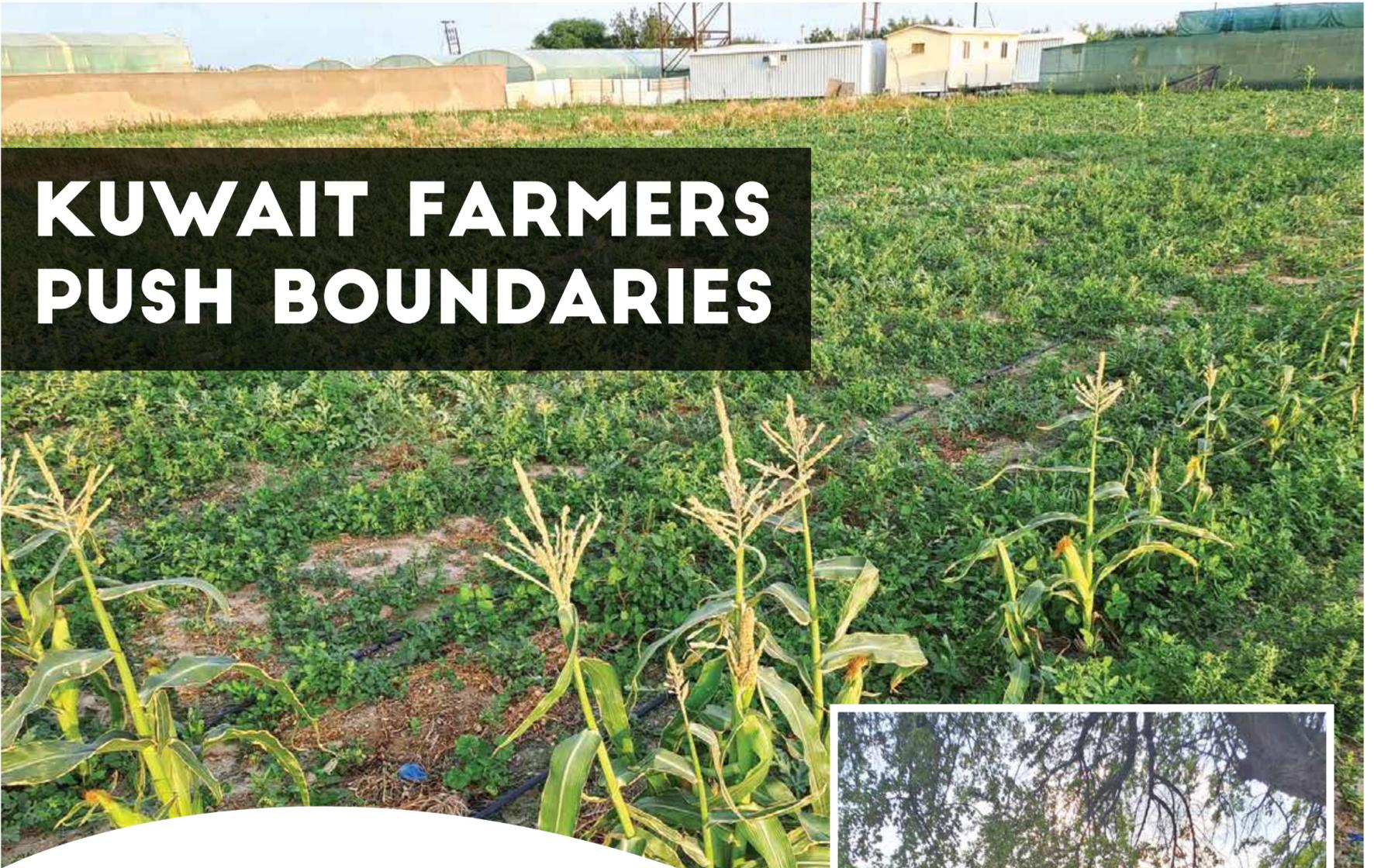
"Our house was built in 1958. My father purchased it in 1967 from the heirs of Ghalia Al-Somali, may God have mercy on her. At that time, he was residing in my uncle's house in Faiha before moving here," owner of the house, lawyer Ali Abdul Rahman Al-Husseinan, said. "The house, at its core, is old, with no additions except for a liwan when I got married, providing me an apartment. Additionally, a roof was added for my brother in the diwaniya until he acquired another apartment," he added. Husseinan described the details of the house. "The building's design is old-fashioned, spacious and airy. Sunlight enters it during the day, and the air circulates within. However, it is susceptible to external elements like dust, but it is healthy because the interior atmosphere is similar to the outside, so

the inhabitants do not suffer. Additionally, the house includes windows that overlook the interior, as the occupants are modest individuals and do not want windows overlooking the outside," he explained.

Regarding the possibility of converting it into a museum, Husseinan stated: "Many have appealed to the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters to preserve this house as a shrine for future generations, showcasing Kuwaiti culture and history and how they lived in the past. It's crucial to preserve our heritage, even if the house itself isn't ancient, as long as it retains its original structure, similar to the houses in Mirqab and Qibla, featuring a liwan, corridor and sheep yard."



KUWAIT FARMERS PUSH BOUNDARIES



By Chidi Emmanuel



With thousands of acres of land available for cultivation, Kuwait's farmers have been on a primary mission to increase the local production of fruits and vegetables to ensure Kuwait's food security. Although Kuwait is a dry desert environment with extremely hot and dry summers, the harsh climatic conditions did not deter Kuwaiti farmers. At the Wafra farms, farmers are using modernized equipment with the latest agricultural technology to optimize production quantity and quality.



These agriculturists employ a large team of experienced agricultural engineers and workers to ensure the best quality standards are implemented. There are large numbers of greenhouses that can withstand Kuwait's high temperatures. "Because of the weather conditions in Kuwait, it is not

"Ordinarily, date palm is our traditional crop, but some of Kuwait's farmers are now cultivating vegetables, fruits, and fodder crops etc. Kuwait's farming primarily revolves around date palms, which have historical and cultural significances in this region," another farmer, Ahmed Abdulaziz, said.

Kuwait imports a large portion of its food supply to meet domestic demand, and agriculturists are now using nursery farming to augment and boost local production. These farmers are focusing on cultivating plants, especially ornamental plants and trees, to meet the demand. Nurseries in Kuwait produce a variety of plants, including flowers, shrubs, and trees suitable for the desert climate. "We are trying our best against all odds. The joy of providing food for our dear nation is overwhelm-

The agricultural areas are located in Wafra, in the south of Kuwait; Al-Abdali, in the north of Kuwait; and Al-Sulaibiya. There are around 2,880 farms in these areas. Irrigation and protected greenhouse production are heavily rely on greenhouses and nurseries due to environmental and water resource constraints.

Kuwait's 2035 vision aims to transform the country into a financial and trade hub regionally as well as internationally and improve the business en-

vironment to attract investors globally. One of the major pillars of Kuwait's National Development Plan is to achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. Because Kuwait lacks sufficient natural freshwater resources or arable lands, the government recognizes the need to bring in dry land urban agriculture and innovative technologies, as well as other necessary resources and skilled labor, to enhance its food production.

There are several programs and organizations that work with and support the farming community in Kuwait, such as the Public Authority of Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAA-

FR), the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), and other governmental entities. Several of these organizations act as platforms for transferring agricultural technologies to farmers to improve farming practices by providing training and learning workshops.



easy to do farming here, but we are trying our best. That's why we have these nurseries. We are passionate about the job we do," Khaled Yousef, a Kuwaiti farmer, told the Kuwait Times.

Agriculture in Kuwait still faces momentous challenges due to its arid climate and limited freshwater resources. However, there are efforts to promote agriculture through innovations like hydroponics, desalination, and using treated wastewater for irrigation.

At Wafra, some farmers deal with livestock while others grow vegetables, fruits, and fodder crops using innovative techniques such as hydroponics and greenhouse farming. However, farming in Kuwait faces challenges due to water scarcity, shortage of arable land, and high temperatures. To overcome these challenges, the government supports agricultural projects that utilize treated wastewater and desalination technology for irrigation.

'The joy of providing food for our dear nation is overwhelming'

ing," Ahmed added.

At the vegetable market in Wafra, the Kuwait Times chatted with some people who drove down there to purchase vegetables. "We prefer organic foodstuffs due to health and environmental concerns. The demand for organic products is driven by an increasing awareness of the benefits of pesticide-free food and sustainable farming practices. The good thing here is that we interact with the farmers and pick up the items directly from the farms. It is fun and healthy," Fahad Talah and his family explained.

A large portion of Kuwait's land is considered not agriculturally viable.

There are several programs and organizations that work with and support the farming community in Kuwait, such as the Public Authority of Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAA-





What's cooking in our kitchens

Food has the magical ability to bring people together. Cooking with others or sharing recipes close to one's heart can be a great way to get to know people and appreciate different cultures.

JORDANIAN MANSAF

By Abdellatif Sharaa



Mansaf holds a significant role at Jordan's social and cultural gatherings. It serves as a symbol of identity and unity, transcending differences in religious, familial or tribal affiliation. Widely regarded as a unifying element in society, mansaf is prepared with utmost respect for guests, reflecting the warm hospitality of the host. Whether in joyful celebrations, times of sorrow, or important events, mansaf takes center stage, symbolizing the generosity of Jordanians.



Ingredients

- Large pieces of lamb
- Jameed (plain yogurt)
- Spices: Cardamom, cinnamon, all-spice, bay leaves, cloves
- Traditional Arabic ghee
- Lemon juice
- Medium-grained rice

Preparation

1. Cook the lamb in a pressure cooker with water and spices until tender.
2. Mix softened jameed with lamb stock in a separate pot.

3. Transfer the jameed mixture to a new pot and add the cooked lamb and broth.
4. In another pot, cook the rice with olive oil, ghee, and water, adding a turmeric water mixture for color.
5. Serve mansaf by layering special Arabic bread (margoog), rice and meat, then pouring jameed sauce over the top.

FATTOUSH

By Ghadeer Ghloum

Fattoush is a famous Lebanese salad, derived from the word "fat" which means crumbs of bread. Fattoush is my favorite salad because it is nutritious and has a sharp taste due to its noticeable acidity and sweetness from the pomegranate. I enjoy adding extra pomegranate to the fattoush to make the taste tangier and sweeter, and also extra fried bread crumbs that are placed on top of the fattoush to make it crunchy. Traditionally, fried bread is added as a simple addition to



the rest of the ingredients, but for me, I add breadcrumbs with every scoop of fattoush, making it the main part of the salad instead of just an addition.

I learned how to make fattoush from my mother as she always includes it in our menu. Sometimes, I am satisfied with just fattoush as a meal! I love preparing and photographing fattoush as much as I love eating it because it contains numerous ingredients and colors, which makes it visually appealing on the plate and has a variety of flavors.



Ingredients

The measurements vary depending on serving size and according to taste.

Salad

- Parsley
 - Mint
 - Spring onions
 - Lettuce
 - Purslane
 - Cucumber
 - Tomatoes
 - Lots and lots of pomegranates!
- Fried bread cut into small squares (you can bake the bread if you are on a diet, but I wouldn't recommend that)

Dressing

- Fresh lemon juice

- Olive oil
- Salt

Some people also add extra ingredients such as: balsamic vinegar, sumac and pomegranate molasses.

How to make it

1. Chop the vegetables into similarly-sized pieces and mix the dressing.
2. Pour the dressing over the vegetables.
3. Place the fried bread on top, right before serving so that it doesn't get soggy and gives you a delicious crunch.
4. Enjoy!

CHICKEN DUM BIRYANI

By Mohamed Hasan



If you ask anyone which country is famous for biryani, the response you get is: "Of course India!" But the fact is that this dish originated from Persia. Biryani is a delicious rice dish made with spices and meat, fish, eggs or veggies. If you are planning to attend any Muslim wedding in South India, you will never miss your biryani there. It is authentically cooked by South Indian Muslims, who serve it as a main course at all their celebrations.

Ingredients

- 1 kg chicken (without skin to help absorb the spices)
 - 1 kg rice (basmati or seeraga samba) washed and soaked for 45 mins
 - 400 grams of sliced onions (6 medium-sized approx)
 - 300 grams of sliced tomatoes (4 medium-sized approx)
 - 200ml oil (preferably groundnut oil for a rich taste)
 - 3 medium-sized cinnamon sticks
 - 10 cardamom pods
 - 8 cloves
 - 1 bundle of coriander and mint leaves (chopped)
 - 100g ginger + 50g garlic (ground to a paste)
 - 4 chillies
 - 200ml yoghurt
 - 2 tbsp chilli powder (preferably Kashmiri chilli for color)
 - 1 teaspoon garam masala
 - 2 tsp salt (as per your taste)
 - 1.3 liters of water
 - Half lemon
 - 2 tsp ghee (optional)
- To prepare this dish you will need a 5-liter vessel with tight lid and a wooden spoon (1 foot)

Preparation

1. Keep the vessel on a burner on medium flame.
2. Pour oil in the vessel and once it is hot enough add the onions. Fry the onions until it turns fully brown.
3. Add half the bundle of chopped coriander and mint leaves and fry until it cooks well. At this stage put the cinnamon, cardamom and cloves and mix it gently.
4. After a minute, add chilli powder and mix it well until you see the color of the oil changes to red.
5. Add the ginger-garlic paste and stir well until the color of the paste changes.



6. Add chopped tomatoes, yoghurt and chillies and mix well. Now close the lid and leave it for 2 minutes.
7. Once you see the oil separating from the mixture, add chicken and stir well and keep the lid closed for 5 minutes.
8. Now stir it again and close the lid so as to avoid sticky texture.
9. When you see the water has totally come out from the chicken and the color of the chicken has changed to white, pour the water and add salt and turn the flame high for 10 minutes with the lid closed.
10. Open the lid and see if the water is boiling well. At this stage, add garam masala and stir it with the flame still high.
11. Strain the soaked rice and add it to the boiling masala mixture and lightly mix it with a wooden spoon to avoid breaking the rice.
12. Close the lid and leave it for about 7-10 minutes with the flame still high.
13. When you see the water and rice coming to the same level with 60-per-

cent cooked texture, lower the flame to the minimum.

14. Using the wooden spoon mix the rice and chicken gently, squeeze lemon and add the remaining chopped coriander and mint leaves.
15. Add ghee (optional) if required at this stage and keep the lid tightly closed so as not to let any heat escape. Leave it for exactly 20 minutes on low flame.
16. Now mix it gently without breaking the rice and put off the burner. Make sure to keep the lid closed after mixing and let it rest for 10 minutes for all the flavors to be absorbed. Now your delicious biryani is ready to eat.

Serving

While serving the biryani, start from any side of the vessel and work your way through downwards without disturbing the rest of the biryani. It is best served with raita (mixture of curd, onions, cucumbers) to give it an added authentic taste.



Event: Glass making workshop
Location: Bayt Al-Othman Museum
Date: May 11, 2024

Event: Farah Alessa acrylic workshop
Location: Andalous Mall
Date: May 11, 2024

Event: The Little Scientist
Location: The Scientific Center
Date: May 11, 2024

Event: Future Engineers
Location: Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre
Date: May 11, 2024

Event: Raseef Beirut
Location: CAP
Date: May 11, 2024

Event: The World of Abdulhussain
Location: Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre
Date: May 9-10, 2024

Event: Pop up workshop
Location: The Scientific Center
Date: May 11, 2024

Sports

Head, Abhishek star as Hyderabad crush Lucknow

Pandya's Mumbai Indians first team to exit IPL play-off race

HYDERABAD: Openers Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma smoked half-centuries as Sunrisers Hyderabad crushed Lucknow Super Giants by 10 wickets on Wednesday to boost their play-off hopes in the IPL.

Chasing a modest 166 for victory, Head, who smashed 89, and fellow left-hander Abhishek, who hit 75, tore into the opposition attack to romp home with 10.2 overs to spare at their home in Uppal. "I'm lost for words. We've watched that batting on TV but that was unreal," Lucknow skipper KL Rahul said of the bludgeoning by the Hyderabad openers.

"Everything was hitting the middle of the bat, kudos to their skill, they've worked very hard on their six-hitting." Australia's Head attacked with a flurry of fours and sixes as he reached his fifty in 16 balls and went past 500 runs this season.

Head is now third in the batting chart behind Virat Kohli (542) and Rituraj Gaikwad (541) with his fourth half-century—he also has a ton—in this edition. He took on the spinners with aplomb and said the skill will be invaluable on the slow pitches in the West Indies during the T20 World Cup in June.

"Something I have been working on with spin, something I have been working hard on. It will be a big part in the Caribbean," said man of the match Head. "Nice to get 360 (degrees) and get to the parts of the ground I have not been to. We want to maximise the powerplay. It is not going to work every time but we want to go for it."

'Incredible'

The 30-year-old Head lauded his younger partner Abhishek, 23, and said: "His spin game is something else. We complement each other so well." Abhishek

joined the charge as he got to his fifty in 19 balls after the pair took Hyderabad to 107 in the first six overs of powerplay, when only two fielders are allowed outside the inner circle.

Hyderabad, who won the IPL in 2016 under David Warner, registered their seventh win in 12 matches to hand a perfect gift to birthday boy and captain Pat Cummins, who turned 31 on Wednesday. Abhishek hit the winning six as Hyderabad moved to third in the 10-team table with 14 points. Lucknow stay sixth after the bruising loss. Top four teams will make the play-offs with the final on May 26 in Chennai. Cummins said Head's unconventional hitting does not "surprise" him anymore and praised Abhishek for being "an incredible player of spin" and pace.

Seam bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar set up victory with impressive bowling figures of 2-12 in his four overs to restrict Lucknow to 165-4 after they elected to bat first. Lucknow lost regular wickets until Nicholas Pooran, who hit 48, and Ayush Badoni, who smashed 55, put on an unbeaten stand of 99 in 52 balls to boost the team total. But the score proved too little against a team which posted record totals of 277 and 287 in this high-scoring edition of the T20 tournament.

Meanwhile, IPL heavyweights Mumbai Indians became the first team to be knocked out of the play-off race after Sunrisers Hyderabad hammered Lucknow Super Giants by 10 wickets. Five-time winners Mumbai are ninth in the 10-team table on eight points after only four wins in 12 matches.

Hyderabad, led by Pat Cummins, moved third on 14 points after they chased down 166 in 9.4 overs on Wednesday night, courtesy Travis

season. Britain's Norris told Sky Sports F1: "100 percent. I am saying that still with my feet on the ground. I want to believe that we have two great drivers (Oscar Piastri is the other driver). We have an amazing team behind us and we are closer than ever."

"As much as I said at the beginning of this year we can win races, I should have the confidence to say next year we can go for the next step." Norris was back at the McLaren Technology Centre in Woking, near London, on Thursday to celebrate his success with the wider team.

He accepted there remained a gap McLaren had to close to compete consistently with Red Bull and Ferrari. "On average we are not quite where we want to be," said Norris. "We still have our feet on the ground, we know we have more work to do."

"As soon as they've all had a little drink this morning I'm going to tell them to get back to work so we can keep fighting even more. "If there is any race I want to have the same speed it is at Silverstone (for the British Grand Prix). We can win races this year, we can compete against Red Bull and we are looking at an exciting season between us, Red Bull and Ferrari." — AFP

Australian legacy

"Every club that I've been at, every single player that I've worked with has been excellent, wanting to learn more about the game, wanting to work harder. "It's something for myself to be able to go out there and learn as well."

Kewell is hoping to build on the legacy left at Yokohama by fellow Australians Ange Postecoglou and Kevin Muscat. Postecoglou won the J-League in 2019 before joining Celtic and then moving on to Tottenham in the Premier League.

Muscat set up Kewell for success by guiding Yokohama through to this season's Champions League knockout round before leaving to join China's Shanghai Port in December. Kewell's previous job was as a first-team coach under Postecoglou at Celtic, and he said he was "not taking full credit" for Yokohama's run to the final.

"They've had two wonderful managers previously that have done wonderful things," Kewell said. "I've walked into the club and even on my first day I said I've got a very solid base. "It just needed something different."

Lower-league limbo

Kewell was one of the brightest lights in Leeds' effervescent young team in the late 1990s, before making a controversial switch to Liverpool in 2003.



Nelly Korda

"Just not getting too ahead of myself and taking it a shot at a time. As boring as it sounds, or as many times as you're going to hear me say it, that's the motto and I'm going to stick to it." Korda, the first American player to win five LPGA titles in a season since Juli Inkster in 1999, found herself starstruck on the red carpet at the Met Gala.

"It was so crazy," she said. "You're standing in line ready to get on the carpet and you're like seeing all these people you usually watch in TV shows or movies and famous singers and you're starstruck the entire time. I was just silent looking at everyone's dresses." "Everyone was really amazing. The dresses were unbelievable and the whole evening was just a dream come true." Korda said no one recognized her, adding, "I think I'm just a grain of sand in such a big room."

Norris backs McLaren to mount 2025 F1 title bid after Miami win

LONDON: Lando Norris is "100 percent" confident that McLaren can mount a challenge for the Formula One title next season as he celebrated his maiden Grand Prix win at the team's British headquarters on Thursday. Norris, 24, topped the podium at the Miami Grand Prix on Sunday, making the most of a safety-car period before pulling away from Red Bull's Max Verstappen to secure a first victory in his 110th Grand Prix.

It was McLaren's first win in nearly three years and was a sign of the resurgence of the British team, a major force in Formula One during the 1980s and 90s. Norris is now fourth in the drivers' standings, 53 points behind three-time world champion Verstappen while third-placed McLaren are a huge 115 points adrift of Red Bull in the constructors' table.

Asked if McLaren can mount a title challenge next

Kewell seeks coaching redemption in AFC Champions League final

YOKOHAMA: Harry Kewell's coaching career has not yet matched the heights he reached as a player but he can take a big step forward in this week's AFC Champions League final. Kewell's Yokohama F-Marininos take on Al Ain of the United Arab Emirates in Saturday's first leg, only four months after the former Leeds and Liverpool forward took over at the Japanese club.

Kewell struggled in lower-league English football with Crawley Town, Notts County and Oldham, and he was sacked by fifth-tier Barnet in 2021 after failing to win in his first seven matches. The Australian now has a shot at coaching redemption as he prepares for a battle of wits against another English Premier League favourite—the coach of Al Ain is former Chelsea and Argentina striker Hernan Crespo.

"It's a learning process," the 45-year-old Kewell said after Yokohama's semi-final win over South Korea's Ulsan Hyundai that took them to the final of the Asian club championship for the first time.

Korda seeks LPGA record sixth win at Founders Cup

NEW YORK: Top-ranked Nelly Korda, coming off her second major title, will try to capture an LPGA record sixth consecutive victory at this week's Founders Cup in suburban New York. The 25-year-old American matched Annika Sorenstam and Nancy Lopez for the all-time record win streak of five by taking last month's Chevron Championship, beating Sweden's Maja Stark by two strokes in the year's first women's major championship.

Reigning Olympic champion Korda arrives at Upper Montclair Country Club in Clifton, New Jersey, after two weeks off, saying she hasn't had time to focus on what six in a row would mean. "I have not thought about it at all because I've had so much going on those two weeks," said Korda whose week included attending the Met Gala in Manhattan. "Then Monday I had The Met so haven't had too much time to think about it."

Korda, the daughter of Czech tennis legend Petr Korda, recalled two missed cuts last year in New Jersey events. "I'm really just trying to keep it one shot at a time, see how it goes," she said. "This golf course is tough. It's very narrow off the tee. The rough is very penalizing and it's wet this year so it's even worse."



HYDERABAD: Sunrisers Hyderabad's Travis Head (R) plays a shot as Lucknow Super Giants' wicketkeeper and captain KL Rahul (C) watches during the Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Lucknow Super Giants at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad on May 8, 2024. — AFP

Head's 89 and 75 by Abhishek Sharma. Lucknow and Delhi Capitals are both on 12 points and face each other on May 14 meaning Mumbai cannot qualify for the top four to that will contest the playoffs, even if Hardik Pandya's side win their two remaining match-

es. Mumbai lost their first three games with Pandya booted after he replaced the popular Rohit Sharma as skipper this season. Table-toppers Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals both have 16 points each. The final will be on May 26 in Chennai. — AFP



MIAMI GARDENS: McLaren's British driver Lando Norris celebrates with his trophy on the podium after winning the 2024 Miami Formula One Grand Prix at Miami International Autodrome in Miami Gardens, Florida. — AFP

He won the UEFA Champions League in 2005 with the Anfield club and also shone on the international stage, winning 58 caps for Australia and appearing at two World Cups.

He got his first start in senior management in 2017 at Crawley, becoming the first Australian to coach an English professional club. He lasted a little over a year at the League Two side and that remains his longest spell in charge of a club.

He was sacked after 11 league games at Notts County and seven months at Oldham, and was shown the door even sooner during a disastrous stint at Barnet. Kewell has a great chance to set the record straight with Yokohama. The club lie 11th in the J-League after 11 matches, but have a game in hand that could lift them to within six points of the top.

He said his team have been "pushed to the limit" in the Champions League knockout rounds, where they have had players red-carded in three games and needed penalties to get past Ulsan in the semis. Kewell played under esteemed managers such as Rafael Benitez at Liverpool and Guus Hiddink with Australia, and he said he has tried to emulate their thoughtful approach as a coach.

"Sometimes you've just got to sit back, don't let emotions get in the way, think about the situation," he said. "Then you can think clearly and make the right decision for the team." — AFP

You won't find her in the sand often on the golf course these days. Korda started her historic victory run at January's Drive On Championship in her hometown of Bradenton, Florida, then took a break before winning three times in as many weeks—at March's Seri Pak and Ford championships and in April's Match Play tournament.

'Simplify it'

Two weeks after that came a second major win after her first at the 2021 Women's PGA Championship. Now three weeks after Chevron, Korda is taking her "Keep it simple" strategy to epic levels. "When I'm home I'm definitely practicing a lot more and trying to work on technique," she said. "When I'm out here, the way I keep it simple is by not overdoing it too much. Going out, seeing the golf course, doing my work with my caddie, picking a game plan, and then that's it."

"I've gotten in the past too caught up in coming out here and thinking I need to do a little extra when I've already done my work going into this event. It's time to just see my shots and execute them. That's how I've tried to simplify it."

Among the LPGA pioneers being honored this week is Pat Bradley, who said she is pulling for Korda to win her sixth straight start. "All eyes are on her. It's going to be tough. It is going to be a challenge for Nelly," Bradley said. "I'm sure she can't wait for the bell to ring and get inside those ropes and be able to focus like she does. But right now, it's going to be interesting." — AFP

Javelin champion Chopra targets 90m mark in Doha

DOHA: India's Olympic javelin champion Neeraj Chopra on Thursday said he was hoping to break the elusive 90-metres mark at the Doha Diamond League as he warms up for the Paris Games. Chopra, a 26-year-old farmer's son from the northern state of Haryana, added a second Asian Games gold in Hangzhou last year to his Olympic and world titles.

And while he has achieved stardom in India, winning the nation of 1.4 billion's first Olympic athletics gold at Tokyo 2020, membership of the elite 90m club has so far escaped him. "I really want to break this barrier," Chopra told a news conference, a day before the Diamond League meeting in the Qatari capital. A throw of 90m would still leave the Indian athlete well short of Jan Zelezny's world record of 98.48m set in 1996. Chopra said questions over the landmark had followed him since he threw 88.06 at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta, not least because of the elbow surgery which forced him to miss the 2019 season.

"I am stuck between 88 and 90 metres," said Chopra. Chopra, who set his personal best of 89.94 in 2022, said he had also hoped to break 90m last year in Doha, which is "famous for 90 metres." "But we were not lucky because (of) too much headwind. Maybe tomorrow it will be good," he said. Known for his boyish looks and bright smile, Chopra acknowledged his popularity in India but downplayed his celebrity in comparison to cricket superstars Virat Kohli and MS Dhoni. He said a decision to train outside India, in South Africa, Turkey and in Europe later this year, was motivated by the need to focus on the Paris Olympics, which start on July 26. — AFP

Hurricanes braced for breakdown storm in Rugby showdown

WELLINGTON: Wellington Hurricanes head coach Clark Laidlaw anticipates a back-row battle royal when his team faces a trio of All Blacks loose forwards in Saturday's Super Rugby top-of-the-table clash with the Auckland Blues.

The Hurricanes head to Auckland's iconic Eden Park stadium just one point ahead of the second-placed Blues with four rounds left of the regular season. To add extra spice, the Blues have won all of their last seven games since falling to a 29-21 defeat at the Hurricanes in March.

A key contest in Auckland will be at the breakdown. The Blues have picked a powerful back-row made up of All Blacks trio Dalton Papali'i, Hoskins Sotutu and Akira Ioane. Laidlaw knows his loose forwards, Hurricanes captain Brad Shields, live-wire flanker Peter Lakai and No 8 Brayden Iose, won't back down.

"It'll be a physical battle up front, the breakdown will be hotly contested," Laidlaw told reporters Thursday. He has named six forwards on the Hurricanes bench, including breakdown experts Devan Flanders and Du'Plessis Kirifi, who Laidlaw plans to use as impact players. "Having guys like Du'Plessis and Devon to come on really adds to our game. "I like having a really strong team on at the end of the field, to keep the momentum and the performance up for the full 80 minutes." Laidlaw added.

Both teams come into the showdown with identical records of nine wins, one defeat. The Hurricanes have not won at Eden Park since 2019. Hurricanes skipper Shields said having back-row firepower in reserve will help the visitors.

"Having fresh legs available puts an emphasis on our pack to be really physical," he said. The New Zealand-born England international is relishing playing at Eden Park, which has hosted three Rugby World Cup finals—two men's, one women's. — AFP

Sports

Saudi tennis elite wowed as stars flock to kingdom

Saudi Arabia's bid to become a sports powerhouse

RIYADH: When Ammar Alhaqbani first picked up a racket two decades ago while living in the United States, he knew very little about the tennis scene in his native Saudi Arabia.

Keenly aware that "football has been king" in the Gulf petro-state, he was surprised to discover a budding community of tennis enthusiasts when he flew to Saudi soil in 2011 to compete as a junior.

That community had a low profile in those days, but it is in the spotlight now as Saudi Arabia tries to position itself as a marquee tennis destination, hosting professional tournaments and luring the likes of Novak Djokovic and Ons Jabeur for exhibitions.

For Alhaqbani, now the top-ranked Saudi men's player, the transformation has been a little surreal. Sitting courtside during a Riyadh exhibition in December, the 25-year-old was stunned when Djokovic - his favorite player, who was facing Carlos Alcaraz - walked over and jokingly told him to "get ready for the third set, I'm tagging you in". It was the type of moment that would have been unimaginable a decade ago, Alhaqbani said.

"It's quite insane having these ambassadors and role models come to Saudi Arabia, and having us see them," he said. Much like its forays into golf and football, the Saudi tennis push has met some resistance, with legends Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert denouncing Riyadh's record on women's rights in an op-ed published by The Washington Post in January.

Yet that has done little to slow Saudi Arabia's tennis momentum. Milestones this year include naming 22-time Grand Slam champion Rafael Nadal as ambassa-

dor for the Saudi Tennis Federation and announcing a deal to host the next three editions of the WTA Finals.

'We're going to change'

Conservative Saudi Arabia's bid to become a sports powerhouse is part of a larger attempt to soften its austere image. That rebranding is central to the success of its Vision 2030 economic and social reform agenda, designed to prepare the world's biggest crude exporter for a prosperous post-oil future.

But decades before Vision 2030 took off, Saudi Arabia had its own tennis federation, and global stars occasionally graced its courts.

Areej Mutabagani, who became head of the Saudi Tennis Federation in 2021, recalls past matches involving players such as Yannick Noah, the 1983 French Open champion. At a time when women had fewer rights, some were nonetheless able to play on private compounds, Mutabagani said, describing how she herself used courts at the US embassy.

"So we had the tennis movement back then. But of course, we didn't have the chance to compete, you know, at an international level, being a female," she said. That is what makes the current moment so exciting, Mutabagani said, even if the sport's embrace of Saudi Arabia has drawn scorn from Navratilova and Evert, who she grew up idolizing.

"I think the best way for them to really realize or understand is come to Saudi Arabia," she said. "Come with us and share your experience... We're going to change." — AFP



DIRIYAH: Saudi tennis player Ammar Alhaqbani (R), 25, takes part in a training session at the "Tennis Academy Net" in Diriyah on February 15, 2024. Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) on February 28, announced a "multi-year strategic partnership" with the ATP, the governing body of men's tennis, extending the kingdom's influence on international sport. — AFP

KSO to participate in Gulf Badminton tournament

KUWAIT: Kuwait Special Olympics (KSO) badminton team left for Abu Dhabi to participate in the Gulf Badminton tournament organized by UAE Special Olympics in cooperation with Special Olympics MENA.

Kuwait delegation to the tournament is headed by Kuwait Special Olympics President Hanaa Al-Zawawi. The delegation includes players Mohammad Burabaa and Fawzan Al-Qassar for singles and doubles and Sheikha Al-Hindi for women's singles, it also has coach Rawan Al-Foudary and Hazim Al-Tarkait and Mustafa Hassouna as officials. Al-Zawawi said this participation is within the sports program of KSO "to allow our players the opportunity to compete and improve their skills in all sports games."

She said the players prepared well for the tournament and it was evident by KSO winning the gold medal during the world games that were held in Berlin in the summer.

Al-Zawawi expressed confidence in the KSO players to give outstanding performance and be



KUWAIT: Kuwait's badminton delegation.

winners. She thanked Olympics Tomooh club and guardians for their efforts in preparing for the team to participate.

Meanwhile, coach Rawan Al-Foudary said the

so we knew we could have played with the bunch. We were going over 60 kilometres an hour. That's when we knew we could do it.

"Nobody bet on the breakaway today," Pietrobon then attacked with almost a kilometre to go and built a lead. "I risked losing it to win it," said Thomas. "I didn't close the gap. It worked out perfectly." As the Italian faded, Valgren overtook but was in turn caught on the line by Thomas.

Thomas lives in the region with his Italian partner and rides the roads in training. "I knew all the road of the final because I train there sometimes. It was helping me to know with the cobbles and the corners," said Thomas. "Nice to win in Italy. Means a lot to me."

The stage was pockmarked by a series of nasty crashes in the nervous peloton. After seemingly slipping on a manhole cover, French strongman Christophe Laporte rode on with a shredded shirt.

Later, after a group of riders hit a small traffic island, Canadian Riley Pickrell was left with blood pouring down his face. Finally, Hungarian Attila Valter of Visma hit the ground for the second time in three days.

The rolling 178-kilometre stage from Genoa, with the only serious climb less than a third of the way in, was set up for a mass sprint finish in the hometown of Italy's greatest sprinter, Mario Cipollini - who holds the record for most Giro stage wins at 42.

However, the breakaway held firm and track cycling

team went through a preparation program followed by a training camp during which concentration was on muscular and nervous compatibility, stamina and to enhance physical fitness.



LUCCA: Team Cofidis' French rider Benjamin Thomas (C) celebrates after crossing the finish line to win the 5th stage of the 107th Giro d'Italia cycling race, 178 km between Genova and Lucca, on May 8, 2024 in Lucca. — AFP

star Thomas was the quickest across the line. The passage through the walled city of Lucca also marked the centenary of the death of composer Giacomo Puccini and the first performance of his last work, Turandot, which contains the most popular operatic aria in sports - 'Nessun dorma'. Thursday's 180km run to Rapolano Terme starts at a local landmark named after the composer, the Torre del Lago Puccini. — AFP

Mbappe gets ready to say goodbye as PSG digest CL exit

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe is set to play his last game for Paris Saint-Germain at the Parc des Princes when they host Toulouse on Sunday, in their first outing since being eliminated from the Champions League. PSG's hunt for elusive European glory will go on into another year after they went out in the semi-finals to Borussia Dortmund, a 1-0 loss in Tuesday's second leg at home sealing a surprise 2-0 aggregate defeat.

It means Mbappe will not get the send-off he had hoped for in the Champions League final at Wembley on June 1 and will end his seven-year spell at PSG without ever having won Europe's elite club competition.

Mbappe informed PSG privately in February of his intention to depart when his contract expires at the end of the current campaign. The 25-year-old has never said as much publicly though, far less confirmed where he will be going next, but it appears certain that he is bound for Real Madrid.

In the meantime, Mbappe and his current club will hope to finish the season on a high, with PSG still able to complete a clean sweep of domestic honors. They have already secured the Ligue 1 title, their 10th in the last 12 seasons, and will pick up the trophy after Sunday's game against mid-table Toulouse, which will be their last of the campaign on home turf.

PSG, who have also won the Champions Trophy, France's equivalent of a Super Cup, will then meet Lyon in the French Cup final in Lille on May 25. "Not everything is to be chucked in the bin. We still have objectives and a French Cup final to come," Mbappe told reporters after the Dortmund defeat. — AFP

Benjamin Thomas escapes to win Giro 5th stage

LUCCA: Frenchman Benjamin Thomas outfoxed the three other members of a late breakaway to take stage five of the Giro d'Italia in Lucca on Wednesday. Thomas, a five-time world champion on the track, was part of a powerful quartet that escaped with 80km to go and eked out a narrow lead to the line. Slovenian Tadej Pogacar finished safely in the peloton and retained the overall lead of the Giro.

Thomas of Cofidis escaped with Dane Michael Valgren of EF Education-EasyPost, Frenchman Enzo Paleni of Groupama-FDJ and Italian Andrea Pietrobon of Polti-Kometa after an intermediate sprint with less than 80 km to go.

The quartet never led by more than 90 seconds but were able to turn that small margin into victory by working hard together while the sprint teams in the peloton were unable, or unwilling, to organize a coherent chase. "It was like a long, long team pursuit," said Thomas.

"It was really hard in the finale. Every pull was full gas. With 10km it was still 45 seconds with a tail wind

Today's Matches

SPANISH LEAGUE PREMIER		
Deportivo Alaves v Girona		22:00
beIN Sports HD 3		
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE SERIE A		
Frosinone Calcio v Inter Milan		21:45
beIN Sports		
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
FC Augsburg v VfB Stuttgart		21:30
beIN Sports		
FRENCH LEAGUE		
OGC Nice v Le Havre AC		22:00
beIN Sports HD 8		
Stade brestois 29 v Stade de Reims		22:00
beIN Sports HD 4		

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Kaizen center	25716707	Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Rawda	22517733	Mirqab	22456536
Adaliya	22517144	Sharq	22465401
Khaldiya	24848075	Salmiya	25746401
Kaifan	24849807	Hospitals	
Shamiya	24848913	Sabah Hospital	24812000
Shuwaikh	24814507	Amiri Hospital	22450005
Abdullah Salem	22549134	Maternity Hospital	24843100
Nuzha	22526804	Mubarak Al-Kabir	25312700
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764	Chest Hospital	24849400
Qadsia	22515088	Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Dasmah	22532265	Adan Hospital	23940620
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908	Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Shaab	22518752		
Qibla	22459381		

Change of Name

I, Irfan Ahmad Abdul Latif Jamadar - India holder of Indian Passport No. T6759433 having permanent address 16/23 Worli B.D.D. Chawl, Mumbai - 400018, Maharashtra, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) Irfan Ahmed Abdul Latif (surname) Jamadar. (#5607 10/5/2024)	will be read as given name Ayesha and surname Bano. (#5603 8/5/2024)	habad, Pin - 211019, Uttar Pradesh, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name Afiah and surname Bano. (#5604 8/5/2024)
I, Fatima , holder of Indian Passport No. T4258524, permanent address Malawan Khurd, Sarai Inayat, Allahabad, Pin - 211019, Uttar Pradesh, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name Fatima and surname Bano. (#5603 8/5/2024)		I, Mustaqeem Muzaffar Roomani, holder of Passport No. R2950973, do hereby change my name to Mustaqeem Muzaffar (as given name) and Rumani (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Mustaqeem Muzaffar Roomani and I also undertake to carry out this change in all my documents. (#5604 8/5/2024)
I, Ayesha , holder of Indian Passport No. P6318774, having permanent address Sai Kripa Chawl R2, Tembi Pada, Lokmanya Nagar, Bhandud West, Maharashtra, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name		

Comeback kings Madrid stun Bayern to reach Champions League final

'We had one foot in London, we saw ourselves going through to the final'



MADRID: Real Madrid's players celebrate victory at the end of the UEFA Champions League semi final second leg football match between Real Madrid CF and FC Bayern Munich at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on May 8, 2024.—AFP

Jalen Brunson fires Knicks over Pacers

NEW YORK: Jalen Brunson shrugged off injury to spark a sensational second-half fightback as the New York Knicks battled past the Indiana Pacers 130-121 to take a 2-0 lead in their best-of-seven NBA playoff series on Wednesday.

New York talisman Brunson gave his team a huge scare after suffering a foot injury in the first quarter which forced him to sit out the remainder of the half at Madison Square Garden. Indiana exploited Brunson's absence to open up a 10-point advantage by half-time and were soon 12 points up in the third quarter after an early Andrew Nembhard layup.

But a limping Brunson—who returned at the start of the third quarter—led a stunning rally as the Knicks outscored Indiana 36-18 in the third to take a 99-91 lead into the fourth quarter. The Knicks then dug deep to hold onto their advantage in the fourth, outscoring the Pacers 31-30 to close out a famous victory.

Brunson finished with 29 points and five assists while Donte DiVincenzo and OG Anunoby came up big with 28 points apiece. Josh Hart added 19 points with 15 rebounds while Isaiah Hartenstein was huge defensively, with 12 rebounds, eight assists and 14 points.

"We found a way, that's it," said an exhausted Brunson. "For us it starts with our habits—we've talked about doing the little things from day one a little bit better, because you never know when they're going to help you in a big game. "It's all about doing the little things well every single day, and we pride ourselves on that." The victory came at a cost though for the Knicks, who were already missing injured first-choice players Julius Randle, Mitchell Robinson and Bojan Bogdanovic.

As well as the injury to Brunson on Wednesday, the Knicks saw another player injured with Anunoby limping out of the game in the third quarter with a hamstring problem. Somehow the Knicks hung on to edge past the Pacers, with Brunson pouring in 14 fourth quarter points and DiVincenzo adding eight points including two crucial three-pointers that helped keep Indiana at arm's length.

Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau revealed the team were uncertain of whether Brunson would continue after missing the second quarter. "We didn't know if he was going to be able to go or not, but he found a way to get it done," Thibodeau said. Tyrese Haliburton led Indiana's scorers with 34 points while Nembhard finished with 15 points and Pascal Siakam 14. Obi Toppin added 20 from the bench. Pacers coach Rick Carlisle was ejected late in the fourth quarter after ranting at officials following a decision to overturn a double-dribble call against the Knicks' Hartenstein. — AFP

MADRID: Real Madrid produced a spectacular comeback with "heart" against Bayern Munich to reach the Champions League final on Wednesday with Joselu striking twice in the dying minutes, earning them a 2-1 win to progress 4-3 on aggregate.

Alphonso Davies smashed the visiting German giants ahead in the second half but record 14-time winners Madrid produced a sensational comeback with Joselu netting in the 88th and 91st minutes. Spanish champions Real Madrid face another German side, Borussia Dortmund, in the Wembley final on June 1, after they stunned the team they call their "black beast". "It's something magical, there's no explanation," said Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, revelling in another electric night in the Spanish capital. Journeyman striker and back-up option Joselu, on as a late substitute, wrote his name in Madrid's history books with his last-gasp brace, giving Europe's comeback kings another night to remember.

"(The comeback) was with feeling and with heart, as the coach told us—you have to win games with heart," said Joselu. Madrid had enjoyed the better of the match but it seemed Davies' superb strike had set up a repeat of the 2013 all-German final in London. Instead Joselu consigned Bayern to a first trophyless season since 2012, his first goal coming after a handling error from Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, who had superbly kept Madrid at bay until that point.

Olympic torch relay sets off in Marseille

MARSEILLE: The Olympic torch relay began in Marseille on Thursday with football legend Basile Boli taking the flame in front of the iconic basilica of Notre-Dame de la Garde, a day after it made a spectacular entrance by sea.

The former French international, who scored the only goal in Marseille's victory over AC Milan in the 1993 European Champion Clubs' Cup final, set off at 8:20am (0620 GMT) just beneath the famous golden statue of the "Good Mother", which watches over France's second-largest city.

"It makes the heart beat and it's fantastic," said Boli. "It's the Olympic flame, it's the symbol of sport, of living together, of everything we can hope for in the world." There will be a strong football element to the first of 78 days of the torch relay with Ivory Coast great Didier Drogba also among the torch bearers in the southern port city on Thursday.

The torch will also visit the Stade Velodrome, home of Marseille's team which will host 10 matches during the men's and women's Olympic football competitions. It is just the start of a 12,000-kilometre (7,500-mile) torch

"(Before that) there were world class saves after world class saves, but that can happen, it's football," said Bayern defender Matthijs de Ligt.

High-intensity

Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel made three changes from the first leg, benching veteran Thomas Mueller and Leon Goretzka but the hosts dominated the opening stages. Neuer produced a superb double save to stop Madrid nosing in front, tipping the electric Vinicius Junior's effort on to the post and then saving Rodrygo's follow-up.

Bayern's Serge Gnabry limped off injured with Davies replacing him before England captain Harry Kane's first flash of danger, but Andriy Lunin pushed his vicious volley around the post. Neuer palmed away a Vinicius free-kick as the teams ended a high-intensity, relentlessly frantic first half.

The second period was just as fraught, with Davies' cross deflecting onto the roof of Lunin's goal. Vinicius was unplayable down Madrid's left and Rodrygo prodded his low cross agonisingly wide of the far post. The 38-year-old Neuer made superb saves to deny both Brazilian forwards again before the hour mark as Madrid ratcheted up the pressure. However just as in Munich, when Los Blancos were at their strongest, Bayern pounced.

Canada international Davies cut inside from the left and smashed a shot beyond Lunin into the far top

corner after 68 minutes. Madrid thought they had levelled moments later through Nacho but after a VAR review the strike was ruled out as the defender had grabbed Joshua Kimmich's face before shooting.

Tuchel took off Kane, still chasing the first trophy of his career, in the final stages to try and hold on to victory but it slipped through his fingers as Madrid produced more indelible European memories.

Referee 'mistake'

Ancelotti, sacked by Bayern in 2017, has kept Madrid's squad players engaged and committed to the cause all season and it paid dividends at a crucial time. Neuer, who had been sublime to this point, fumbled what appeared a simple Vinicius strike and substitute Joselu gratefully bundled home from close range. "We had one foot in London, we saw ourselves going through to the final," lamented the goalkeeper. With Bayern reeling Madrid struck again, decisively. It was Joselu once more, the striker on loan from second-division side Espanyol, turning home after Antonio Rudiger cut the ball back to him.

The goal was ruled offside but officials overturned the decision after review, and after nearly 15 minutes of stoppage time, Madrid earned the chance to go for their 15th Champions League trophy. "There have been a lot of times we have looked dead and buried, but we have that mentality of never say die," said Real midfielder Jude Bellingham. — AFP



MARSEILLE: This photograph shows the Olympic flame on the French 19th-century three-masted barque Belem as the boat sails near the coast of Marseille, in the Mediterranean Sea, on May 8, 2024, before landing with the Olympic torch, ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. — AFP

relay across France and its far-flung overseas territories before the opening ceremony in Paris on July 26.

Security test

The flame arrived on French soil at Marseille on Wednesday on board the 19th-century sailing ship Belem in front of 150,000 spectators for a ceremony that posed a first major security test for organisers of the 2024 Paris Games.

As the ship entered Marseille's Old Port with hundreds of small boats trail-

ing behind, planes from the Patrouille de France display team traced the Olympic rings in the sky and then the red, white and blue of the French flag.

Fireworks were fired as the Belem docked after its 12-day voyage from Greece, where the flame was lit in ancient Olympia on April 16. Olympic gold medal-winning swimmer Florent Manaudou carried the torch from the ship and passed it to Paralympic champion sprinter Nantenin Keita, who handed it to French rapper Jul to light

a cauldron. Organisers are hoping the first public spectacle of the Games on French soil will help build excitement after a row about the price of Olympics tickets and concerns about security.

'Moment of unity'

President Emmanuel Macron praised the "unprecedented effort" of the security forces in Marseille. And after watching the flame arrive, he said he hoped the Olympics would bring France together.

"I want our compatriots to imagine that this is a moment of unity and that we are capable of it and that we can be proud of it," he said. After the Covid-hit edition in Tokyo in 2021 and the corruption-tainted Rio de Janeiro Games in 2016, the Paris Olympics are seen as an important moment for the sporting extravaganza.

In the background in Marseille, around 6,000 security forces are on duty at a time when the country is on its highest terror alert. Extremely tight security will be a constant feature as the torch travels through more than 450 French towns and cities, and passes by dozens of tourist attractions including Mont Saint Michel. It will also visit France's overseas territories including Guadeloupe, New Caledonia and Reunion. Around 200 members of the security forces are set to be positioned permanently around the torch, including an anti-terror SWAT team and an anti-drone operatives. — AFP