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Rafah rocked by Zionist brutality

Scores killed across Gaza • Hezbollah uses new weapons in Zionist attacks



GAZA: A man pushes a wheelchair filled with belongings past garbage piled up near tents set up by displaced Palestinians in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on May 18, 2024. — AFP

GAZA: Heavy clashes and bombardment rocked Rafah on Saturday, as the Zionist entity pressed an assault against Hamas that has led hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to flee the southern Gaza city. The Zionist military said its air forces hit more than 70 targets across the Gaza Strip while ground troops conducted "raids" in eastern Rafah.

Hamas' armed wing, the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, said it fired a barrage of rockets towards the city of Ashkelon and targeted a Zionist command center at the Jabalia refugee camp in the north of the Gaza Strip. An AFP reporter said air strikes and artillery shells pounded eastern Rafah as warplanes crisscrossed over the city on Gaza's border with Egypt.

The Rafah crossing, a vital conduit for humanitarian assistance, has been closed since the Zionist entity launched its operation in the city last week. The Zionist entity's offensive has killed at least 35,386 people in Gaza, mostly women and children. The toll includes at least 83 deaths over the past 24 hours, said a health ministry statement on Saturday.

More than 10 days into what the army called a "limited" operation in Rafah that sparked an exodus of Palestinians, fighting between Zionist forces and Palestinian militants has also flared again in northern Gaza. The Zionist entity said in early January it had dismantled Hamas' command structure in the north,

but the army said Hamas had been "in complete control here in Jabalia until we arrived a few days ago".

Hamas slammed what it called the Zionist entity's "intensified brutal raids" on Jabalia, saying they had killed dozens of civilians and wounded hundreds more while targeting schools and shelters. "The escalating crimes of the occupation will not succeed in breaking the will of our brave resistance or in deterring our proud people from their decision to stand firm on their land," it said.

The Zionist incursion into Rafah, launched despite overwhelming international opposition and as mediators were hoping for a breakthrough in stalled truce talks, has worsened an already dire humanitarian crisis, aid groups say. With key land crossings closed or operating at limited capacity due to the fighting, some relief supplies began flowing into Gaza via a temporary, floating pier constructed by the United States.

The Zionist army said 310 pallets began moving ashore in "the first entry of humanitarian aid through the floating pier". Satellite pictures taken on Saturday showed more than a dozen trucks lining up on the approach road to the pier. In the coming days, around 500 tons of aid are expected to be delivered to Gaza through the pier, according to US Central Command.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Aboutrika removed from 'terror' list

CAIRO: Egypt's top court Saturday removed the names of ex-football star Mohamed Aboutrika and 1,500 others from "terrorist" lists over their alleged links to the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, a lawyer said. The lower court in Cairo decided to list Aboutrika as a "terrorist" in Jan 2017, accusing him of helping to finance the Brotherhood which was ruled a "terrorist" organization in 2013. Aboutrika was on the Egyptian national team in 2006 and 2008 when they were African champions and was also African Player of the Year four times. — AFP

Oil tanker hit by missile off Yemen

DUBAI: A crude oil tanker was hit by a missile off the coast of Yemen's southwestern city of Mokha overlooking the strategic Bab al-Mandeb strait, maritime security firm Ambrey said Saturday. "A Panama-flagged crude oil tanker was reportedly 'attacked'" about 10 nautical miles southwest of Mokha, Ambrey said, adding that information "indicated the vessel was hit by a missile and that there was a fire" in the ship's rear. The British navy's maritime security agency United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said the incident occurred 180 km south of Yemen's Hodeida, without specifying the type of vessel involved. — AFP

Turkmenistan unveils giant statue

ASHGABAT, Turkmenistan: The isolated Central Asian state of Turkmenistan on Friday unveiled an 80-m-high bronze statue, one of the tallest in the world, in honor of its most famous national poet. President Serdar Berdimukhamedov presided over the lavish opening ceremony of the statue of Magtymguly Pyragy, south of the capital, Ashgabat. Born 300 years ago, he is seen as one of the most important figures in Turkmen literature. — AFP

Kuwait holds municipal by-elections

KUWAIT: Voters headed to the polls on Saturday to cast ballots for municipal by-elections. The voting began as scheduled at 8 am for electing two members of the Municipal Council for the 13th legislative term. Ten nominees contested the vacant seat in the sixth constituency and eight for the seat in the 9th district.

Polling was held with 194 electoral committees hosted by 26 schools, against the backdrop of a declaration by the Municipal Council on April 22 declaring vacancy of the two seats that had been occupied by the former members Nasser Al-Kalif and Fehaid Al-Muwaizri. The interior ministry

had announced that voters should present the original identity certificate and declared a hotline (1889888) for any inquiry or help throughout the process.

It added information about voting stations and registration are available on the government electronic app Sahel. According to the statement, a candidate must be a Kuwaiti citizen according to Amiri Decree 15 (1959) regarding the nationality law, along with amended legislations. The nominee's name must be included in the electoral lists, must have mastery of the Arabic language, and not be younger than 30, with no criminal records.

The two municipal seats had been declared vacant after the ministry of justice and the ministry of interior addressed reports to the minister of state for municipal affairs with respect to affirming that a verdict had been issued against Kalif and Muwaizri had registered as a candidate for the 2024 parliamentary elections. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A voter casts his ballot in the Municipal Council by-elections on May 18, 2024. (See Page 2)

Kuwait demands action on POWs, UN urges urgency

NEW YORK: Kuwait Permanent Delegate at the United Nations Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai reaffirmed the necessity of pursuing special operations to locate the remains of 308 missing Kuwaitis and prisoners. Bannai, addressing a special Security Council session on Thursday, called on the

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Tareq Al-Bannai



Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert

Muslim professionals quit 'hostile' France in silent brain drain

PARIS: After being knocked back at some 50 interviews for consulting jobs in France despite his ample qualifications, Muslim business school graduate Adam packed his bags and moved to a new life in Dubai. "I feel much better here than in France," the 32-year-old of North African descent told AFP. "We're all equal. You can have a boss who's Indian, Arab or a French person," he said. "My religion is more accepted."

Highly qualified French citizens from Muslim back-

grounds, often the children of immigrants, are leaving France in a quiet brain drain, seeking a new start abroad in cities like London, New York, Montreal or Dubai, according to a new study. The authors of "France, you love it but you leave it", published last month, said it was difficult to estimate exactly how many.

But they found that 71 percent of more than 1,000 people who responded to their survey circulated online had left in part because of racism and discrimination. Adam, who asked that his surname not be used, told AFP his new job in the United Arab Emirates has given him a fresh perspective. In France "you need to work twice as hard when you come from certain minorities", he said.

He said he was "extremely grateful" for his French education and missed his friends, family and the rich cultural life of the country where he grew up. But

he said he was glad to have quit his "Islamophobia" and "systemic racism" that meant he was stopped by police for no reason.

France has long been a country of immigration, including from its former colonies in North and West Africa. But today the descendants of Muslim immigrants who came to France seeking a better future say they have been living in an increasingly hostile environment, especially after the Islamic State attacks in Paris in 2015 that killed 130 people.

They say France's particular form of secularism, which bans all religious symbols in public schools including headscarves and long robes, seems to disproportionately focus on the attire of Muslim women. Another French Muslim, a 33-year-old tech employee of Moroccan descent, told AFP he and his

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Ministry provides medical teams for municipal polls

Nationality certificate can be extracted through Sahel for elections



KUWAIT: Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Wasmi on Saturday inspected polling stations of the municipal by-elections throughout the country. The minister, who visited the voting centers of the sixth and ninth constituencies, was accompanied by Undersecretary Hashem Al-Gallaf and other officials. — KUNA photos

In my view

Is Gen Alpha in danger?

By Ahmad Albarjas



With the increase in technological advancements and societal growth, Gen Z is expected to pave the way for the younger generation, Gen Alpha. However, the literacy rate among children in Kuwait tells another story. The fact that 51 percent of Kuwait's children fall into the categories of "learning poverty" and "not proficient in reading", as labeled by the Kuwait LPB (Learning Poverty Brief), comes as a surprise to a country with a very high adult literacy rate such as Kuwait.

If this statistic is compared to a fellow Gulf country like Oman, which is almost indifferent in terms of population to Kuwait, a similar 42 percent appears. Not only does this showcase the concerning reading predicament that children in Kuwait or Gulf countries face, but it also opens another common door. Upon opening it, the overreliance on algorithmic technology prevalent in social media can clearly be seen, as well as a lack of hobby exploration and barely any social connection for children who are in a crucial developmental stage of their lives.

One would blame the COVID pandemic; others would blame the child themselves for his or her habitual usage of devices. Albeit, the problem lies in the lack of exploration of the realms of reading and writing. This is connected back to the infamous "iPad kid" phenomenon, which is seen very frequently. The term is primarily used jokingly as a way to label the major issue of Gen Alpha kids being stuck to their devices, but despite the humorous context behind it, it demonstrates the harsh truth behind our future generation.

Children are not galvanized to pursue hobbies like reading or writing due to being blinded by the world of electronics. Of course, it's always up to one's preferences for hobby-practicing, but can anyone really make such major decisions about hobbies while never trying them in the first place?

Today, Kuwait faces a struggle of trial, where people must encourage their children to try and reward them for doing so. Communication is also paramount to enforcing the child's mother tongue in his/her mind, which can indirectly aid in the child's literary intelligence. This comes with the aim of making sure that children are introduced as soon as possible to hobbies like reading or writing to enhance their knowledge in those areas beyond the teachings of school.

The 51 percent of children in the statistic doesn't serve as a sign of shame and guilt, whether on children or us as their carers and caregivers, but as a reminder to continue guiding them and pushing these children to indulge their free time in hobbies, whether exploring literacy sources or perhaps practicing an enjoyable hobby of their own, all with the sole purpose of fostering their cognitive and emotional development.

It is imperative for a child with a developing brain to be on the right trajectory when it comes to literacy in order to dodge any obstacles when he/she grows into adolescence. It's our job as guides for the soon-to-be leaders of society to assist them in adapting to reading and writing from a young age and being exposed to the benefits of that practice from a young age as well. Nevertheless, the words in books might just come across as sequenced and connected groups of letters depicting fantasy, comedy or even non-fiction. But behind those words and spaces lies a lifelong added value that can never go unnoticed.

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health provided 26 medical clinics and nine ambulance vehicles to serve 24 committees at the polling stations of the municipal by-elections, an official said on Saturday. Dr Ahmad Al-Shatti, Director of the MoH Medical Emergency Department, said in a statement to KUNA, after he inspected the electoral commissions, that four clinics and two ambulance vehicles were assigned for Mubarak Al-Kabeer, six clinics and two vehicles for Al-Farwaniya, 16 clinics and five cars for Al-Ahmadi, with 108 medics and technical personnel operating. Since balloting began early Saturday, 12 people were treated by the assigned teams, but none had to be shifted to hospitals, he added.

Also, the undersecretary of the Interior Ministry, Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, made an inspection tour on

Saturday to the headquarters of the by-elections for the Municipal Council in its 13th legislative term. Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah was accompanied by the Assistant Undersecretary for Private Security Affairs Major General Abdullah Al-Saffah, the Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Major General Yousef Al Khadda, the Director General of Public Relations and Security Media Major General Tawheed Al-Kanderi, the Director General of Central Operations Brigadier General Abdullah Al-Ateeqi, and a number of security leaders.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) confirmed on Saturday that citizens who have lost their nationality certificate, could extract a new one for the by-elections of the Municipal Council in its 13th legislative term through the government app (Sahel). The Ministry's General Directorate of Security



Relations and Media said in a press statement that the certificate could be extracted through the app, printed in color, and then brought to the voting polls, reassuring that it is valid during election day only. — KUNA

ALECSO conference kicks off in Jeddah

JEDDAH: The 27th session of the General Conference of the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) kicked off on Friday in the city of Jeddah, with Kuwait's participation. In a speech delivered on behalf of the Saudi Minister of Culture, Chairman of the Saudi National Committee for Education, Culture, and Science, Prince Badr bin Abdullah, Minister of Education, and Vice Chairman of the committee, Yousef Al-Benyani, said that the Kingdom's hosting of the conference bears fruit of great efforts made with partners in the organization.

He added that the meeting also shows fruitful cooperation among member states. The minister stressed the Kingdom's full and unwavering humanitarian and fraternal support for the Gaza Strip, within the framework of Arab cooperation and solidarity. This support is one of the Kingdom's humanitarian and development priorities given to boost humanitarian and relief efforts as part of its vision of supporting humanitarian and Islamic issues, he noted.

He affirmed Saudi Arabia's support for Dr Khaled Anan, the only Egyptian and Arab candidate for the position of Director-General of the United Nations



Acting Undersecretary of Ministry of Education Mansour Al-Daihani

Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It will be an important opportunity to strengthen the Arab role in serving cultural, educational, and scientific sectors at the international level, he stated. Meanwhile, Iraqi Minister of Education and head of the 26th session, Dr Ibrahim Al-Jubouri, pointed to achievements made in the previous session and the various programs aimed at building bridges of dialogue and cooperation between Arab culture and the rest of the world.

For his part, the Director-General of ALECSO, Dr

Mohammad Ould Omar, expressed hope that this meeting would be a prominent milestone for work that enhances the role and status of the organization to continue its missions. Kuwait's delegation to the conference included Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Mansour Al-Daihani and Acting Secretary General of the Kuwait National Commission for Education, Science, and Culture Ali Dashti.

Saudi Arabia re-elected

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia won Saturday the chairmanship of the Executive Council of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) for the third time in a row. The Kingdom's representative and member of the Executive Council Hani Al-Mogbil was reelected as the Chairman of the Executive Council of ALECSO from 2024 to 2026, reported the Saudi Press Agency (SPA). This came during the council's meeting held following the 27th ALECSO Congress in Jeddah on Friday.

Qatar was also elected as deputy chair and Jordan as rapporteur of the executive council. Established in 1970 and based in Tunis, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) is one of the Cairo-based Arab bloc's organizations that seeks to develop Arab culture, education and science at both national and regional levels. — KUNA

Museums are 'catalysts for cultural exchange'

KUWAIT: Assistant Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL) for Antiquities and Museums Sector Mohammed bin Redha has emphasized the crucial role of museums in fostering cultural exchange and promoting global cooperation and peace. On International Museum Day, bin Redha told KUNA that celebrating this occasion raises awareness about the importance of museums as "the living memory of people."

Bin Redha explained that International Museum Day 2024 adopts the slogan "Museums for Education and Research," highlighting museums' role in contributing to the sustainability and development of society. He revealed that the NCCAL will organize the exhibition (Museums and Different Means of



Mohammed bin Redha

Education) at the Kuwait National Museum in cooperation with the Expo 965 team for heritage and craft exhibitions and Kuwaiti innovators.

Furthermore, he recapped the history of museums in Kuwait, noting that the Kuwait National Museum was first opened on December 31, 1957, in the palace of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

in Dasman (formerly Diwan Sheikh Khazal). In 1976, it was moved to Bait Al-Bader, one of Kuwait's traditional houses. Later, in 1983, the new museum was opened. The national museum was designed by the French architect Michel Ecochard, earning him an international award for architectural design.

Bin Redha confirmed that several museums in Kuwait, including the Kuwait Red Fort Museum, the Maritime Heritage Museum, the Qurain Martyrs Mu-

seum, the Mubarak Kiosk Museum, the Dixon House Museum, the Police Museum, and the Abdullah Al-Salem Palace Museum, fall under the supervision of NCCAL. The Kuwait Red Fort, built in 1897 for the late Mubarak bin Sabah Al-Sabah, is located in Jahra.

It is considered one of the most important historical monuments in the state of Kuwait due to its connection to the famous Battle of Jahra. Additionally, bin Redha emphasized that the Al-Qurain Martyrs Museum stands as a testament to the patriotism and resilience of the Kuwaiti people. He highlighted that the late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah commanded the transformation of the house in Al-Qurain into a historical museum.

Regarding the Dixon House Museum, bin Redha highlighted its origins at the end of the 19th century, following a historic agreement between the late Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, the Amir of Kuwait, and Britain in 1899. Initially established as a residence and office for the British political commissioner in 1904, it later served as the headquarters for the first British commissioner, Colonel Harold Dixon, in 1929. — KUNA

Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyah celebrates Museums Day

KUWAIT: Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyah celebrated the International Day of Museums on Saturday with the slogan 'Museums for Education and Scientific Research'. The event focuses on the importance of museums in providing an environment for creativity through the journey of research and learning. In a press release on Friday, the officials invited the public to attend various events and activities dedicated to families and children at the American Cultural Center on Sunday from 2 to 7 pm.

The events began with drawings and photography activities, educational activities specializing in Islamic

art, as well as workshops, including Arabic calligraphy, and specialized workshops in museums using the ancient Harvard University curricula. The celebration also included story-reading episodes for children. Guided museum tours will continue throughout the day on Sunday to allow children and their families to explore their creative abilities. It is noteworthy that World Museum Day is celebrated on May 18 every year in coordination with the International Council of Museums (ICOM) to raise public awareness of the leading role of museums in the development of society. — KUNA



Children participate in the event.

Local

Zain celebrates future entrepreneurs at INJAZ's annual competition

Company joins judges panel of 'Company Program', awards winners



Al Mutairi and Alasfour award the university level winners.

Awarding the high school level winners.

KUWAIT: Zain celebrated the winners of the Most Innovative Product award for the high school and university levels during the closing ceremony of the INJAZ Company Program Competition 2024. Zain supports this contest annually in partnership with INJAZ Kuwait to empower the next generation of young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs.

The ceremony, hosted by the American University of the Middle East at the AUM Cultural Center, was attended by INJAZ Kuwait Executive Director Lailah Hilal Al Mutairi, Zain Kuwait Corporate Sustainability Manager Louwah Alasfour, and representatives from sponsors and partners. Zain took

the stage to honor the two winning teams of the Most Innovative Product award: RHYTHMi (university level) and Solution Seekers (high school level).

Zain's support came under the umbrella of its long-term strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, which extends for 19 years since the non-profit's inception in 2005. Throughout this partnership, Zain has continued to shoulder the academic programs and initiatives organized by INJAZ to invest in young people's creative skills to empower them to pursue their entrepreneurship aspirations. Zain Group Digital Solutions Director Ali Dashti joined the judges panel, which featured

entrepreneurs, businesspeople, and private sector executives. The panel listened to final pitches from the students, initiated the evaluation process, and carefully selected the winners.

INJAZ's annual Company Program competition provides university and high school students with a great opportunity to learn how to establish and run their own startups. Corporate volunteers from across the Kuwaiti private sector guide students through the most essential business skills, like how to develop a business idea, conduct a feasibility study, sell stocks, work as a team, devise business plans, create and sell products/services, and much more.

Through its strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, Zain strives to empower ambitious young minds who are passionate about building their own businesses with world-class training programs. INJAZ Kuwait is an NGO and a nonprofit organization that inspires and prepares young people to succeed in a global economy by delivering business programs on entrepreneurship, work readiness, and financial literacy. INJAZ is a member of Junior Achievement Worldwide and has so far trained over 100,000 students from 200+ public and private schools and universities through 7,000+ volunteers.



Chief of the General Staff of Kuwait Army Air Marshal Bandar Al-Muzain sponsors and attends the graduation ceremony of Maghawir 25 Brigade course. — KUNA photos

Military personnel to dedicate themselves to homeland

KUWAIT: The Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwait Army, Air Marshal Bandar Al-Muzain, has called on military personnel to live up to the trust placed in them and dedicate themselves to the safety of the homeland. In an address to the graduates of the 108th non-commissioned officers' course and the 108th personnel's course combined with the 17th Maghawir's (Special Forces) course, Al-Muzain spoke highly of the efforts of the Maghawir brigade to build the capacity of the military personnel and enhance their preparedness through military science and field training.

The graduation ceremony was held under the auspices and in the presence of Air Marshal Al-Muzain, according to a statement from the General Staff headquarters. The Chief of the General Staff reaffirmed the readiness of the Kuwait Army to carry out any mission to protect the security and stability of the dear homeland under the leadership of His Highness the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

On his part, Commander of Maghawir 25 Brigade



Brig Staff Nasser Barrak said the just-ended courses focused on field combat skills and chemical warfare defense. The trainees were provided with techniques of mobilization, field combat, and engagement in mountainous areas, as well as training on communication systems and topographic study, Brig Barrak noted in a statement.

During the ceremony, the graduates paraded their military skills and combat capabilities, whether individually or collectively, and then the Chief of the General Staff handed them certificates and awards. The ceremony gathered senior officers from the ministries of defense and interior and the National Guards, as well as the families of the graduates.

Army's alertness

Chief of Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces stressed on Saturday that the country's wise leadership is keen to follow up on the affairs, conditions and vigilance of the armed forces. Al-Muzain made the remarks while touring the 6th Al-Tahreer Mechanized Brigade, the Army General Staff said in a press release. During the tour, the army chief listened to a briefing about tasks and duties carried out as part of the brigade's training plans and programs. The top general, further, appreciated the army personnel's high efficiency, capability and eagerness to defend the homeland's security, stability and territorial integrity, according to the release. — KUNA



Kuwait ambassador to US visits patients



WASHINGTON: Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States, Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, paid a visit to Boston Children's Hospital to meet and get treated about the conditions of Kuwaiti patients treated there and be informed about their needs. Speaking to KUNA, Sheikha Al-Zain affirmed her

keenness on following up on the conditions of Kuwaitis receiving treatment at US hospitals. Accompanied by the representatives of the embassy and the Kuwait Health Bureau in Washington, Sheikha Al-Zain said she met with the hospital's medical team during the visit. — KUNA

Kuwait ambassador presents credentials to Argentine leader

WASHINGTON: The Ambassador of Kuwait to the Argentine Republic, Abdulaziz Al-Bisher, presented his credentials to Argentinean President Javier Milei in the presence of Argentinean Foreign Minister Diana Mondino. Ambassador Al-Bisher conveyed to President Milei the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for Argentina and his best wishes for further progress and prosperity.

On his part, President Milei asked Ambassador Al-Bisher to convey his sincere greetings to His Highness the Amir, affirming his desire to strengthen bilateral relations between Kuwait and Argentina.



During the meeting, the historical relations between the two countries, spanning 55 years, were recalled, as was the political leadership's keenness in both countries to continue enhancing and expanding bilateral relations in all fields to serve the interests of both nations. — KUNA

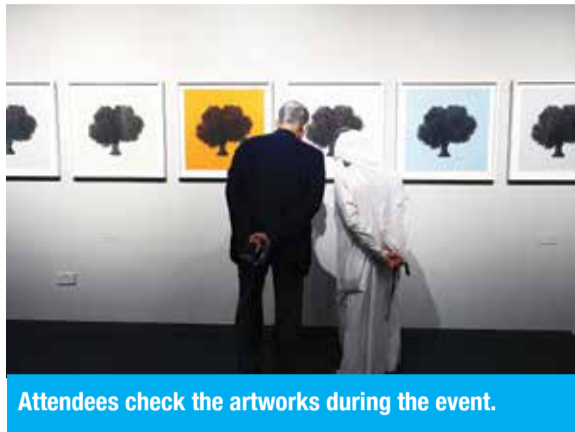
Kuwait deplores Slovak PM's attack

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry has condemned an attempted assassination on Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, wishing him a swift

recovery and Slovakia security and stability. In a press release, the ministry rejected this criminal act and voiced support for all measures taken by Slovakia to safeguard its domestic security. The Slovak Prime Minister was shot and injured in an away-from-home government meeting in Handlova Town, northeast of Bratislava. — KUNA

CAP hosts an event in honor of South Africa ambassador

SA becoming 'a favorable destination of choice' for travelers



Attendees check the artworks during the event.



South Africa Ambassador
Dr Manelisi Genge



Amer Huneidi
— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Sheikha Suhaila wins competence award

DOHA: The second international scientific conference for social responsibility, being hosted by Qatar, awarded the 2024 scientific competence prize in social responsibility to Sheikha Suhaila Fahad Al-Malek Al-Sabah, the managing editor of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies magazine, in Kuwait. In statements to KUNA, Sheikha Suhaila expressed joy for winning the award, which followed her selection as United Nations Ambassador for Community Partnership. The two-day conference aims to analyze the social problems facing the quest for sustainable development and explore the role of social responsibility scientific research in this regard. — KUNA

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: Contemporary Art Platform (CAP) hosted a special dinner in honor of South African (SA) Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Manelisi Genge on Thursday. This event not only celebrated the cultural ties between South Africa and Kuwait but also underscored South Africa's dedication to justice and human rights on a global scale. Genge highlighted South Africa's commitment to contributing to the realization of a better Africa and a better world.

He emphasized initiatives such as the achievement of international human rights, the implementation of international law in an unbiased and fair manner, and the establishment of a rules-based international order for all. He also took the opportunity to highlight that 2024 marks the 30th anniversary of democracy in South Africa, which according to him, "not only presents an opportunity to reflect on the past 30 years

but coincides with several historic milestones in the nation's fight for fundamental rights and freedom."

Speaking of South Africa-Kuwait relations, the ambassador said, "South Africa takes pride in its cultural and people-to-people diplomacy, where tourism and culture intertwine." He pointed out the remarkable rise in South Africa's tourism sector, especially from the Middle East. From January to December 2023, South Africa saw 54,339 arrivals from the Middle East, marking a 33.7 percent growth compared to the same period in 2022.

Specifically, inbound tourism from Kuwait increased to 1,477 travelers in 2023. Dr Genge noted this trend as an indicator that South Africa is becoming "a favorable destination of choice" for travelers from Kuwait and the expatriate community. Apart from tourism and culture, South Africa's global commitment was echoed by Amer Huneidi, founder of the Contemporary Art Platform, who expressed his

heartfelt gratitude to the South African government for its pioneering role in supporting the Palestinian people in their ongoing struggle.

He praised South Africa for having the moral courage to pose brave questions and shine a light on the state of justice in our world. Huneidi remarked, "Indeed, this is a continuation of Nelson Mandela's profound support for the Palestinian people in their struggle against colonization and injustice, a deep commitment that has persisted to this day, even after his passing."

Speaking on the social responsibility of CAP, Huneidi highlighted his long-held belief in art's role as a fundamental element and catalyst in shaping the visions and components of human culture at large. He stated, "Art has indeed been able to create a more beautiful parallel world while, at the same time, serving as an outcry against violence, injustice, dictatorship, and tyranny."

Ambassador applauds cultural council's role

RABAT: Kuwait Ambassador to Morocco Abdulatif Al-Yahya has acclaimed Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL) for disseminating culture and knowledge in Arab countries. The ambassador, in a statement to KUNA during his visit to the fair-ground of the International Book and Publishing Fair in Rabat, said Kuwait's participation in the event mirrors the cultural renaissance in Kuwait, namely the role of the NCCAL at this level. Culture is effective in promoting countries and bolstering relations among states and peoples, he said. "It is the soft power that makes states more lucrative, effective, and respectful," said Al-Yahya. The Moroccan book fair opened on Thursday. — KUNA



Kuwait Ambassador to Morocco Abdulatif Al-Yahya and the exhibition manager Mohammad Duwaish visit the Abu Dhabi Peace Forum. — KUNA photos



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Beat the heat in style with LuLu Summer Fashion Specials

KUWAIT: LuLu Hypermarket, your one-stop shop for the best deals, officially launched its much-awaited Summer Fashion Specials 2024 on May 16 at their Al Rai outlet. The ceremony, which was inaugurated by fashionistas and vloggers along with the LuLu Management, kicked off a promotional bonanza running from May 15 to June 4 across all LuLu Hypermarket locations in Kuwait.

The 21-day LuLu Summer Fashion Specials 2024 allowed fashion aficionados and budget-conscious shoppers alike to rejoice, as the fashion festival offered a plethora of exciting deals on the latest summer collections for men, women, and children. Shoppers could browse through a vast selection of trendy clothing, footwear, and ladies' bags, including from renowned brands such as Eten, Cortigiani, Tom Smith, DeBackers, Marco Donateli, John Louis, and Reo - all



at incredible discounts ranging from 20 percent to a whopping 70 percent.

The launch ceremony at the Al Rai outlet was a dazzling affair, featuring popular fashion bloggers and influencers who not only graced the event but also tried on the latest summer collections. Adding to the spirit of style, a kids' fashion show was held in conjunction with the launch, with over 50 enthusiastic children showcasing the latest summer trends in children's wear. All participants in the fashion show received attractive prizes, making it a memorable experience for everyone involved.



Flash floods kill 50 in western Afghanistan

N Korea confirms missile launch, vows to bolster nuclear force

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MAJDEL AANJAR, Lebanon: Lebanese army soldiers and onlookers gather around the remains of a car after it was hit by a Zionist strike, reportedly killing a local Hamas official, in Majd Al-Anjar in Lebanon's Bekaa valley, on May 17, 2024. — AFP

Funerals offer displaced Lebanese villagers a chance to go home

IOM says more than 93,000 people have been displaced in south Lebanon

MAIS AL-JABAL, Lebanon: For displaced south Lebanese villagers, funerals for those killed in months of cross-border clashes are a rare chance to return home and see the devastation caused by Zionist entity bombardment. "My house is in ruins," said Abdel Aziz Ammar, a 60-year-old man with a white beard, in front of a pile of rubble in the border village of Mais Al-Jabal. Only a plastic water tank survived. "My parents' house, my brother's house and my nephew's house have all been totally destroyed," said Ammar, who was back in Mais Al-Jabal this week for the funeral of a Hezbollah fighter from the village. Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah movement began attacking Zionist entity in support of ally Hamas a day after the Palestinian militant group's unprecedented Oct 7 attack on Zionist entity that sparked war in the Gaza Strip. Many residents of towns and villages on either side of the Zionist entity -Lebanon border have evacuated their homes for safety. Most of the dead are Hezbollah fighters,

including seven from Mais Al-Jabal, but at least 82 are civilians, three of whom journalists. Zionist entity says 14 soldiers and 11 civilians have been killed on its side of the border. For funerals in the south, the Lebanese army informs United Nations peacekeepers, who then inform the Zionist entity military, a spokesperson for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon said. The peacekeepers usually patrol near the border, and act as a buffer between Lebanon and Zionist entity. Ammar fled his village for Beirut's southern suburbs, a Hezbollah stronghold, two weeks after the violence broke out. The International Organization for Migration says more than 93,000 people have been displaced in south Lebanon, while authorities in Zionist entity have evacuated tens of thousands from the country's north. "We come for the funerals, but we inspect our homes. Those whose houses haven't been destroyed use the time to collect their belongings," Ammar said. "The house meant a lot to us, it was big," with plenty of space

for the children outside, he said of his home in Mais Al-Jabal. "My daughter always tells me, 'I miss the house, when will we go back?'" An AFP photographer saw dozens of houses razed or partially destroyed in the village, which resembled a battlefield surrounded by green countryside. A funeral procession crossed the rubble-strewn streets, with people chanting slogans in support of Hezbollah, not far from Zionist entity positions across the border. Hezbollah flags fluttered in the wind as women in chadors walked together, some wearing yellow scarves - the colour of the Shiite Muslim movement—or holding pictures of the fallen "martyr". "Whether I carry a weapon or not, just my presence in my village means I am a target for the Zionist entity is," Ammar said, noting the fighting does not always stop for the funerals. On May 5, a man, his wife and two children were killed in a strike on Mais Al-Jabal while a funeral took place. They had returned to the village to collect things from a store

they owned, believing it to be a moment of calm, local media reported. In front of a half-destroyed house, people piled a small truck with whatever they could - a washing machine, a child's stroller, a motorbike and plastic chairs. Amid rubble in the village, a sign was propped up reading: "Even if you destroy our houses, your missiles cannot break our will." Lebanese authorities are waiting for a ceasefire to fully assess the damage, but have estimated that some 1,700 houses have been destroyed and 14,000 damaged. Emergency personnel have reported huge damage and villages emptied of residents, while many journalists have been reluctant to travel to the border areas due to the heavy bombardment. The overall bill already exceeds \$1.5 billion, authorities estimate, in a crisis-hit country where compensation procedures remain vague. But to village resident Khalil Hamdan, 53, who also attended the funeral, "the destruction doesn't make a difference." "We will rebuild," he said. — AFP

Myanmar ethnic armed group claims control of town

BANGKOK: A Myanmar ethnic minority armed group on Saturday claimed its fighters had seized control of a town in western Rakhine state, in what would be another blow to the junta. Clashes have rocked Rakhine since the Arakan Army (AA) attacked security forces in November, ending a ceasefire that had largely held since the 2021 military coup. AA fighters have seized territory, including along the border with India and Bangladesh, piling further pressure on the junta as it battles opponents elsewhere across the Southeast Asian country. "We seized all bases of the Myanmar Army in Buthidaung," in northern Rakhine state, the AA said on its Telegram channel on Saturday. Those seized included a "military strategic headquarters", it added, without giving details. Its fighters were still clashing with junta troops outside the town, it said. Buthidaung sits around 90 kilometers (55 miles) north of state capital Sittwe, which is still held by the military. Earlier this month, the AA said it had taken hundreds of junta personnel prisoner following an assault on a command near the Buthidaung. A junta spokesman has been approached for comment. Communication with Rakhine is extremely difficult, with most mobile networks down. The AA is one of several armed ethnic minority groups in Myanmar's border regions, many of whom have battled the military since independence from Britain in 1948 over autonomy and control of lucrative resources. The AA claims to be fighting for more autonomy for the state's ethnic Rakhine population. Fighting has spread to 15 of Rakhine state's 17 townships since November, the UN's human rights chief said last month. Hundreds of people have been killed or wounded and more than 300,000 displaced, it said. Clashes between the AA and the military in 2019 roiled the region and displaced around 200,000 people. The military launched a crackdown on the Rohingya minority there in 2017 which is now the subject of a United Nations genocide court case. — AFP

Georgia president vetoes controversial 'foreign influence' law

TBILISI: Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili on Saturday put a mostly symbolic veto on the "foreign influence" law that sparked unprecedented protests and warnings from Brussels that the measure would undermine Tbilisi's European aspirations. Ruling Georgian Dream party lawmakers voted through the legislation this week in defiance of protesters, who are worried the ex-Soviet republic is shifting away from a pro-Western course back toward Russia. The move has sparked a wave of protests unprecedented in the recent history of the Black Sea nation, where according to opinion polls more than 80 percent of the population wants to join the European Union and NATO, and is staunchly anti-Kremlin.

"Today I set a veto... on the law, which is Russian in its essence, and which contradicts our constitution," she said in a televised statement, speaking about the bill that critics describe as resembling Russian legislation used to silence dissent. Brussels has said the measure is "incompatible" with Georgia's bid for EU membership, which is enshrined in the country's constitution. Georgian Dream has enough lawmakers in parliament to override her veto. Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze has signaled his party's readiness to consider Zurbishvili's proposed amendments to the law, should she lay them out in her veto document. But figurehead president Zurbishvili - at loggerheads with the ruling party - has ruled out the prospect of entering "false, artificial, misleading negotiations" with Georgian Dream. The bill requires NGOs and media outlets that receive more than 20 percent of their funding from abroad to register as bodies "pursuing the interests of a foreign power". Georgian Dream insists it is committed to joining the EU, and portrays the bill as aimed at increasing the transparency of NGO funding. — AFP



TBILISI, Georgia: Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili gestures as she delivers a speech during a gathering celebrating Europe Day outside her residence in Tbilisi on May 9, 2024. — AFP

Pelosi's husband's attacker jailed for 30 years

SAN FRANCISCO: A man who attacked the elderly husband of former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi with a hammer was sentenced Friday to 30 years in prison. David DePape was convicted last year of breaking into the couple's San Francisco home and bludgeoning Paul Pelosi in a horrifying attack captured on police bodycam. At the time

of the October 2022 assault, Democrat Nancy Pelosi was second in line to the presidency and a regular target of outlandish far-right conspiracy theories. Jurors in his trial last year heard how DePape - a Canadian former nudist activist who supported himself with occasional carpentry work - had initially planned to target Nancy Pelosi, planning to smash her kneecaps if she did not admit to her party's "lies." On arriving at their home armed with rope, gloves and duct tape, DePape instead encountered her then-82-year-old husband, and kept asking, "Where's Nancy?" During what DePape told officers was a "pretty amicable" conversation with Paul Pelosi, the husband managed to call for help from law enforcement officers. Moments later when police

arrived DePape hit Pelosi with a hammer before officers rushed at him and took the weapon away. Pelosi was knocked unconscious and had his skull fractured. He spent almost a week in a hospital, where he underwent surgery. Nancy Pelosi was not at home the night of the attack. Prosecutors had asked the federal court in San Francisco to sentence DePape to 40 years in prison. In the lead up to Friday's sentencing, Nancy Pelosi had asked the judge to impose a "very long" sentence for an attack that "has had a devastating effect on three generations of our family." "Even now, eighteen months after the home invasion and assault, the signs of blood and break-in are impossible to avoid. "Our home remains a heartbreaking crime scene," she wrote, according to court documents cited by

the San Francisco Chronicle. On Friday her office said the family was proud of Paul Pelosi "and his tremendous courage in saving his own life on the night of the attack and in testifying in this case." DePape had pleaded not guilty to charges that included assault on a family member of a US official, and attempted kidnapping of a US official. While not denying the attack, his defense rested on contesting federal prosecutors' claims that he had targeted Nancy Pelosi in her official capacity. Instead, his lawyers argued that DePape was driven to target a number of prominent liberal figures, due to his exposure to a web of obscure conspiracy theories. In social media posts, DePape shared QAnon theories and false claims that the last US election was stolen. — AFP

International

Flash floods kill 50 in Afghanistan

Over 2,000 houses destroyed, thousands of homes and businesses damaged

KABUL, Afghanistan: Flash flooding has killed at least 50 people in western Afghanistan, provincial police said Saturday, with some reaching safety on higher ground mere minutes before the water hit. The floods on Friday also destroyed about 2,000 houses, and damaged thousands more homes and businesses, Ghor police spokesman Abdul Rahman Badri said in a statement.

The fresh flooding in the country - which has experienced above-average rainfall this spring - comes after flash floods on May 10 in northern Baghlan province washed away hundreds. Survivors there were still searching for missing relatives days after the disaster. "Fifty residents of Ghor province were killed by the floods on Friday and a number of others are missing," Badri said. "These terrible floods have also killed thousands of cattle... They have destroyed hundreds of hectares of agricultural land, hundreds of bridges and culverts, and destroyed thousands of trees."

A resident of Firozkoh district in Ghor told AFP he and his family raced to higher ground when they were alerted by the sound of aerial firing and urgent warnings over mosque loudspeakers of oncoming flash floods. "Within five minutes of our escape, a huge and horrible flash flood came and washed away everything. I watched the flood destroy my house with my own eyes," Zahir Zahid told AFP over the phone. "Women and children, everyone was crying," he said. "In our area, around a hundred houses have been washed away by the flood, nothing is left, the flood has taken everything away."

Obaidullah Muradian, the head of the province's disaster management department, said it was an "emergency situation". The floods hit several districts in the province, including the capital Chaghcharan, where the streets "are full of mud", he said, adding that victims were in need of shelter, food and water.

The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) and Taliban officials said more than 300 people died as a result of the flood disaster earlier this month, which left homes and roads coated in thick mud.

The destruction of roads and bridges hampered rescue efforts, with United Nations agencies and Taliban authorities warning the death tolls would rise. Afghanistan, which is "exceptionally vulnerable to flooding", has seen above-average rainfall this spring, Mohammad Assem Mayar, a water resource management expert, said in a recent Afghanistan Analysts Network report.

From mid-April to early May, flash flooding and other floods had left about 100 people dead in 10 of Afghanistan's provinces, authorities said. Farmland has been swamped in a country where 80 percent of the more than 40 million people depend on agriculture to survive. The rains come after a prolonged drought in Afghanistan, which is one of the least prepared nations to tackle climate change impacts, according to experts. The country, ravaged by four decades of war, is also one of the world's poorest. The WFP warned that the recent floods have compounded an already dire humanitarian situation. — AFP



CHAGHCHARAN, Afghanistan: Afghan residents clean debris and salvage their belongings after flash floods following heavy rainfall at a damaged house in Firozkoh, Ghor province on May 18, 2024. — AFP

Bodies of US and Nepali climbers recovered

KATHMANDU: A team of mountaineers has retrieved the bodies of a US climber and her Nepali guide who were killed in an avalanche on Mount Shishapangma in Tibet last year, organizers said Saturday.

Mount Shishapangma is one of the highest mountains in the world, at 8,027 meters (26,335 feet), and is located entirely within Chinese territory. In October last year, an avalanche on the mountain killed two US climbers and their Nepali guides. Nirmal Purja of Elite Exped, a firm that organizes expeditions, said Saturday it had retrieved the bodies of American Anna Gutu and her Nepali guide Mingmar Sherpa.

"Earlier this week, we were able to climb on Shishapangma and were able to bring them down the mountain and cross the border," he said on Instagram. "From there we brought them to Kathmandu and onward to be reunited with their families." China has closed Shishapangma expeditions this year, but the Elite Exped team was given a permit for this mission.

The bodies of the other two, American Gina Marie Ruzicidlo and her record-holding guide Tenjen "Lama" Sherpa are still missing. Tenjen Sherpa set the record last year for the fastest summit of all 14 of the world's 8,000-metre (26,000-foot) mountains alongside Norway's Kristin Harila.

Harila said on Instagram Friday that she was in Nepal for the "search and repatriation" of her climbing partner and Ruzicidlo but did not get a permit. "I am so disappointed and feel totally empty in this situation," she said. "We need a closure. But unfortunately, not now, not this time." — AFP

New Caledonia 'under siege'

NOUMEA, France: French Pacific territory New Caledonia was "under siege" Saturday, the mayor of its capital Noumea said, with another person killed in rioting that has left six dead over six days. Anger is still high over a contested voting reform, with Noumea mayor Sonia Lagarde telling news channel BFMTV "we're far from getting back to calm" even after the arrival of hundreds of military and police reinforcements.

Saturday's deadly incident occurred in the archipelago's northern Kailash-Gomen area, General Nicolas Mattheos said, with two other men wounded.

An informed source said the dead man and one of the injured were a father and son trying to cross a barricade erected by rioters. Hundreds of heavily armed French soldiers and police on Saturday patrolled Noumea, where streets were filled with debris.

"Today, the rule of law, security for citizens, are not back in place everywhere in (New) Caledonia," said

Philippe Blaise, vice-president of the territory's southern province.

AFP reporters in the city's Magenta district saw vehicles and buildings burned, with a phalanx of riot police on the scene trying to reassert government control. Overnight, residents reported hearing gunfire, helicopters and "massive explosions" - what seemed to be gas canisters blowing up inside a building that was set alight. For days Helene, 42, has been manning makeshift barricades in shifts with neighbors as they waited for hundreds of French security forces being flown 17,000 kilometers (10,600 miles) to impose order. "At night we hear shooting, and things going off," she told AFP. "Helicopters, and military planes landing - which is sweet music to our ears."

For almost a week, the usually unhurried oceanside city has been convulsed. Two gendarmes and three other people - all Indigenous Kanaks - have also been killed. The unrest has been blamed on economic malaise, social tensions and - above all - a political fight between mostly Indigenous pro-independence activists and Paris authorities. French officials have accused a separatist group known as



NOUMEA, France: People wait in line to buy provisions from a supermarket along a street blocked by debris and burnt out items following overnight unrest in the Magenta district of Noumea, France's Pacific territory of New Caledonia, on May 18, 2024. — AFP

CCAT of being behind the riots. Ten activists accused of organizing the violence have been placed under house arrest, according to authorities. The territory is "on a destructive path", warned local minister Vaimu'a Muliva, telling those involved "you are only punishing yourselves."

CCAT on Friday called for "a time of calm to break the spiral of vio-

lence". Despite that appeal, 81-year-old Noumea resident Annie also reported hearing loud explosions during the night. She said the week's violence was worse than that seen during the tumultuous 1980s, a time of political killings and hostage-taking euphemistically referred to as "The Events". "At the time, there weren't as many weapons," she said. — AFP

Health outlook of Slovak PM Fico 'positive'

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia: Slovakia's health minister said Saturday the prognosis for Prime Minister Robert Fico was "positive" after an assassination attempt

as a court put the suspected gunman in pre-trial detention. Fico has been in hospital since Wednesday when a lone gunman shot him four times, including in the abdomen. He underwent a five-hour surgery on Wednesday and another surgery on Friday, both at a hospital in the central Slovak city of Banska Bystrica.

"Yesterday's surgery, which took two hours, contributed to a positive prognosis of the prime minister's health condition," Health Minister Zuzana Dol-

inkova told reporters.

"The prime minister's condition is stable, but despite this it's still serious," she added. The suspected gunman, identified by Slovak media as 71-year-old poet Juraj Cintula, was placed in pre-trial detention by a special penal court in Pezinok northeast of the capital Bratislava on Saturday. "The reason... is concerns about a potential escape or that the criminal activity may continue," court spokeswoman Katarina Kudja-

kova told AFP. The decision followed a request from a prosecutor made Friday. Cintula had been charged with a pre-meditated murder attempt earlier. Fico was shot as he was walking to greet supporters after a government meeting in the central mining town of Handlova.

Interior Minister Matus Sutaj Estok said earlier that if one of the shots "went just a few centimetres higher, it would have hit the prime minister's liver". — AFP

Rafah rocked by Zionist brutality...

Continued from Page 1

The army said troops in Gaza had recovered late Thursday the bodies of four captives whom it said had been killed on Oct 7. The Zionist entity has vowed to defeat remaining Hamas forces in Rafah, which it says is the last bastion of the Iran-backed group. The looming Zionist assault has prompted nearly 640,000 of the 1.4 million people who had been sheltering in the southern city to flee to other areas, the UN has said.

Palestinian sources in Rafah said Zionist forces were operating in the city's Al-Salam and Jenina neighborhoods as well as on the Philadelphia route along the Egyptian border. "Troops are advancing and retreating around these areas," a security source said. Cairo, which has been involved in mediation efforts during the war, says a potential Zionist takeover of Philadelphia could violate its landmark 1979 peace deal with Egypt.

In northern Gaza's Beit Lahia, witnesses reported air strikes near Kamal Adwan hospital on Saturday. The hospital's director Hussam Abu Safiya said Friday the facility had received "large numbers" of casualties from nearby Jabalia and was running low on supplies. The fuel aid that had reached the hospital was "barely enough for a few days", Abu Safiya told AFP. The World Health Organization has received no medical supplies in Gaza since the Rafah operation began on May 6, spokesman Tarik Jasarevic said Friday.



GAZA: Children stand near a crater caused by Zionist bombardment in a street in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on May 18, 2024. — AFP

Kuwait demands action on POWs...

Continued from Page 1

international community to adopt a renewable mechanism to "move this file forward"

This multiparty operation has so far failed to identify the remains of half of the prisoners and missing persons, he said, stressing that the operation must continue. Bannai stressed the necessity that the Security Council work out a mechanism to accelerate the search, proposing the assignment of a senior-level coordinator for this file, as the 1284 UNSG Security Council Resolution of 1999 stipulates.

He lauded the intensive efforts that had been exerted to collect information and evidence for preparing the 40th report on the issue for the UN Secretary-General, who is concerned with the file of the missing Kuwaitis, third-country citizens and Kuwaiti properties, including the national archives, in line with the 4th article of Resolution 2107 of 2013. He acclaimed the performance of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and affirmed Kuwait's support for completing its tasks of resolving pending matters, namely the file of the prisoners and the missing, during its work period that expires in Dec 2025.

Bannai expressed hope that all pending files with

Iraq would be worked out during the mission's set action period and appealed to the concerned authorities in Iraq to continue efforts at this level. Moreover, the Kuwaiti delegate indicated that in the event all these files have not been tackled for good, "we all ought to look together for other options". He reiterated Kuwait's affirmation with respect to the necessity that Iraq's sovereignty and decisions be respected concerning the UNAMI presence in the country.

Kuwait reserves the utter right regarding the file of the prisoners, the missing and the properties, he stressed. Kuwait, during its non-permanent membership in the UNSC (2018-2019), pushed for the adoption of Resolution 2474, with the participation of 68 states, he said, noting that this resolution affirms the necessity that states need not deviate attention from prisoners' issues in armed strife. He finally underscored the necessity to maintain the UN follow-up on the events in this vein through the daily regular reports, filed with the UN Secretary-General, until locating the last remains.

Meanwhile, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Iraq called on Baghdad to double its efforts to speed up settling the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives and dossiers. "As I said last time, swifter progress is needed," Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, also head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, said in a briefing to the special UN Security Council session on Iraq. — KUNA

Muslim professionals quit 'hostile' France...

Continued from Page 1

pregnant wife were planning to emigrate to "a more peaceful society" in southeast Asia. He said he would miss France's "sublime" cuisine and the queues outside the bakeries. But "we're suffocating in France", said the business school graduate with a five-figure monthly salary. He described wanting to leave "this ambient gloom", in which television news channels seem to target all Muslims as scapegoats.

The tech employee, who moved to Paris after growing up in its lower-income suburbs, said he has been living in the same block of flats for two years. "But still they ask me what I'm doing inside my building," he said. "It's so humiliating. This constant

humiliation is even more frustrating as I contribute very honestly to this society as someone with a high income who pays a lot of taxes," he added.

A 1978 French law bans collecting data on a person's race, ethnicity or religion, which makes it difficult to have broad statistics on discrimination. But a young person "perceived as black or Arab" is 20 times more likely to face an identity check than the rest of the population, France's rights ombudsman found in 2017. The Observatory for Inequalities says that racism is on the decline in France, with 60 percent of French people declaring they are "not at all racist".

But still, it adds, a job candidate with a French name has a 50 percent better chance of being called by an employer than one with a North African one. A third professional, a 30-year-old Franco-Algerian with two masters degrees from top schools, told AFP he was leaving in June for a job in Dubai because France had become "complicated". — AFP

International

North Korea confirms missile launch, vows to bolster nuclear force

Pyongyang tests accuracy and reliability of its 'autonomous navigation system'

SEOUL: North Korea has test-fired a tactical ballistic missile equipped with a "new autonomous navigation system", state media said Saturday, with leader Kim Jong Un vowing to boost the country's nuclear force. Kim oversaw the Friday test-launch into the East Sea, also known as the Sea of Japan, on a mission to evaluate the "accuracy and reliability of the autonomous navigation system", Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

The launch was the latest in a string of ever more sophisticated tests by North Korea, which has fired off cruise missiles, tactical rockets and hypersonic weapons in recent months, in what the nuclear-armed, UN-sanctioned country says is a drive to upgrade its defenses. The Friday launch came hours after leader Kim's powerful sister Kim Yo Jong denied allegations by Seoul and Washington that Pyongyang is shipping weapons to Russia for use in its war in Ukraine.

Seoul's military on Friday described the test as "several flying objects presumed to be short-range ballistic missiles" from North Korea's eastern Wonsan area into waters off its coast. The suspected missiles travelled around 300 kilometers (186 miles) before splashing down in waters between South Korea and Japan, the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Seoul said.

"The accuracy and reliability of the autonomous navigation system were verified through the test fire," Pyongyang's KCNA said Saturday, adding leader Kim expressed "great satisfaction" over the launch.

In a separate report released on Saturday, KCNA said Kim visited a military production facility the previous day and urged for "more rapidly bolstering the nuclear force" of the nation "without halt and hesitation". During the visit, he said the "enemies would be afraid of and dare not to play with fire only when they witness the nuclear combat posture of our state", according to KCNA. Pyongyang's nuclear force "will meet a very important change and occupy a remarkably raised strategic position" when its munitions production plan, aimed to be completed by 2025, is carried out, it added.

Seoul and Washington have accused North Korea of sending arms to Russia, which would violate rafts of United Nations sanctions on both countries, with experts saying the recent spate of testing may be of



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspecting a test fire of a tactical ballistic missile into which a new autonomous navigation system at an undisclosed location in North Korea. — AFP

weapons destined for use on battlefields in Ukraine. North Korea is barred by UN sanctions from any tests using ballistic technology, but its key ally Moscow used its UN Security Council veto in March to effectively end UN monitoring of violations, for which Pyongyang has specifically thanked Russia.

But leader Kim's sister Kim Yo Jong said Friday that Pyongyang had "no intention to export our military technical capabilities to any country", adding that the North's priority was "to make the war readiness and war deterrent of our army more perfect in quality and quantity". She accused Seoul and Washington of "misleading the public opinion" with their allegations that Pyongyang was transferring arms to Russia. The Friday launches come as Russian leader Vladimir Putin was in China on Friday, the final day of a visit aiming to promote crucial trade with Beijing - North Korea's most important ally - and win greater support for his

war effort in Ukraine. North Korea's latest weapons tests were likely intended to attract the attention of Putin while he was in China, said Ahn Chan-il, a defector-turned-researcher who runs the World Institute for North Korea Studies. The North would benefit greatly from an expected visit by Putin to Pyongyang, and "they want their country to be used as a military logistics base during Russia's ongoing war (in Ukraine)", he told AFP.

Yang Moo-jin, president of the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said: "China and Russia's irresponsible handling of North Korea, riding on the new Cold War dynamics, is further encouraging Pyongyang's nuclear armament." Inter-Korean relations are at one of their lowest points in years, with Pyongyang declaring Seoul its "principal enemy". It has jettisoned agencies dedicated to reunification and threatened war over "even 0.001 mm" of territorial infringement. — AFP

Spanish authorities were therefore coordinating with an EU delegation in the capital. "They will remain on the ground until all the bodies are repatriated and the last Spaniard leaves Kabul," said Albares.

According to hospital sources in Bamiyan, the wounded were from Norway, Australia, Lithuania and Spain. "They were roaming in the bazaar when they were attacked," the interior ministry spokesman Qani added. "Seven suspects have been arrested of which one is wounded, the investigation is still going on and the Islamic Emirate is seriously looking into the matter."

It is not yet clear how many shooters were involved. The European Union condemned the attack "in the strongest terms". The UN mission in Afghanistan, UNAMA, said it was "deeply shocked and appalled by the deadly terrorist attack" in Bamiyan, adding that it was providing assistance after the incident.

The Taliban government has yet to be officially recognized by any government. It has, however, supported a fledgling tourism sector, with more than 5,000 foreign tourists visiting Afghanistan in 2023, according to official figures. Western nations advise against all travel to the country, warning of kidnap and attack risks, and tourists holiday without consular support. Alongside security concerns, the country has limited road infrastructure and a dilapidated health service.

Multiple foreign tourism companies offer package tours to Afghanistan, often including visits to highlights in cities such as Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif and Bamiyan. Bamiyan is Afghanistan's top tourist destination, known for turquoise lakes and striking mountains. It was once home to the giant Buddha statues that were blown up by the Taliban in 2001 during their previous rule. The number of bombings and suicide attacks in Afghanistan has fallen dramatically since the Taliban authorities took power and deadly attacks on foreigners are rare. However, a number of armed groups, including the Islamic State group, remain a threat. The jihadist group has waged a campaign of attacks on foreign interests in a bid to weaken the Taliban government, targeting the Pakistani and Russian embassies as well as Chinese businessmen. — AFP

Three Spaniards, three Afghans killed in Afghan shooting

KABUL: The bodies of three Spanish tourists and three Afghans shot dead while visiting a market in Afghanistan were transported to the capital along with multiple wounded, the Taliban government said Saturday. The group was fired on while walking through the bazaar in the mountainous city of Bamiyan in central Afghanistan, around 180 kilometers (110 miles) from the capital Kabul, on Friday. "All dead bodies have been shifted to Kabul and are in the forensic department and the wounded are also in Kabul. Both dead and wounded include women," the government's interior ministry spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani told AFP.

"Among the eight wounded, of whom four are foreigners, only one elderly foreign woman is not in a very stable situation," Qani said that the death toll included two Afghan civilians and one Taliban member. A diplomatic source told AFP the foreign nationals had been part of an organized tour of 13 people, all of whom were evacuated along with the wounded to Kabul overnight by road, since bad weather made an airlift impossible.

Spain's government on Friday announced that three of the dead were Spanish tourists, adding that at least one other Spanish national was wounded. "Overwhelmed by the news of the murder of Spanish tourists in Afghanistan," Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez posted on social media platform X.

The bodies would likely be brought back to Spain on Sunday, according to the country's foreign minister Jose Manuel Albares, who spoke on Spanish public television TVE. He said one of the wounded had already undergone surgery in Kabul. The Spanish embassy was evacuated in 2021, along with other Western missions, after the Taliban took back control of Kabul, ending a bloody decades-long insurgency against foreign forces.



ARGO, Afghanistan: Afghan security personnel sit on a Ranger vehicle during destruction of the poppy fields in Argo district of Badakhshan province. — AFP



Tran Thanh Man, 61, was nominated as the new head of Vietnam's National Assembly. — AFP

Vietnam nominates security minister to be new president

BANGKOK: Vietnam's Communist Party has nominated public security minister To Lam to be the country's new president, state media said Saturday, after his predecessor resigned as part of a sweeping anti-graft purge. Thousands of people - including top officials and senior business leaders - have been caught up in the Southeast Asian country's "blazing furnace" crackdown on graft, led by Communist Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong.

The party's central committee agreed to "the nomination of Comrade To Lam, Politburo member, Minister of Public Security to be elected as President", the Vietnam News Agency reported.

Lam, 66, has been public security minister since 2016 and has taken a hard line on human rights movements in the communist country. His nomination follows Vo Van Thuong's resignation in March after just one year as president, becoming the latest high-profile leader to fall in the anti-corruption drive.

Tran Thanh Man, 61, was also nominated as the new head of Vietnam's National Assembly, state media said, becoming one of the country's four most powerful leaders. Man, currently the rubber-stamp National Assembly's deputy chairman, succeeds Vuong Dinh Hue, who asked to step down last month because of "violations and shortcomings". The nominations have been accepted by the party's central committee but will be officially voted in by the National Assembly, which is due to meet next week. All top leadership "must be truly united, truly exemplary, wholehearted and devoted to the common cause", VNA reported the central committee as saying.

On Thursday, Truong Thi Mai also resigned. She was the permanent member of the secretariat in the central party committee - the most important position in Vietnamese politics outside its four-pillar leadership structure. With the resignation of Mai, the once 18-strong politburo fell to 12 after also losing two presidents, the National Assembly chairman, a deputy prime minister and the head of the party's economic commission in the past 18 months.

However, the party said Thursday four new members had been appointed, including Bui Thi Minh Hoi, replacing Mai as the only woman in the politburo. The political upheaval is highly unusual in Vietnam, where for years all changes were carefully orchestrated with an emphasis on cautious stability. The anti-corruption drive has proved popular with the public. But analysts warn the turmoil may threaten the country's reputation for stability, which has helped it build a highly successful export-driven manufacturing economy, making products for major global brands. — AFP

News in Brief

Mumbai billboard owner nabbed

MUMBAI: Indian police have arrested the owner of a huge billboard that collapsed on a petrol station and killed 16 people in the financial capital Mumbai, media reports said. Another 75 people were rescued from underneath the wreckage of Monday's accident when the giant hoarding fell during fierce rain and dust storms that buffeted the coastal megacity. Police opened a culpable homicide case against the billboard's owner Bhavesh Bhande who fled Mumbai in the aftermath of the collapse. He was arrested late Thursday in the tourist city of Udaipur, around 800 kilometers (497 miles) to the north, police joint commissioner Lakhmi Gautam told The Indian Express. — AFP

Pope leads forum for peace

VERONA: Pope Francis presided over a forum for peace Saturday during a visit to Verona, home to the warring Montague and Capulet families in Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet". It was the second trip this month for the pontiff who has cut back his travel schedule for health reasons. "Peace will never be the result of mistrust, of walls, of weapons pointed at each other," the 87-year-old told the audience gathered in Verona's Arena, a 1st-century Roman amphitheatre. "We sow death, destruction, fear. Let us sow hope!" he told some 12,500 people present in the northern Italian city. — AFP

Poland to fortify eastern border

WARSAW: Poland will spend over 2.3 billion euros (\$2.5 billion) to fortify its eastern border, the EU's eastern flank, against potential enemies, Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on Saturday. "We have taken the decision to invest 10 billion zlotys for our security and above all to secure our eastern border," he said, calling the project an "eastern shield". Poland's eastern border includes Belarus, Ukraine and the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad. "The reinforcement of 400 kilometers (about 250 miles) of border with Russia and Belarus will be an element of dissuasion, a strategy to push back the war at our frontiers," he said, adding that the work had not started. — AFP

Turkey pardons seven generals

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has pardoned seven generals imprisoned for their role in the military coup that overthrew an Islamist government in 1997, according to decrees published in the official gazette. The decision cited the age and medical conditions of the generals, who were sentenced in 2018 after a trial full of twists and turns. The decrees were signed as a court in Ankara sentenced charismatic Kurdish leader Selahattin Demirtas to 42 years in prison for offences including undermining state unity. The main opposition CHP party, which made strong gains in municipal elections in late March, has long asked for the generals to be freed. Party leader Ozgur Ozel said on X, formerly Twitter, the decision was "late but just". — AFP

Mexican politician, wife slain

MEXICO CITY: A local politician and his wife were murdered in Mexico's Pacific coastal resort of Acapulco, his party said Friday - the latest victims of a wave of electoral violence. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) said Anibal Zuniga was standing in the June 2 elections to be a councilor in the municipality of Coyuca de Benitez in Guerrero state. The local prosecutor's office said it had opened a homicide investigation. According to Mexican media, the couple's dismembered bodies were found in bags in an abandoned vehicle. — AFP

Colombia transfers jail inmates

BOGOTA: About 15 inmates were transferred from a major Colombian prison on Friday, hours after the facility's director was gunned down on a street in the capital city, authorities said. Elmer Fernandez, who took charge of La Modelo prison in Bogota last month, was murdered late Thursday while traveling in an armored prison car. Fernandez had ordered guards to search cells and was killed after receiving a threatening note, Justice Minister Nestor Osuna told reporters. Local media said threats had come from an inmate who runs illegal businesses inside the prison. — AFP

EU military mission leaves Mali

DAKAR: The European Union's military training mission in Mali said Friday it had officially ended its 11-year presence in the jihadist-wracked country, after the bloc did not renew its mandate in early May. The 27-member bloc deployed the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) in 2013 to train and advise the West African country's armed forces in the face of rising jihadism since 2012. The mission had included up to 700 soldiers from some 20 European states, but numbers significantly reduced against a backdrop of diplomatic tensions between Bamako and Western partners. — AFP

SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2024

Higher US food prices lead to a shift in shopping habits

Food prices rose by 2.2% in the 12 months to April

FALLS CHURCH, United States: "I don't really shop for groceries as often as I used to," said Jasmine Reed, 32, outside a store in northern Virginia, as she explained the impact of higher food prices on her shopping habits. Consumer inflation data published Thursday showed that food prices rose by 2.2 percent in the 12 months to April - masking some sharp differences between items.

Eggs have plummeted by nine percent, according to the Department of Labor data, while the cost of butter jumped by 3.5 percent. Milk prices have also fallen by more than one percent and the cost of bread has ticked higher.

Inflation and the cost of essential items like food and gas will likely play an important role in November's presidential rematch between Joe Biden and his Republican rival Donald Trump, as both candidates have looked to talk up their economic records in office. Outside a grocery store in Falls Church, Virginia, on Friday, shoppers told AFP they had noticed an increase in the cost of everyday items in recent years - causing some to change their buying habits.

"If the groceries were cheaper, then I would definitely cook more," said Reed, who says she now eats out at restaurants much more. "For me it's the same, so I'd rather not waste time cooking," added Reed, who works as a teacher in nearby Fairfax.

"I keep hearing some things are coming down but I haven't seen it," Mary Joe, 66, told AFP. "Things have been expensive in general for a while now," said Gavi, a professional DJ and former US Marine Corps employee, who declined to give his last name. Gavi, who is vegan, says he has seen his weekly shop double, from around \$100 a week to \$200. "I don't really look at whether it's the bread, the sugar or the milk," he added. "I just see that it's all very inflated."

For former mechanic James Russell, also 66,



People shop at a supermarket in Montebello, California, on May 15, 2024. — AFP

higher fruit and vegetable prices have changed what he buys, and when. "I just see the prices keep increasing by 25 cents and 50 cents, and nothing's re-

ally easy anymore on your pocket," added Russell, who lives nearby. "I just go in there and just check the prices and get what I can get," he said. "Before I

wouldn't think about what I was putting in the cart," added Mary Joe, who also lives in the area. "And now it's like, do I really want this?" — AFP

Gulf Bank transforms all street ads into reusable bags

KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability, Gulf Bank has launched an ambitious initiative aimed at repurposing its street advertisements into reusable bags. This initiative underscores the Bank's dedication to promoting sustainable practices and reducing plastic waste.



Najla Al-Eisa

and recycled bags at most of its major events, including the recent event announcing the winner of the grand prize in the Al-Danah Millionaire Draw, valued at KD 2,000,000. This practice not only promotes the use of reusable bags but also raises awareness about the importance of sustainability.

A clear roadmap for sustainability

Al-Eisa affirmed that these initiatives unequivocally demonstrate Gulf Bank's firm commitment to incorporating sustainability principles. The Bank has outlined a clear roadmap and structural plan within its 2030 Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) sustainability strategy. This strategy is aimed at maintaining robust developments in sustainability across environmental, social, and governance levels through diverse initiatives strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally.

Leading the way to a sustainable future

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the future. The bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace, recognizing every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank ensures a simple and seamless banking experience while offering customers the choice of how and where to conduct their transactions.

Supporting Kuwait Vision 2035

Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it. Through its sustainability initiatives, Gulf Bank is setting a benchmark in the banking sector for environmental responsibility and sustainable practices.

4 Steps to Turn Street Advertisements into Reusable Bags



By repurposing street advertisements into reusable bags, Gulf Bank not only contributes to environmental sustainability but also inspires the community to adopt eco-friendly practices. This initiative is a testament to Gulf Bank's commitment to making a positive impact on the environment and leading the way toward a sustainable future.

Energy transition risks critical mineral shortage, says IEA

PARIS: The sharp drop in prices for minerals critical to the green energy transition is masking a looming shortage due to inadequate investment, the International Energy Agency said Friday. In its second annual review of the market for such critical materials, the IEA noted prices for minerals key for electric vehicles, wind turbines and solar panels fell back to pre-pandemic levels as supplies caught up with and surpassed demand.

While the price drops are good news for consumers, the Paris-based agency expressed concern it will deter investment needed to meet demand, which is set to soar as many nations try to phase out sales of new internal combustion engine cars in the next decade. The IEA, which advises advanced economies on energy policy, calculated that announced projects will be able to meet only 70 percent of copper and 50 percent of lithium requirements in 2035, in a scenario in which countries worldwide meet their national climate goals.

Both metals are key for manufacturing electric vehicles. "Secure and sustainable access to critical minerals is essential for smooth and affordable clean energy transitions," IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol said in a statement. "The world's appetite for technologies such as solar panels, electric cars and batteries is growing fast - but we cannot satisfy it without reliable and expanding supplies of critical minerals," he added.

The IEA forecasts the combined market size of key energy transition minerals is set to more than double to \$770 billion by 2040 as countries target net zero emissions by mid-century. It found only limited progress has been made in diversifying supplies, a key issue given the recent experience with the pandemic snarling supply chains and geopolitical tensions creating risks to access.

The IEA called for stepping up efforts to recycle materials, innovate and encourage behavioral changes in order to ease potential supply strains. It also said some \$800 billion of investment in mining is required by 2040 to put the world on track to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels. It warned, however, that "without the strong uptake of recycling and reuse, mining capital requirements would need to be one-third higher."

The report analyzed supply and geopolitical risks, as well as barriers to responding to supply disruptions, and exposure to environmental, social and governance (ESG) risks. The IEA said it found a "mixed picture" regarding ESG risks.

While progress has been made in terms of involving local communities and using renewable energy, it flagged a different picture for reducing waste, emissions and water consumption. But representatives of local communities warned the rush for critical minerals was already inflicting "serious costs" on indigenous people and their traditional lands, said Galina Angarova of the Buryat ethnic group from Siberia. "If we continue down the current path, we risk building the destruction of nature, biodiversity, and human rights" into the economy-wide shift away from fossil fuels, she told reporters. "We are on the cusp of the next industrial revolution and we have to do this right," said Angarova, who leads a coalition fighting for indigenous rights in the green transition. — AFP

A remarkable achievement in recycling
Najla Al-Eisa, Chief Marketing Officer at Gulf Bank, highlighted the progress, stating, "We have successfully converted 2,300 square meters of our street advertisements into reusable bags. This initiative reflects our long-term dedication to environmental protection and aims to shift societal norms towards embracing reusable bags." Al-Eisa emphasized the multi-step recycling process that minimizes materials used in the advertisements. The ads are sent to a specialized recycling company where they are cleaned, sterilized, and cut into various sizes before being transformed into stylish, reusable bags suitable for multiple uses.

Strengthening environmental commitment

This innovative approach enhances Gulf Bank's commitment to environmental preservation and demonstrates practical efforts to reduce plastic waste and reliance on single-use plastic bags, which have detrimental effects on wildlife and marine ecosystems. Al-Eisa highlighted the Bank's parallel initiative, launched earlier in the year, where approximately 100,000 reusable bags were distributed in collaboration with five cooperative societies. Each co-op provided 20,000 bags to its members, reinforcing the Bank's dedication to sustainability.

Promoting reusable bags at Gulf Bank's events

Gulf Bank ensures the distribution of reusable

Boeing shareholders back outgoing CEO

NEW YORK: Boeing shareholders voted Friday to back outgoing CEO Dave Calhoun's pay deal and reelection to the board, in an endorsement of company leadership as it faces heavy scrutiny over safety problems.

The company announced the preliminary vote results at its annual meeting, saying all 11 directors had been reelected and that shareholders backed Calhoun's planned \$33 million compensation package. Advisory services firm Glass Lewis had urged shareholders to reject Calhoun's nomination, while Investor Shareholder Services (ISS) had recommended a "no" vote on Calhoun's compensation package.

The virtual meeting comes on the heels of a number of crises facing the storied planemaker. Boeing has faced serious questions following a near-catastrophic Alaska Airlines flight in January that necessitated an emergency landing of a 737 MAX after a panel on the fuselage blew out mid-air.

On Tuesday, the Department of Justice said Boeing had breached a 2021 criminal settlement over two fatal 737 MAX crashes in 2018 and 2019, opening the company up to possible prosecution. In commu-



WASHINGTON: Boeing CEO Dave Calhoun speaks with reporters on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, on January 24, 2024, before meeting with a group of senators. — AFP

nications to investors ahead of the annual meeting, Boeing emphasized its aggressive response to the Alaska Airlines incident that included a leadership shakeup announced in late March.

On March 25, Boeing said Calhoun would step down at the end of 2024. The company also named former Qualcomm CEO Steve Mollenkopf as the new chairman who will oversee the executive search. "The months and years ahead are critically import-

ant for our company as we take the necessary steps to regain the trust lost in recent times to get back on track and perform like the company we all know Boeing can and must be," Mollenkopf said at the outset of the meeting.

Mollenkopf said he has been meeting with investors, customers and other shareholders, expressing confidence that "we're going to find the right person to lead this company." He did not give a timetable for announcing a new CEO. Mollenkopf and Calhoun took questions on safety, executive compensation and other topics, but the queries were read by a company official in a heavily managed process in which actual shareholders did not speak. Late Friday, Boeing disclosed in a securities filing that about 22 percent of the shares cast voted against Calhoun's reelection to the board, while 36 percent voted against the pay package.

Glass Lewis had argued that shareholders should use the annual meeting to send a message to Boeing. "Shareholders will be sending a clear indication of discontent regarding the company's recent oversight and handling of safety issues and safety culture," said a report that urged investors to vote against the reelection of Calhoun, and Akhil Johri and David Joyce, who chair the audit and aerospace safety committees respectively. ISS meanwhile had urged a no vote on Calhoun's executive pay package. — AFP

Business



Adel Alghanim family.



The all-new MG7 sedan.

MG Adel Alghanim Automotive unveils a all-new MG7 sedan

A bold new arrival in Kuwait

KUWAIT: MG Adel Alghanim Automotive has announced the launch of its all-new MG7 sedan, representing a significant expansion of the British-born brand's carline-up. The MG7 exudes sophistication with its striking design, cutting-edge technology, and performance-driven features. It is equipped with a choice of 1.5L and 2.0L Turbo petrol engines. The all-new MG7 promises an exhilarating driving experience and will be available to customers in Kuwait from May, 2024.

Prices for the new MG7 start from KD 7,199, ensuring the new model offers remarkable value for its class while combining economy, style, and performance with innovative features. Additionally, customers will benefit from a generous 6-year/200,000 km manufacturer's warranty, providing exceptional peace of mind.

The MG7 introduces to the MG lineup the first-ever large sedan, meticulously engineered for precision and elegance. It is complemented by a streamlined aerodynamic design that ensures it stands out on the road, while seamlessly merging sophistication with style. Elevating its appearance even further, the top three models feature sporty red calipers and 19-inch wheels, enhancing the vehicle's dynamic look.

The eye-catching design elements continue inside the cabin where you are greeted with Storm Eye integrated motorsport seats, meticulously designed for ergonomic support. The top trim model features seats crafted with luxury silk Napa leather, micro fiber suede, and European textured piping for added sophistication and an elevated feel. The driver's seat offers convenient 6-way electric adjustment for personalized comfort and ease of maneuver.

This level of comfort extends to the driving capabilities of the MG7, with features that have been designed

- The unveiling of the all-new MG7 took place at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre in the presence of the President of Adel Alghanim Automotive Marzouq Adel Alghanim
- The MG7 offers cutting-edge race mode capabilities, complemented by luxurious details including a sleek aerodynamic design and integrated motorsport seats
- Available in both 1.5L and 2.0L Turbo petrol engines, offering drivers a powerful and an immersive driving experience, backed by a generous 6-year/200,000 km manufacturer's warranty

to elevate the experience behind the wheel. Depending on the trim, drivers can enjoy features including a speed dial and supersport mode button conveniently located on the steering wheel, providing an immersive X-mode racing experience tailored for precision driving. Its 10.25-inch front screen complemented by a 12.3-inch infotainment display caters for an immersive drive. The top-tier model comes equipped with a premium Bose sound system, featuring 9 speakers and central point virtual sound technology allowing for an exceptional listener experience.

In addition to its technological features, the MG7 offers a wide range of active safety features, ensuring peace of mind on the road for all occupants. Among the advanced driver-assistance systems available, depending on the model, are Front Collision Warning, Emergency Lane Keep System, and Adaptive Cruise Control.

The 1.5L Turbo MG7 features a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission, offering 188HP. Coming in DEL and STD trims, the STD trim is equipped with a PVC foaming steering wheel and rear cameras, while the DEL boasts a leather steering wheel and a 360-degree camera. The DEL model also offers a panoramic sunroof, which can be adjusted using the smart key.

On the other hand, the 2.0L Turbo variant comes with a 9-speed automatic transmission, providing seamless power delivery. It is also available in COM and G.DEL trims and the 2.0L variant offers 261 HP. The G.DEL trim includes a panoramic sun roof, also operable via the smart key with the added convenience of an electric tailgate function and an active retractable tail fin, enhancing its sporty appearance. The COM trim features a leather steering wheel, while the G.DEL offers a premium Napa Leather wheel. Additionally, the

COM model is equipped with a rearview camera, whereas the highest trim G.DEL model features a 360-degree camera for enhanced visibility.

MG cars have proven their strong presence on the roads and established their leading position among their competitors, which contributed to recording a significant increase in the volume of MG sales, as they topped second place in sales for the month of March 2024.

It is worth noting that MG Adel Alghanim Automotive currently has three showrooms distributed in the Al-Rai, Shuwaikh and Jahra areas, in addition to 13 maintenance centers throughout Kuwait.

The company offers a wide range of MG cars, including sedans, sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and electric cars, which are distinguished by their elegant designs, advanced technologies, and competitive prices, making them an ideal choice for customers looking for quality and distinctive value. MG cars have won praise and admiration thanks to the diverse range of options they offer. They have also succeeded in establishing their position thanks to their flexible customization options that meet the various needs and preferences of drivers. In his speech, the President of Adel Alghanim Automotive, Marzouq Adel Alghanim, emphasized the importance of this occasion, stating: "We at Alghanim Sons Group believe in the importance of serving our customers in various regions, and today we are pleased to share with our customers this significant occasion for MG cars with our valued customers. All-new MG models will benefit from the company's famous 6-year or 200,000 km warranty, to provide complete peace of mind to the customer along with a 3-year or 100,000 km warranty on the car's front shock absorbers."

Burgan Bank upgrades iconic 'BuBa' Kids account to 'awal'

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced the launch of its latest interest-bearing savings account "awal", which was developed and tailored specifically for children up to the age of 14. Building on the great success of its predecessor, "BuBa" savings account, awal aims to encourage Burgan's young customers to adopt the savings culture and learn to manage their spending wisely. This comes as part of Burgan's commitment to addressing the varying banking needs of its customers, as well as spreading essential financial literacy among members of the community, beginning with children.

In light of the awal account launch, Nasser Al-Qaisi, General Manager - Retail Banking at Burgan Bank, said: "The ability to manage finances in a sound and sustainable manner is a vital skill that everyone needs; however, like any skill, the earlier one practices it, the sooner they can master it. Today, we are reintroducing the BuBa account as awal, which comes with a wider range of features that enable our young customers to gain a hands-on banking experience in a safe and controlled context, thereby starting them on their journey of financial literacy and management."



Nasser Al-Qaisi

As a committed contributor to the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) banking awareness campaign - which was launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), along with the support of Kuwaiti banks - Burgan Bank continues to innovate new and engaging means to spreading and instilling the fundamentals of financial literacy across Kuwaiti society. "Today, financial literacy among the younger generations is an important area of action that will have a huge impact on their lives as adults, and we believe that awal has an imperative role to play in encouraging them to adopt the saving culture, setting them up for a future of success and financial independence," added Al-Qaisi. "Our team continues to study the market and pinpoint gaps that call to be met, to which we instantly respond by developing new innovative products and services that bridge these gaps."

The newly launched awal account, which can



be opened at any of Burgan's branches across the country, requires a minimum account opening deposit of KD 10, with no minimum amount for the account to start yielding interest. By transferring funds to their awal account, young customers can benefit from a free monthly standing order, as well as exciting year-long promotions. Furthermore, they can apply for the account's special banking card, which comes in a distinctive design that is fitting for its young card holders.

The awal account follows in the footsteps of several notable Burgan savings accounts that cater to the varying needs of customers across different market segments. Topping these accounts is Kanz, Burgan's flagship draw and savings account, which owes its wide popularity to its outstanding prizes, including the KD 1,500,000 annual draw prize, the KD 500,000 semi-annual draw prize, and the KD 2,000 draw prize, which goes out to 20 lucky winners every month.

a quarter of China's gross domestic product but the real estate sector has been under unprecedented strain since 2020, when authorities tightened developers' access to credit in a bid to reduce mounting debt. Major companies have teetered since then, while falling prices have dissuaded consumers from investing in property. The crisis has put huge pressure on leaders to come up with a plan to help the sector and avoid it spreading to other parts of the economy, but most measures have left investors disappointed.

Officials announced the widest-ranging measures yet at a meeting on Friday attended by regulators, representatives of top banks, local governments and the property market.

No details were provided on how many houses would be bought. State media also cited the central bank and the National Financial Regulatory Administration as saying they would cut the minimum down payment rate for first-time homebuyers to 15 percent, one of the country's lowest-ever rates. The rate will be cut to 25 percent for second-home purchases, it added.

Pantheon Macro economist Duncan Wrigley gave the news a cautious welcome. "China's new property support measures are helpful, but no magic bullet," he said. "The new measures... are a step in the right direction and should speed up the bottoming out of upper-tier city housing markets, but the policy funding amount announced so far is disappointing and will probably need to be increased." - AFP

Dow finishes above 40,000 as rally pauses in Europe

NEW YORK: The Dow scored its first-ever finish above 40,000 points Friday in a flourishing end to a week of records after a subdued session in Europe and a rally in some Asian markets. "We made a breakout to new record high," Karl Haeling from LBBW told AFP.

"The market is just choosing to consolidate, which is probably a healthy thing," he continued. "Because it's racing and getting too exuberant." The blue-chip index mustered only a 0.3 percent gain, but it was enough to finish at 40,003.59.

The S&P 500 also eked out an increase, while the Nasdaq finished narrowly negative. Global indices had earlier this week hit fresh highs on hopes of interest-rate cuts in the United States and elsewhere on cooler inflation. But European markets were hit Friday by a round of profit-taking. "One day stock markets are making record highs and banking on rate cuts, the next stocks are giving back gains and rate cut expectations are being pared back," noted XTB analyst Kathleen Brooks.



NEW YORK: Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange during morning trading on May 17, 2024 in New York City. Wall Street stocks opened little changed May 17 after pulling back from a record run where the Dow exceeded 40,000 points for the first time. - AFP



Back in Asia, Shanghai piled on one percent and Hong Kong extended its recent advance, with shares in Chinese property developers soaring. Beijing announced it would cut the minimum down payment rate for first-time homebuyers and suggested the government could buy up commercial real estate.

Property and construction accounts for more than

Russia seizes Deutsche Bank, UniCredit assets

MOSCOW: A Russian court has ruled that Deutsche Bank and UniCredit's assets in the country are to be seized, documents showed. European banks have largely exited Russia after Moscow launched its offensive on Ukraine in 2022.

A court in Saint Petersburg ruled in favor of seizing 239 million euros (\$260 million) from Deutsche Bank, documents dated May 16 showed. The same day, it ordered the seizure of around 463 million euros of assets belonging to Italy's UniCredit. — AFP

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Business

NBK Wealth strengthens its position in Saudi as top provider of wealth management solutions

Company's AUM reached SAR 3.1 billion by the end of 2023

KUWAIT: NBK Wealth - Saudi Arabia continues to strengthen its position as a premier provider of wealth management solutions in the Kingdom. This progress is fueled by its exceptional performance and unwavering commitment to strategic objectives set since its inception six years ago, aiming for significant expansion within the Saudi market.

Further attesting to NBK Wealth Group's achievements in strengthening its foothold in the Saudi market, NBK Wealth - Saudi Arabia clinched the top spot as the company with the highest Assets Under Management (AUM) in the fourth quarter of 2023 among financial institutions licensed by the Saudi Capital Market Authority (CMA).

As outlined in a comprehensive report compiled by CMA regarding the operations of its licensed fi-



Musaad F Al-Sudairy

- The company distinguished itself as the frontrunner in Saudi Arabia, experiencing an extraordinary surge in Assets Under Management (AUM) with an impressive growth rate of 1,004% in 4Q2023
- This leap underscores NBK Group's strategic vision, affirming Saudi Arabia's role as a key market within the wealth management sector

ment to becoming the premier and trusted option for wealth management solutions in the Saudi market. This objective is pursued through a diverse array of operations spanning wealth management, asset management, investment services, and brokerage.

Moreover, Al-Sudairy added that the significant increase in the company's assets under management clearly demonstrates the confidence that the company holds in the Saudi market. This confidence is a result of its consistent delivery of distinctive and innovative products and services to high-net-worth individuals and families since its establishment in 2018. Further-

more, it underscores the prudent strategic vision of NBK Group in founding the company, recognizing the Saudi market as a promising arena for growth and prosperity in the realm of wealth management.

Al-Sudairy further highlighted that the overall strength of NBK Wealth Group derives from its association with NBK Group, a renowned financial organization, both locally and internationally. He emphasized that this connection serves as a driving force for NBK Wealth to enhance its performance and deliver innovative services and products that exceed customer expectations.

"We don't provide off-the-shelf solutions; instead, we craft personalized wealth management strategies aligned with each client's unique financial goals and aspirations. Our dedicated team of wealth management experts offers a suite of outstanding benefits, guaranteeing our clients an unparalleled experience," he said.

Global presence

Al-Sudairy emphasized that NBK Wealth Management is leveraging the expansion of NBK Wealth Group, which recently unveiled its new brand on a global scale through an extensive network of integrated operations spanning nine cities across five countries. He underscored that NBK Wealth includes NBK Capital, NBK Banque Privée (Suisse), National Bank of Kuwait (International) PLC, and Watani Financial Brokerage Company (WFBC), establishing itself as the largest entity in Kuwait and one of the largest in the MENA region in wealth management. With assets under management exceeding US\$20 billion as of last year's end, the entity stands as a formidable player in the industry.

NBK Wealth has secured a prominent standing by offering distinctive services that extend beyond traditional investment realms. These encompass asset management, trading, lending, deposits, financial advisory, and a spectrum of customized and innovative services tailored for high-net-worth individuals and families. This suite of offerings is delivered by a committed team of over 125 investment experts, traders, and 75 relationship managers, ensuring personalized attention and expertise.

The Group utilizes its deep market expertise, worldwide presence, and dedication to pioneering investment strategies to empower clients in realizing their long-term financial objectives with steadfast assurance. Meanwhile, NBK Wealth benefits from strategic partnerships with JPMorgan Asset Management and Investec, strengthening its service portfolio across various fronts, such as advisory services and the creation of innovative investment solutions.



ancial institutions in the fourth quarter of the previous year, Watani Wealth Management, a subsidiary of NBK Group, witnessed a remarkable surge in assets under management. The assets soared by an impressive 1,004 percent, growing from SAR 280.8 million at the end of the third quarter to SAR 3.1 billion by the conclusion of 2023.

Strategic overview

Musaad F Al-Sudairy, Board Member & Chief Executive Officer of Watani Wealth Management, said: "We are steadily moving towards strengthening our footprint in the Saudi market by offering a wide range of innovative and advanced solutions in wealth management."

Al-Sudairy emphasized the company's commit-

- The significant increase in our AUM reflects our confidence in the Saudi market
- We are persistently progressing towards strengthening our presence in the Saudi market by offering a diverse range of innovative solutions
- NBK Wealth tailors a customized strategy for each client based on their individual financial needs and objectives
- Our affiliation with NBK Group propels us to achieve heightened performance and innovate services and products that exceed customer expectations

UK government promises tax cuts if wins reelection

LONDON: British finance minister Jeremy Hunt said Friday his Conservative government would cut taxes should it win reelection this year, and warned voters off expected victors Labour.

"I can't today tell you what will be in the Conservative manifesto for the next parliament," the chancellor of the exchequer said in a speech. "But what I can do is make a very clear argument that we will bring down taxes, and I can do so with credibility because that is already what we have been doing," Hunt added as he also claimed that the main opposition Labour Party would hike taxation.

While the Conservatives, headed by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, have reduced taxes for workers in recent budgets, the UK still has the highest tax levels in 70 years. And Hunt on Friday offset the promise of more tax cuts by saying he could not give voters "a cast-iron guarantee" of when the Tories would "be able to reduce the tax burden and to what level", claiming it "would be irresponsible to do so".

Although the UK economy has turned a corner - recent data showed it had exited a short recession amid cooling inflation and with interest-rate cuts on the horizon - opinion polls indicate a change of leadership could be on the horizon after 14 years of Tory rule. Labour on Thursday set out its stall for the upcoming election with six key pledges to voters in a de facto campaign launch.

Its leader Keir Starmer promised economic stability, shorter health service waiting times and a new border security command to tackle irregular immigration. He also vowed to establish a publicly-owned clean energy company, crack down on anti-social behavior with more neighborhood police and recruit 6,500 new teachers. — AFP

For Taiwan shoppers, China's malls only a ferry ride away

KINMEN, Taiwan: With suitcases and packages stuffed with food, alcohol and construction materials, Taiwanese shoppers make their way towards a ferry in the Chinese city of Xiamen bound for the Taipei-administered island of Kinmen. Passing through immigration, the travelers cannot miss a sign declaring: "One family on two sides of the strait, working together to fulfill our dreams."

China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has vowed to seize the self-ruled island, by force if necessary. In the months leading up to Monday's inauguration of Taiwan's president-elect Lai Ching-te, who Beijing has branded a "dangerous separatist", Chinese coast guard ships have made frequent appearances around the waters of Kinmen.

Yet the deepening rift between Beijing and Taipei, and the threat of a conflict if China fulfills its promise to take Taiwan, appears to be the last thing on the minds of the Taiwanese passengers. More than 700,000 people made the journey between Kinmen and China by ferry last year, the vast majority of them Taiwanese,

China offers to buy up commercial real estate to boost market

BEIJING: China cut the minimum down payment rate for first-time homebuyers on Friday and suggested the government could buy up commercial real estate, in some of Beijing's most ambitious moves yet to lift the ailing housing market out of an unprecedented debt crisis. Property and construction accounts for more than a quarter of gross domestic product, but the sector has been under unprecedented strain since 2020, when authorities tightened developers' access to credit in a bid to reduce mounting debt.

Since then, major companies including China Evergrande and Country Garden have teetered, while falling prices have dissuaded consumers from investing in property. Under mounting pressure to boost the ailing market and ensure millions of unused homes go to those in need of housing, Beijing convened a video conference Friday, state news agency Xinhua said.

Friday's meeting was attended by regulators, representatives of top banks, local governments and the property market, Bloomberg News reported. "Great efforts should be made to promote the handling of commercial housing projects classified as under construction that have been sold and are facing difficulties to deliver," Vice Premier He Lifeng told the meeting, according to state media.

"In cities where there is a large inventory of commercial housing, the government can place orders and purchase some of the commercial housing at reasonable prices as appropriate to use as affordable housing," he added. No details were provided on how many houses would be bought.

"Relevant local governments should... properly handle transferred idle residential properties through retaking, acquisition... to help housing companies with financial difficulties solve their challenges," He said. State media also reported, citing the central bank and the National Financial Regulatory Administration, that they would cut the minimum down payment rate for first-time homebuyers to 15 percent, one of the country's lowest-ever rates.

The rate will be cut to 25 percent for second-home purchases, it added. The moves are some of Beijing's most ambitious yet in seeking to reverse a chronic

and many of them seeking a bargain in the bustling markets of Xiamen.

Huang Chuang-yuan, who runs a seafood restaurant on Kinmen, is one of the many regulars travelling back and forth between the island and Xiamen. "China is a big market, they have more products and more variety of things - and things are much cheaper," Huang, 57, told AFP on Friday after arriving back at Kinmen with his haul. "But you need to watch the products very closely. Some are good but others not."

One of Taiwan's many outlying islands, Kinmen is located just five kilometers (three miles) - and a world apart from the gleaming towers and upscale shopping malls populating Xiamen. Before passengers can board the ferry in the Chinese city for the half-hour journey across the sliver of water separating it from Kinmen, they put their luggage through X-ray machines and then pass through immigration.

People push airport-style trolleys loaded with suitcases and large packages up a ramp and onto the ferry before taking their seats.

Eight ferries run each day between the two sides, with the staff removing China's national flag from the vessel's staff when the boat moves closer toward Kinmen. Chef Ji De-wei said he travels back and forth to Xiamen every month to stock up on products. "It's super convenient to get there and it's only a 30 minute ferry," the 45-year-old told AFP as three of his employees loaded his purchases onto a small truck. — AFP



People walk past a housing complex under construction in Beijing on May 17, 2024. — AFP

crisis in the housing market. "This is the lowest down payment requirement and the lowest mortgage interest rate in history," Yan Yuejin, research director of the Yiju Research Institute, told AFP.

"These policies send very bullish signals and will be very helpful in boosting market moods," he added. "We are very optimistic about the potential effects they will have on boosting the real estate market."

During a State Council briefing Friday afternoon attended by officials from the housing ministry as well as those from China's top regulator and its central bank, officials pointed to "significant difficulties" in the market. "Significant changes have taken place in the supply and demand dynamics of the property market," said Dong Jianguo, deputy head of China's housing ministry, adding that the sector "is in the process of adjustment".

The briefing also saw central bank deputy governor Tao Ling announce that the government would set up a loan scheme for low-income housing totaling over \$41 billion.

Shares in Chinese developers have rallied in Hong Kong in recent days on hopes of fresh support for the sector. Jeff Zhang, an analyst at Morningstar Inc.

in Hong Kong, told Bloomberg Friday's move was "unexpected and positive for property stocks".

Agile Group soared 23 percent and Fantasia added 8.3 percent Friday, while Sino-Ocean Group and CIFI Holdings each gained more than 12 percent. Longfor Group added 10 percent and China Vanke piled on 19 percent each, having jumped 15 percent and 16 percent respectively on Thursday, according to Bloomberg News. The meeting comes as official figures Friday showed that property prices and sales in the country continued to slip in April. Further economic data showed that industrial production picked up last month, but consumption continued to slow.

China on Friday also issued around \$5.5 billion in ultra-long treasury bonds, Xinhua said, the first batch of a planned sale of nearly \$140 billion in such bonds this year.

Measures introduced by the central government to support the sector have so far had little effect. But HSBC economists wrote in a note that, with Friday's announcement: "China's property stabilization plan is underway." "The quicker and bolder the intervention plan, the more effective it will be, in our view," they said. — AFP



NEW TAIPEI CITY: Fish vendors listen to customers at a fish market in New Taipei City on May 18, 2024. — AFP

SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2024



This photograph shows Necmettin Colak selling "mad honey" (also called "komar" honey in Turkish) in a shop in Cayeli.



Mustafa Oguz Alparslan checks his beehives.



This photograph shows "mad honey" (also called "komar" honey in Turkish) displayed in a shop in Cayeli.



TURKEY'S 'MAD HONEY' APHRODISIAC THAT CAN KNOCK YOU FLAT



Photo shows Bayram Demirciler tending to his beehives in Camlihemsin, in the Turkish province of Rize. - AFP photos



This picture shows Mustafa Oguz Alparslan checking his beehives.



A bee on a Rhododendron flower, in Camlihemsin, in the Turkish province of Rize.



This photograph shows bees near their hive, in Camlihemsin.

Its fans swear it can cure heart palpitations, dodgy stomachs and even impotence. Yet every year hundreds of people end up in hospital after gorging themselves on Turkey's "mad honey".

But beekeeper Bayram Demirciler is adamant the honey his bees make high in the mountains above the Black Sea "has never caused any problems".

In good years his hives in the province of Rize in northeast Turkey produce up to 350 kilos of "mad" rhododendron honey. The lush green Pontic Alps is home to a subspecies of rhododendron whose purple flowers drip with pollen that give "mad honey" its colour. They also contain a neurotoxin called grayanotoxin in which can slow the heartbeat and that also packs a hallucinogenic punch.

"This honey is very good for people with hypertension," said Mustafa Oguz Alparslan, whose hives - protected from sweet-toothed bears by an electric fence - are even higher up the mountains at 1,400 metres (4,600 feet). But eat too much and "it can also cause a rapid fall in blood pressure", warned the beekeeper, who said he always "tests his honey as it takes it out the hive".

Knocked out a bear

Doctors - who recognize its virtues in small homeopathic doses - say the honey can slow the flow of blood to the brain, causing dizziness, fainting and even hallucinations. Intoxication with "mad honey" was even documented in ancient times.

The Greek historian Strabo, who was

born in the Black Sea region, said three of Pompey's Roman cohorts were put out of action by allies of the Pontian king Mithridates who left "pots of mad honey" in their path.



This aerial photograph shows Mustafa Oguz Alparslan tending to his beehives.

And it also figured in Agatha Christie's novel, "A Haunting in Venice", filmed last year by Kenneth Branagh. The "Queen of Crime" - who wrote part of "Murder on the Orient Express" in Istanbul - had Rowena Drake kill her own daughter with it and even used it to give Belgian detective Hercule Poirot visions.

The honey can even put beasts on

their back. A young brown bear made headlines in August 2022 when he was found unconscious near hives in Duzce province at the other end of Turkey's Black Sea. It had keeled over after over-

have been knocked sideways by the honey in bad years.

The doctor said it was "possible that there are thousands of cases" across the wider region. "If we have a sunny May and June, the bees will feast on the rhododendrons," making the honey even stronger, said Professor Gunduz, who has long researched the subject.

One particular detail pricked his interest. "More than 80 percent of the intoxicated patients are men over 50. Some believe (the honey) ups their sexual performance," he said.

'Almost died for nothing'

In his shop in Cayeli, 20 kilometres from Rize, Necmettin Colak recommends his customers "take a soup spoon of the honey on an empty stomach". For more mature clients in search of a sexual pick-me-up, he advises his chestnut honey instead, which he swears is "more efficient".

He stores his "mad honey" for several months to allow its more problematic attributes to dissipate before tasting it himself and selling it at 55 euros a kilo. But not everyone takes such precautions. Alaattin Demirci, from Trabzon province, had to be taken to hospital after eating some "mad honey" in January 2021. A few days later the sixtysomething posted photos of himself on Facebook on a drip, insisting that he would "never again" try it, saying he "almost died for nothing". — AFP

indulging on "mad honey", according to the ministry of forestry and agriculture.

The same month a bus driver travelling between Rize and the port city of Trabzon blamed the honey for him passing out and crashing into cars at a traffic light. In his hospital in Trabzon, Professor Abdulkadir Gunduz treats between "30 and 100" people who



This aerial photograph shows a general view over the Pontic Mountains from the Badara Plateau in Camlihemsin, in the Turkish province of Rize.



A queen bee bearing the code number "46" amid her hive in Camlihemsin.



This photograph shows Mustafa Oguz Alparslan checking his beehives.



This aerial shows Mustafa Oguz Alparslan tending to his beehives.

Lifestyle



(From left) US actor Shia Labeouf, US actress Chloe Fineman, British actress Nathalie Emmanuel, US actor Giancarlo Esposito, US actor Adam Driver, US actress Aubrey Plaza, US director Francis Ford Coppola, US actor Laurence Fishburne, US singer Grace Vanderwaal, US actor Jon Voight and US actor D.B. Sweeney pose as they arrive for the screening of the film "Megalopolis".



(From left) Actor Yorgos Stefanakos, US actress Hunter Schafer, US actor Willem Dafoe, Greek director and screenwriter Yorgos Lanthimos, US actress Emma Stone, US actress Hong Chau, US actor Mamoudou Athie, US actor Jesse Plemons, US actress Margaret Qualley and US actor Joe Alwyn pose during a photocall for the film "Kinds of Kindness".

EMMA STONE IN NEW TWISTED COMEDY AFTER COPPOLA EPIC DIVIDES CANNES



Indian actress Aishwarya Rai arrives for the screening of the film "Megalopolis".



Mexican-Italian TV host and model Patricia Contreras arrives for the screening of the film "Megalopolis".



(From left) British actor Joe Alwyn, US actor Jesse Plemons, Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos, US actress Hong Chau, US actress Emma Stone, US actor Willem Dafoe, US actress Margaret Qualley, US actor Mamoudou Athie, US actress Hunter Schafer and Irish producer Andrew Lowe leave after the screening of the film "Kinds of Kindness".—AFP photos



This combination of pictures shows US director and president of the Jury of the 77th Cannes Film Festival Greta Gerwig, French singer Yseult, US actress Chloe Fineman, Brazilian model Luma Grothe and French actor and member of the Jury of the 77th Cannes Film Festival Omar Sy arriving for the screening of the film "Megalopolis".

Emma Stone and director Yorgos Lanthimos brought audiences yet another hilarious and freaky film as "Kinds of Kindness" premiered in competition in Cannes on Friday. The triptych, in which the same cast of actors recount three separate stories, was filmed as the Greek filmmaker put the final touches to his feminist Frankenstein remake "Poor Things" for which Stone won an Oscar. Its occasionally repulsive scenes are balanced by dark humor, notably Willem Dafoe as a creepy guru in an orange speedo and one very shocking home movie that got big laughs at Cannes screenings.

"I thought it was funny and Emma thought it was funny, but we didn't know if people are going to find it funny," Lanthimos said before the premiere. In early reviews, the Guardian called it a "macabre, absurdist triptych", while Variety called it a "quizzical concoction bound to baffle and delight". Lanthimos said that, as trust grows between him and Stone, the duo has become "more bold and more brave".

'Big swing'

The film was the latest hot ticket at the festival after Hollywood titan Francis Ford Coppola returned on Thursday to unveil his enormously hyped, wildly experimental and deeply divisive "Megalopolis". The 85-year-old director's arrival at the world-famous movie festival - where decades earlier he twice scooped the top prize Palme d'Or - had been the talk of cafe terraces in the swanky Cote d'Azur city.

Would the epic \$120-million project that he self-funded, and that has been gestating for some 40 years, be another masterpiece emerging from chaos, like "Apocalypse Now" all those decades ago? Or would the film that Coppola sold part of his California wine estate to create be a chaotic mess?

One early press screening attended by AFP was greeted with both jeering boos and enthusiastic applause. Deadline hailed "a true modern masterwork of the kind that outrages with its sheer audacity," but The Guardian called the film

"bloated, boring and bafflingly shallow." The Hollywood Reporter said the film was "a staggeringly ambitious big swing, if nothing else," while The Times of London ripped into its "nails-along-the-blackboard performances, word-salad dialogue and ugly visuals".

"Megalopolis" is set in New Rome, a parallel and decayed version of modern-day New York filled with bacchanalian parties, crumbling ancient statues,

and the drama is interspersed with archive footage ranging from the cosmos to Nazi rallies. At one highly unorthodox moment, events on the screen interact with those in the real-life theatre.

'Bird'

"Megalopolis" is one of 22 films competing for the Palme d'Or, facing a jury led by "Barbie" director Greta Gerwig, who will announce their verdict on May



German Turkish model and actress Meryem Sarah Uzerli arrives for the screening of the film "Megalopolis".

and a Madison Square Garden that hosts chariot races and Greco-Roman wrestling bouts. Coppola, one of Hollywood's most revered and mythologized directors, was greeted on the Croisette red carpet with a grand reception befitting an old master.

Straw hat and cane in hand, he entered the packed world premiere having promised a film of operatic scale. He recently reeled off a list of influences that included Voltaire, Plato, Shakespeare, Hitchcock, Kubrick and Kurosawa.

And, indeed, the movie is packed with endless quotes and references from the Ancient Classics to Enlightenment philosophers and modern novelists. Dialogue flits from modern English to Shakespearean verse, and even Latin,

25. Also on Thursday, British director Andrea Arnold returned to Cannes with "Bird", the story of a 12-year-old girl navigating a world of domestic violence, teen pregnancies and broken families.

Channelling similar themes to her award-winning "Fish Tank", "Bird" adds fantastical, metaphorical and playful elements, including a flamboyant turn from Barry Keoghan ("Saltburn") as the girl's young father. A day earlier "Wild Diamond" - also about a fragile teenage girl, but this time one desperate to find fame on social media and reality TV -- was hailed by movie magazine Variety as "the arrival of a major filmmaker" in first-time French director Agathe Reidinger.



Lebanese director and member of the Jury of the 77th Cannes Film Festival Nadine Labaki (right) and Lebanese composer Khaled Mouzanar arrive for the screening of the film "Megalopolis."



US actor Willem Dafoe (left) gestures next to US actress Emma Stone (right) arrive for the screening of the film "Kinds of Kindness".



US director Francis Ford Coppola gestures as he leaves after the screening of the film "Megalopolis".

Lifestyle



(From third left) Australian producer Doug Mitchell, US actress Alyla Browne, British-US actress Anya Taylor-Joy, Australian director and screenwriter George Miller, Australian actor Chris Hemsworth and Spanish model and actress Elsa Pataky arrive for the screening of the film "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga" at the 77th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP photos



(From left) British-US actress Anya Taylor-Joy, Australian director and screenwriter George Miller and Australian actor Chris Hemsworth pose during a photocall for the film "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga".

MAD MAX, MERYL AND #METOO IN STRONG DAY FOR WOMEN AT CANNES



British-US actress Anya Taylor-Joy arrives for the screening of the film "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga".

A blood-splattered "Mad Max" heroine, a Meryl Streep masterclass, a #MeToo figurehead - the Cannes Film Festival showed the progress women have made in cinema on its first full day on Wednesday. The festival welcomed the world premiere of "Furiosa", the latest instalment of the post-apocalyptic "Mad Max" franchise, with Anya Taylor-Joy in the no-holds-barred title role playing alongside "Thor" star Chris Hemsworth.

Director George Miller said the action film - featuring his trademark high-octane road battles and visceral stunts - had become "almost a feminist piece" as the saga's story unfolds. Streep, who was awarded an honorary Palme d'Or at the opening ceremony, shared intimate stories from her career and spoke about the huge progress of women in the industry.

"The biggest stars in the world are women right now," she said in a talk to festival-goers, pointing out that her early roles were often so memorable "because she was the only woman in the film". She put the blame on the fact that men had all the power at studios in the past.

"They're living their fantasy and so it was very hard - before there were women in green-light positions at studios - for men to see themselves in women protagonists," she said. "They just didn't get it." The race for the festival's top prize, the Palme d'Or, also started Wednesday with



US actress Meryl Streep gestures as she arrives for the opening ceremony and the screening of the film "Le Deuxieme Acte".

two films that put women's stories centre-stage. First up are "The Girl with the Needle", billed as the story of a Danish woman running an underground adoption agency after World War I, and "Wild Diamond" about a French teenager seeking fame on a reality TV show, from first-time director Agathe Riedinger.

They are being judged by a jury led by Greta Gerwig, the first woman to direct a \$1 billion movie with "Barbie".

'Respect on set'

French star Lea Seydoux, who appeared in the opening night film "The Second Act", said she had personally witnessed more respect for women on sets since the #MeToo movement.



French actress and master of the ceremony of the 77th Cannes Film Festival Camille Cottin delivers a speech on stage.

"I was an actress before and after, and I can only welcome the change," said Seydoux, who famously denounced the director of her Cannes-winning breakthrough "Blue is the Warmest Colour" for the "horrible" conditions when shooting its explicit sex scenes. "Today, I see that there is respect on set, even for intimate scenes," Seydoux told reporters.

There is also a screening of a short film about sexual violence, "Moi Aussi" ("Me Too"), by French actor Judith Godrèche. She has become a leading figure in France's #MeToo movement after accusing two directors of assaulting her when she was a teenager in the 1980s - even appearing before the French Senate this year to call for greater protections on film

sets. It comes amid a wave of new allegations in France, most notably against veteran actor Gerard Depardieu, and persistent rumors that more big names will face accusations.

Godrèche told AFP she has a nuanced view of the #MeToo movement.

"There is growing awareness, but sometimes things are announced in a way that feels too staged. It's not very spectacular being abused, it's not very funny, it's not very theatrical," she said.

Gerwig hopeful

The host of the opening ceremony, Camille Cottin, star of hit series "Call My Agent!" and an outspoken feminist, also took digs at the "biggest bad guy of all time: the patriarchy".

"The late-night work meetings in hotel rooms of all-powerful gentlemen are no longer part of the Cannes vortex," she said in her welcome address. Gerwig, meanwhile, struck an optimistic note. "Every year I cheer when there are more and more women being represented," she told reporters on Tuesday. "Fifteen years ago, I couldn't have imagined the number of women represented not only at international festivals but in distribution and board conversations, and so I'm hopeful that it's just continuing." — AFP

Costner, Gere, Demi Moore: Hollywood icons on Cannes comeback trail

This year's Cannes Film Festival hosts a trio of heartthrobs from the back end of the 20th century, making their comeback on the red carpet: Demi Moore, Kevin Costner and Richard Gere. From "Ghost" to "Pretty Woman" to "Dances with Wolves", they are responsible for some of Generation X's favorite movie moments. AFP looks at what they've been up to since.

Demi Moore: Ghost girl

On the Croisette, 61-year-old Moore will be making her unexpected return in slasher-horror "The Substance", competing for the festival's top prize, the Palme d'Or. It has been a long time since Moore came anywhere near a Cannes red carpet, having appeared mostly in small TV roles and forgettable films since the early 2000s.

In her heyday, Moore was a global star after the weepie "Ghost" co-starring the late Patrick Swayze as a murdered businessman who watches over his grieving ceramicist girlfriend from beyond the grave and famously helps her mould clay in a steamy supernatural scene. Her baggy, androgynous look in that movie - the dungarees and boyish crop - helped define 1990s style,



US actress Uma Thurman (left) and US actor Richard Gere arrive for the screening of the film "Oh Canada".

and she had other era-defining hits with steamy dramas "Indecent Proposal" and "Disclosure". An Annie Leibovitz photo-shoot - showing off her pregnant belly on the cover of Vanity Fair in 1991 - was a stunning move at the time, since copied by Beyonce, Rihanna and others.

She proved her acting chops in meatier 1990s movies such as blockbuster courtroom drama "A Few Good Men" opposite Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson. But since the turn of the century, Moore, who has a life-long passion

for collecting dolls and bought an entire house to store her 2,000-strong collection, was in the headlines more for her tumultuous love life than her acting.

She formed two Hollywood power couples, first in the 1980s with "Die Hard" star Bruce Willis, father of her three daughters, and then with Ashton Kutcher, the latter union ending acrimoniously in 2013.

Kevin Costner: Forever West

The soft-spoken 69-year-old is back in Cannes in his favorite genre, the Western, with the epic "Horizon: An American Saga". Fans are hoping his fourth feature as director - which is out of competition at Cannes - will mark a return to form after a series of expensive duds in the 1990s trashed his Oscar-gilded career.

His directorial debut "Dances With Wolves", despite being a three-hour Western, was a global hit and in 1991 won the double Oscar whammy of best picture and director. As an actor he captured hearts in smash hits "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (1991) and as Whitney Houston's protector in "The Bodyguard" (1992). Teaming up with big-gun directors also proved a winning formula,

from Oliver Stone's "JFK" (1991) to Clint Eastwood's "A Perfect World" (1993). But then a string of ultra-expensive and hubristic flops - especially "Waterworld" (1995) and "The Postman" (1997) made him into something of a laughing stock.

He continued to work in smaller roles, but invested more in music with his nostalgic country band "Kevin Costner & Modern West". There has been a late resurgence in his 60s, however, thanks to the long-running hit neo-Western series, "Yellowstone".

Richard Gere: Zen charm

Gere was the world's sexiest man according to People Magazine in 1999, when he was 50. By then he had charmed audiences with his quiet seduction in "An Officer and a Gentleman" (1982) and, of course, "Pretty Woman" opposite Julia Roberts.

He and supermodel Cindy Crawford were also the ultimate It-couple. But progressively he gave up glamour for meditation. Gere had been a Buddhist since he was 25, and increasingly used his fame to speak out, in particular against China's control of Tibet. — AFP



US actor Adam Driver (left) and US director Francis Ford Coppola pose during a photocall for the film "Megalopolis" at the 77th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

Coppola 'writing another film' after 'Megalopolis' debut

Francis Ford Coppola said Friday he does not plan to stop making movies and is already writing his next one, just hours after his divisive epic "Megalopolis" had its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival.

The 85-year-old US director spent decades working on passion project "Megalopolis", which stars Adam Driver as a fiercely ambitious architect determined to rebuild a decaying city into a utopia, at seemingly any cost.

Asked at a press conference whether he may be tempted to re-edit the film later, as he did with his previous Palme d'Or winner "Apocalypse Now", Coppola said he hopes to be back at Cannes "in 20 years."

"If there's a way I can make the film a little better, I will try," he said. "But I know I'm done with it because I've already started writing another film. That's how I know I'm finished."

Reviews of the wildly ambitious and experimental "Megalopolis" have been mixed. Critics in the US were largely enthusiastic, while European outlets were markedly less convinced. The inability of even the most powerful and visionary men to stop the passage of time is a central theme of the movie.

Driver's character in the film, Caesar Catalina, insists "I'm not concerned about my place in history, what I am concerned about is time", and means that there is "still so much to accomplish, but is there time?"

Coppola appeared to be driven by that same sentiment at his press conference on Friday. "There are so many people who, when they die, say, 'I wish I had done this, I wish I done that.' When I die, I'm going to say, 'I got to do this,'" he said. — AFP



US director Paul Schrader (center), Spanish Alejandra Silva (fourth right), US actor Richard Gere (third right), US actor Homer James Jigme Gere (second right) and US actress Uma Thurman (right) arrive for the screening of the film "Oh Canada".



US actress Demi Moore arrive for the screening of the film "Kinds of Kindness".

Sports

Golfer Scheffler fires 66 after arrest on 'chaotic' day at PGA

Scheffler charged with assault on a police officer, reckless driving

LOUISVILLE: Golf world number one Scottie Scheffler was handcuffed and arrested on Friday after allegedly dragging a police officer with his car while trying to avoid traffic controls outside the PGA Championship at Valhalla.

In one of the strangest scenes ever at a major tournament, Scheffler was taken into custody by police, booked with a mugshot taken in an orange jumpsuit, released, returned to the course in time for his second round, then recovered well enough to fire a five-under par 66 and share third early in the second round.

"I still feel like my head is spinning a little bit but I was fortunate to be able to make it back out and play some golf," Scheffler said. "I've kept myself in the tournament now with a pretty chaotic day." Scheffler, 27, was charged with felony assault on a police officer, criminal mischief, reckless driving and disregarding signals from an officer directing traffic and released.

"My situation will get handled," Scheffler said. "I can't comment on any of the specifics, but it was just a huge misunderstanding that will get resolved I think fairly quickly." Scheffler was detained by Louisville

Metro police after he drove onto curbing trying to get around a prior accident at the Valhalla entrance, one that resulted in the fatality of a pedestrian named as John Mills.

"My sympathies go out to the family of Mr. Mills," Scheffler said. "I can't imagine what they're going through." A police report on the incident obtained by ESPN said arresting officer Bryan Gillis says Scheffler disobeyed orders to stop his car and accelerated, dragging the officer to the ground.

Gillis was hospitalized with pain, bruising and swelling in his left wrist and knee. An arraignment is set for Tuesday. "I never intended to disregard any of the instructions," Scheffler said in a statement before his round.

Scheffler, who won his second Masters title last month, arrived at Valhalla just under an hour before his start time in the second round, which began after an 80-minute delay due to the accident. "We were devastated to learn that a worker with one of our vendors was tragically struck and killed by a shuttle bus," the PGA of America said in a statement. "This is heartbreaking to all of us involved with the PGA Championship." The PGA of America

later identified Mills and said of Scheffler, "We're fully cooperating as local authorities review what took place."

'I was pretty rattled'

Scheffler was driven from jail, by the owner of Valhalla Golf Club according to ESPN, to the clubhouse, where he ate breakfast before a practice range visit. "I was pretty rattled to say the least," Scheffler said. "I was shaking. I would say in shock and in fear. Coming out here and trying to play today was definitely a challenge, but I did my best."

"It probably took a few holes to feel normal." Fans cheered as Scheffler walked onto the course and gave him a huge ovation just before his first shot landed in the right rough on his way to an opening birdie.

"Fans were tremendous today," Scheffler said. Scheffler's mugshot was posted by the Louisville Metropolitan Department of Corrections after he was booked. Some fans had it on T-shirts at the course. "You felt like it was sort of a prank or something when you see a mugshot of Scottie," said tournament leader Xander Schauffele. "He's a solid guy and there was no malintent by him to anyone. So hopefully he goes out un-



Scottie Scheffler

scathed. Scottie's a good dude."

Scheffler has won four of his past five starts, capturing Bay Hill and the Players in March, losing in a playoff at the Houston Open, then winning the Masters and Heritage last month. American Mark Hubbard, on 133 with Scheffler, was amazed at his performance. "I saw as everybody

did the mug shot and the police report," Hubbard said. "Unbelievable that he gets arrested and then goes out and shoots 66." Scheffler was the feel-good story of the week, seeking a third major title a week after becoming a father. His wife, Meredith, gave birth to son Bennett nine days ago. — AFP

News in Brief

Sid Going dies at 80

WELLINGTON: Former All Black great Sid Going has died at the age of 80. New Zealand Rugby said Saturday. "It's incredibly sad to hear of Sid's passing," the governing body's chief executive Mark Robinson said in a statement. "He was a dynamic player and one of the greatest halfbacks in All Blacks history." Going died on Friday and will be buried in Maromaku, Northland. Nicknamed "Super Sid", the scrum-half was a powerful runner with the ball in hand and a fearless tackler of forwards, who often towered over him. Going played 86 matches for the All Blacks, including 29 Tests, over a decade-long span until 1977. He captained New Zealand five times. Going scored 10 tries in Test matches, including two by darting past French defenders inside the opening 30 minutes to seal a 19-12 win over Les Bleus at Eden Park in 1968. — AFP

Piastri on top at Imola

IMOLA: Oscar Piastri topped the times ahead of McLaren team-mate Lando Norris in Saturday's incident-filled third and final practice ahead of this weekend's Emilia Romagna Grand Prix. The Australian outpaced the Briton by three-tenths of a second ahead of both Ferraris as two crashes - involving Fernando Alonso of Aston Martin and Red Bull's Sergio Perez - brought out red flags. George Russell of Mercedes was fifth ahead of Red Bull's struggling three-time world champion Max Verstappen, Alex Albon of Williams, Alpine's Esteban Ocon and Lance Stroll in the second Aston Martin. Nico Hulkenberg was 10th for Haas. In a disrupted but dramatic session it was evident that Red Bull were unable to reproduce their normal dominating form, offering the prospect of a straight scrap between the McLaren and Ferrari teams in qualifying later Saturday. — AFP

Sevilla confirm coach leaving

BARCELONA: Sevilla confirmed Saturday coach Quique Sanchez Flores will leave the club at the end of the season, while captain Jesus Navas said he would stay on despite initially deciding to depart. The record seven-time Europa League winners are languishing in 12th in La Liga, although when Sanchez Flores was appointed in December they were battling relegation in 16th. Sanchez Flores' contract was set to expire in June 2025 but Sevilla chief Jose Maria del Nido Carrasco told reporters both parties agreed the coach will depart. "I want to thank him, the club was in a very difficult situation and he was capable of turning it around with a lot of hours of work," the president told a news conference Saturday. "He achieved an objective that, although it hurts us to say it, was difficult." The president also said he would offer captain Navas a contract for life, and the Spain international quickly confirmed he would stay with the club he "is in love with". — AFP

Paralympics count on team effort for Paris Games breakout

PARIS: Paralympic organizers, with a cast of compelling athletes and a record-breaking broadcasting deal, are hoping this year's Paris Games can mark a breakout. The 22-sport event, which starts in just over 100 days and will be screened in 160 nations and territories, has long sought wider audiences.

And with Paris 2024 officials promising "iconic"

Kuwait shooters win gold, bronze at Tunis shooting competition

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait pistol shooters, participating in the Arab 10m Pistol and Rifle Championship, organized by Tunis Shooting Federation won a gold and a bronze medals during the first day of competition.

Shooter Hamad Abdullah Al-Namshan won the first place and the gold medal of the 10m pistol singles competition, while Egypt's Hafez Ibrahim won silver and Iraq's Ali Al-Mousawi won the bronze medal in the same event.

Meanwhile, in the ladies category, Kuwait's Ghizlan Al-Hindi won the bronze medal following tough competition with Egypt's Hala Al-Jauhari who won the gold medal while Duaa Chaljoum from Tunis won the silver medal.

The Arab 10m Pistol and Rifle Championship started on Wednesday 19/5/2024 in the presence of Vice President of the Arab Shooting Federation, President of African and Egyptian Shooting Federations Maj General Hazem Hosni, who deputized for President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federation Duaj Al-Otaibi.

Eng Al-Otaibi thanked Hazem Hasni for attending the opening of the competition on his behalf. He also thanked the president of Tunis Shooting Federation



Shooter Hamad Abdullah Al-Namshan (centre) won the first place.

Redha Al-Manae for hosting the championship, and the good organization and the facilities given to the participating Arab delegations.

Al-Otaibi pointed to the importance of such events in preparing Arab Shooters for Olympic and International competitions, specially that Arab Shooting witnessed an important development lately at the administrative and technical levels.

He said "the Arab shooting is enjoying major support from HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Com-

plex is home of the Arab Shooting Federation.

Al-Otaibi expressed pride in the achievements of Kuwait shooters in this event so far, as the efforts of members of the board as well as the technical and administrative departments enabled Kuwait shooters to make such big achievements.

Eng. Duaj Al-Otaibi dedicated this achievement to HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the government and the people of Kuwait.

He also thanked the Public Authority for Sport for its support of Kuwait shooting and shooters.

Pooran powers Lucknow to win over Mumbai

MUMBAI: Nicholas Pooran starred in Lucknow Super Giants' 18-run victory over pre-tournament favorites Mumbai Indians in the last game of a disappointing Indian Premier League season for both teams Friday.

The maverick West Indies' wicketkeeper-batsman hit eight sixes in his 29-ball 75 to take Lucknow to 214-6 after Mumbai skipper Hardik Pandya won the toss and chose to field first. Mumbai crashed to 196-6 despite an impressive start by openers Rohit Sharma and Dewald Brevis in their rain-interrupted chase.

Pandya said that it was "quite difficult" for five-time champions Mumbai, who finished the 10-team league in last spot. "This season we didn't play good quality cricket and it cost us the whole season," Pandya said.

Lucknow too failed to qualify for the playoffs and ended the tournament in sixth spot. Captain KL Rahul said that it was "very disappointing". He blamed mid-season injuries to key players and said that they "didn't play well enough collectively and couldn't come together" as a team. Earlier, Nuwan Thushara got Mumbai off to a great start and removed opener Devdutt Padikkal for a first ball duck.

Padikkal's partner Rahul stitched together a 48-run partnership with Australia's Marcus Stoinis, who fell to Piyush Chawla's leg-spin for a 22-ball 28 in the sixth over. Chawla also removed Deepak Hooda (11) to reduce Lucknow to 69-3 by the 10th over.

Thushara finally removed Pooran in the 17th over to end his match-defining, 109-run partner-



MUMBAI: Lucknow Super Giants' captain KL Rahul (L) plays a shot as Mumbai Indians' wicketkeeper Ishan Kishan watches during the Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Mumbai Indians and Lucknow Super Giants at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. — AFP

ship with Rahul. He also removed rookie Arshad Khan (0) in the same over and finished with 3-28 in his four-over spell.

Chawla removed Rahul, who took 41 balls for his 55 runs, in the 18th over and finished with 3-29. Key unbeaten cameos by Ayush Badoni (22) and Krunal Pandya (12) took Lucknow to 214-6. Mumbai's openers took their team to 88 before Brevis fell for 23 in the ninth over.

India skipper Sharma top-scored with a 38-ball

68 with 10 fours and three sixes before he fell in the 11th over. In between, Mumbai also lost their best T20 batsman, Suryakumar Yadav, for 0 and were reduced to 97-3 while out-of-form skipper Pandya fell for 16.

Indian rookie Naman Dhir hit five sixes and four fours in his unbeaten 28-ball 62. Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi, who removed Sharma, and Afghanistan's Naveen-ul-Haq, who removed Brevis, took four key Mumbai wickets between them. — AFP

Games with the City of Light as a telegenic backdrop, the stage has been set for the top names in para sport to shine. They include competitors such as Bebe Vio, an Italian fencer with more than a million followers on Instagram, and the American "armless archer" Matt Stutzman whose technique in firing arrows or driving cars with his feet have made him an Internet sensation. Others include German "blade jumper" Markus Rehm and 18-year-old Japanese wheelchair tennis champion Tokito Oda. The one para star to break into the mainstream was the since-disgraced sprinter Oscar Pistorius at the 2012 London Olympics.

Becoming a global star would require personality, sporting prowess and institutional support, say experts. "You need to start a virtuous circle in which all

stakeholders play their role," said Magali Tezenas, director general of Sporsora, a French sponsorship management agency. "The media, sponsors, the institutions, organizers and the athletes who emerge, speak publicly and dare to go into the media," she added.

Fallen star

In 2012, Pistorius, a double amputee, elevated interest in Paralympians through the technology he employed - his famed running blades - and by competing against able-bodied runners. After debate about the impact of his prosthetic legs and whether they conferred an advantage, Pistorius was authorized to run in the London Olympics 400m where he qualified for the semi-finals. — AFP



Oscar Pistorius

Sports

Man City eye Premier League history as Arsenal dare to dream

City have been at their relentless best in the intense heat of the run-in

MANCHESTER: Manchester City stand on the brink of a historic fourth successive Premier League title, but Arsenal lie in wait hoping for a last-gasp slip from the leaders on Sunday. Pep Guardiola's all-conquering team go into the final day of the season with a two-point lead over second-placed Arsenal thanks to an eight-game winning streak.

City, who host West Ham knowing a win will seal the title, are hot favourites to set a new standard for dominance in English football. Arsenal, at home to Everton in their final game, have been near flawless themselves in 2024, with 15 wins and one draw, away to City, in 17 league matches.

However, the Gunners' costly 2-0 defeat against Aston Villa last month looks set to be decisive in a thrilling title race that also involved Liverpool until their recent stumbles. Not for the first time, City have been at their relentless best in the intense heat of the run-in.

Guardiola's men have dropped just six points since mid-December, in draws against Chelsea, Liverpool and Arsenal. As City close in on a sixth title in seven seasons under Guardiola, the competitiveness of the world's most-

watched league has been questioned.

But the Catalan coach has hit back at suggestions the Premier League has become boring and that City's dominance is thanks purely to the financial muscle of their Abu Dhabi-based owners. "It's not boring, it's difficult," Guardiola said, adding that based on spending levels, Manchester United, Chelsea and Arsenal should be matching City.

"They spent as much money in the last five years as us. They should be there. They are not there." David Moyes will take charge of West Ham for the final time at the Etihad Stadium. And the Scot did not offer much encouragement to Arsenal fans when he claimed this week it would be difficult to stop Man City's "under-14s winning the title" let alone the champions in full flow.

Arsenal, who finished second last year, must beat Everton and hope City fail to win if they are to end their 20-year wait for the title. Mikel Arteta's men have set a club record by winning 27 Premier League games this season, but that still might not be enough to dethrone City.

"We have to give ourselves the opportunity to live a beautiful day on Sunday, where the dream is still alive and is

possible," Arteta said. "It's football and once we are there we just have to live the moment."

Man Utd face Euro exile

There will be an emotional farewell for Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp at the end of his memorable nine-year reign, but the Reds will finish third regardless of their result against Wolves at Anfield. "I spoke before about how hard it will be to say goodbye," Klopp said.

"I love absolutely everything about this place, I do. I take memories with me, fantastic memories, I take relationships with me forever." Manchester United are at risk of missing out on European football altogether after a miserable season.

Erik ten Hag's men sit eighth and must better Newcastle's result at Brentford when they visit Brighton to avoid finishing outside the top seven for the first time since 1990. Tottenham visit relegated Sheffield United knowing a point is enough to guarantee fifth spot, while in-form Chelsea would secure a top-six finish with a draw against Bournemouth at Stamford Bridge.

The top six teams will all definitely qualify for Europe, while seventh could be enough as long as Manchester United



Pep Guardiola

do not shock City in next week's FA Cup final. At the bottom, Luton will be relegated if they fail to beat Fulham or if Nottingham Forest avoid defeat at Burnley.

Even if Luton win and Forest lose, the Hatters' vastly inferior goal difference means they need a mathematical miracle to survive.

Fixtures

Arsenal v Everton, Brentford v Newcastle, Brighton v Manchester United, Burnley v Nottingham Forest, Chelsea v Bournemouth, Crystal Palace v Aston Villa, Liverpool v Wolves, Luton v Fulham, Manchester City v West Ham, Sheffield United v Tottenham. — AFP

Southampton to face Leeds in play-off final

LONDON: Southampton will face Leeds for a place in the Premier League after reaching the Championship play-off final with a 3-1 win against West Bromwich Albion on Friday. Russell Martin's side moved a step closer to promotion thanks to Will Smallbone's second half opener and two late goals from Adam Armstrong in the semi-final second leg at raucous St Mary's.

Cedric Kipre's header in the final seconds was no consolation for out-classed Albion. Bidding to end their one-year exile from the Premier League after last season's relegation, Southampton will head to Wembley on May 26 for what is regarded as world football's richest game, given the wealth on offer in the top tier.

After a goalless first leg at the Hawthorns on Sunday, Southampton were deserved winners, with their confident performance showing why they finished fourth in the table, 12 points clear of fifth-placed Albion.

British prime minister Rishi Sunak, a noted Southampton fan, cheered from the stands as Martin's men responded to their manager's pre-match plea to "attack the game until you can't run any more". The only blemish for Southampton was a post-match pitch invasion that turned ugly when Saints fans confronted their Albion rivals, with punches briefly traded before police restored order.

"In the first half, we were good but a little bit tense. In the second half, I thought we were incredible. I feel we got what we deserved," Martin said. "We had a brilliant night but it's all leading to the big one. If we can play with the same courage and intensity as we did tonight, we can give ourselves a chance." West Brom boss Carlos Corberan added: "We didn't show our best level. I had confidence in our team but it is more about the pain that we have after this defeat."

Armstrong double

Leeds had crushed Norwich 4-0 at Elland Road in the second leg of the other semi-final on Thursday, with Canaries boss David Wagner sacked on Friday. That ruthless dismissal underlined the desperation of Championship clubs to strike it rich in the Premier League.

The Saints are no different but they rose to the occasion with a commanding display after surviving an early scare. West Brom's aerial prowess caused problems when Grady Diangana glanced a header wide from Alex Mowatt's cross.

Southampton quickly took control and David Brooks' close-range effort cannoned off the post from Armstrong's cross. Playing with Jed Wallace as their lone forward, Albion used a five-man defence in a bid to subdue the Saints.

Southampton keeper Alex McCarthy had to scramble back to push Tom Fellows' cross over the bar just before it dipped into the net. But Martin's team were well on top and Brooks' drive from 25 yards was repelled by Alex Palmer.

Southampton's dominance was finally rewarded in the 49th minute thanks to a moment of magic from Smallbone. Picked out by Brooks' pass after Diangana carelessly surrendered possession, Smallbone unleashed a ferocious strike from just inside the area that fizzed past Palmer via the inside of the post.

McCarthy preserved Southampton's lead with an instinctive tip-over from Darnell Furlong's blast. And Armstrong netted the killer second in the 78th minute when he drilled a fine low finish into the far corner from 12 yards. Eight minutes later, the Saints were ready to march on Wembley after Armstrong made it 23 league goals this season with a clinical penalty after Fellows fouled Ryan Manning. — AFP

Al-Rajhi wins gold, qualifies for Paris 2024 Paralympics

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Disabled Athletics team member Faisal Al-Rajhi won the gold medal and first place in the 5,000 meter wheelchair running of the T54 category during the second day of competitions of the 11th World Disabled Athletics championship being held in Japan.

Al-Rajhi registered a time of 10:50 minutes ahead of Japan's Huo Ghoushi and China's Lu Ghisnez Ghoshnan, and by this Al-Rajhi qualified for the Paris 2024 Paralympics.

Kuwait's national team is headed by Fahad Al-Mutairi and has coaches Nizar Ramadan and Ahmad Harby in addition to players Faisal Al-Rajhi, Faisal Suoor, Dhari Al-Butti and Malak Hadi Al-Enezi.

Al-Mutairi dedicated the win of Al-Rajhi to HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the government and the people of Kuwait. He said "we were honored by the visit of HH the Amir during the month of Ramadan, and the gold medal (Friday) was a response to HH the Amir's advice to the players, and Al-Rajhi fulfilled his promise and had Kuwait's flag hoisted high".

Fahad Al-Mutairi said the championship has 1,000 players from 100 countries, and Kuwait athletes are keen on presenting the best performance and hope to win more medals in the coming days.



Faisal Al-Rajhi



Sadrega Al-Ansari (seated - second right).

Al-Ansari elected chairwoman of families council

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The Council of Special Olympics players' families held its first meeting at Tomooh Sports Club premises and elected Sadrega Al-Ansari as Chairwoman of the Council and Ali Dashti Deputy Chairman. Meanwhile, Essa Dashti, Nour Mohammad Mariam Al-Kandari, Zainab Al-Muaili, Tagwa Al-Najjar, Sumaya Al-Matrouk and Fahad Al-Enezi were elected as members.

Al-Ansari thanked the council for its confidence in her, and said she will exert all efforts to achieve the council's goals to strengthen the families' role and its effective participation in supporting the players and provide them suitable environment to enable them continue making achievements, as the family represents a true motivation power in the lives of Special Olympics players and its role in presenting the most ideal level of care of players in all aspects of their lives and during competition.

She said the council discussed several is-

suues including increasing awareness of Special Olympics activities, encourage families to join the program and exchange ideas that contribute to increasing sport and social activities that are inclusive of players.

Al-Ansari said sports was and will remain the main approach to cause a deep-rooted change in our special needs children's life, and that their practice of various sports contribute to including them with the society, and their acceptance by others".

She said their participation in various competitions plays a major role in changing their lifestyle and supports their abilities to build bridges with others.

She said the council discussed several views and proposals related to societal and educational inclusion, in addition to the programs of training for daily skills and players' personal protection, increase opportunities to make friendships, strengthen positive behaviors, develop the leadership chances and voluntary work, that in addition to benefitting from social media networks by focusing on players and their families.

Al-Ansari thanked the Kuwait Special Olympic and Special Olympics MENA for their support, and she also thanked the players' families.

Sadrega Al-Ansari is also the deputy chairwoman of the first regional Council of Players families in the Special Olympics MENA region.

Pacers pummel Knicks to stay alive in playoffs

LOS ANGELES: The Indiana Pacers produced another big win on their home court Friday, routing the New York Knicks 116-103 to force a decisive game seven in their NBA Eastern Conference semi-final series.

Pascal Siakam scored 25 points to lead Indiana's scoring. Tyrese Haliburton added 15 with nine assists and Myles Turner had 17 points as six Pacers players scored in double figures. On the brink of elimination after an embarrassing game five defeat in New York, the Pacers played with desperate aggression, out-scoring the Knicks 62-38 in the paint and winning the rebounding battle.

They hustled after loose balls, blocked eight shots and handed out 35 assists to keep their offense firing, and kept Knicks talisman Jalen Brunson in check for much of the night as they improved to 6-0 at home in this post-season. They'll have to follow up on the road, however, if they want to book a clash with the Boston Celtics in the Eastern Conference finals, with the Knicks hosting game seven on Sunday at Madison Square Garden.

"Now it's a one game series, and it's for all the marbles," Haliburton said. "Where better to have a game seven than the Garden? "No team's won a game on the road in this series, so we've got to be ready to go from start to finish in 48 minutes."

The Pacers broke open a close game with a 17-2 scoring run that pushed their lead to 13 points late in the second quarter. Donte DiVincenzo stopped the rot for New York, draining a three-pointer from the corner that cut the Pacers' lead to 10, 61-51, at halftime.

Brunson was limited to five points on 2-of-13 shooting in the first half. He found his range after the break, scoring 14 points in the third and finishing with 31. Miles McBride added 20 for the Knicks, whose brief surge to open the third quarter was quickly squelched by the Pacers.

"There really isn't any excuse for anything," Brunson said. "Just the way they played tonight you've got to give them credit." Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said it was a matter of playing harder. He said Siakam, an NBA champion with Toronto in 2019 and acquired from the Raptors in January, had provided a key veteran presence on a young and a crucial skillset that made a big difference on Friday.

"He's the only guy on our roster that can manufacture a 16-foot shot over a seven-foot guy and make it," Carlisle said. "He did it three or four times in the third, fourth quarter." While Carlisle was pleased with his team's bounce-back win, he was already looking ahead to the test awaiting on Sunday. "In a series like this, you can't sit around patting yourself on the back. That's what gets your ass kicked the next game," he said.

Physical, mental test

The Knicks return home with yet another injury concern after forward Josh Hart departed early in the fourth quarter with what the team called abdominal soreness. He'd clearly been troubled by discomfort around his midriff since the first quarter.

It's just the latest blow for the Knicks, who saw forward OG Anunoby go down to a hamstring injury in game two after they were already without Julius Randle, Bojan Bogdanovic and Mitchell Robinson. "We'll see," was head coach Tom Thibodeau's tight-lipped response on whether Hart would be available on Sunday, but he made it clear the Knicks wouldn't be citing injuries as an excuse.

"This is the nature of the playoffs," he said. "This is what you play for. Oftentimes it comes down to a hustle play, a loose ball .. so you're going to get tested physically, mentally, emotionally—and you've got to be able to get through all of that. — AFP

Bayer Leverkusen complete Bundesliga season unbeaten

Leverkusen's rivals Cologne relegated after a 4-1 loss at Heidenheim



LEVERKUSEN: Bayer Leverkusen's Finnish goalkeeper #01 Lukas Hradecky and his teammates celebrate with the Bundesliga trophy after the German first division Bundesliga football match between Bayer 04 Leverkusen and FC Augsburg in Leverkusen, western Germany on May 18, 2024. — AFP

LEVERKUSEN: Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday became the first team in Bundesliga history to go through an entire season unbeaten after a 2-1 home win against Augsburg extended their undefeated streak in all competitions to 51 games.

Crowned Bundesliga champions for the first time in April, goals from Victor Boniface and Robert Andrich put Leverkusen—who play the Europa League final against Atalanta and the German Cup final this week—on course for victory.

Elsewhere, Leverkusen's rivals Cologne were relegated after a 4-1 loss at Heidenheim. Union Berlin scored in stoppage time against Freiburg to win 2-1 and beat the drop, leapfrogging Bochum who will play a two-legged relegation play-off against second-division Fortuna Duesseldorf after losing 4-1 at Werder Bremen.

Xabi Alonso's Leverkusen took the lead after 12 minutes when Amine Adli forced Augsburg goalkeeper Tomas Koubek into an error, winning possession before squaring for Boniface to tap in from close range. Midfield star Andrich doubled Leverkusen's lead, backheeling in a rebound after 27 minutes.

Augsburg teenager Mert Komor pulled one back on his first start for the visitors with a stunning strike on the 62nd-minute mark, but Leverkusen held on to win ahead of what could be an historic week. At the other end of the table, Union—who were playing Champions League against the likes of Real Madrid as recently as December—were locked 1-1 at home to Freiburg in stoppage time and headed for a relegation playoff clash with Duesseldorf.

Union had been reduced to 10 men when Michael Gspurning was red carded with four minutes remain-

ing but won a penalty just into stoppage time. Kevin Volland missed the spotkick but Janik Haberer was there to turn in the rebound and save Berlin.

Bochum, who looked to have secured top-division football with a 4-3 win at Union Berlin two weeks ago, will now need to beat Duesseldorf in a home and away playoff. The loser of that playoff will play second division football with Cologne as well as Darmstadt who were relegated earlier in the season.

Serhou Guirassy scored a brace as Stuttgart won 4-0 at home against Borussia Moenchengladbach, leapfrogging Bayern Munich, who lost 4-2 to an Andrej Kramaric-inspired Hoffenheim, into second spot. Without the injured Harry Kane, Bayern were 2-0 up after just six minutes thanks to goals from Mathys Tel and Alphonso Davies. Maximilian Beier, selected as part of Germany's Euros squad on Thurs-

day, cut the deficit two minutes later, capitalising on a Manuel Neuer error to make it 2-1.

Kramaric then scored three goals in 20 minutes to turn the match on its head. Bayern finished outside the top two for the first time since 2010-11. Borussia Dortmund veteran Marco Reus signed off in impressive style in his last home match, scoring a goal and laying on another in a 4-0 win over Darmstadt. In Dortmund's last competitive outing before June's Champions League final clash with Real Madrid at Wembley, Reus set up Ian Maatsen for the opener after 30 minutes, then added one of his own from a free kick eight minutes later. Julian Brandt and Donyell Malen added second-half goals to seal the win. Eintracht Frankfurt came from two goals down to draw 2-2 at home with RB Leipzig, while Mainz came from behind to win 3-1 at Wolfsburg. — AFP

Brazil to host 2027 Women's World Cup

BANGKOK: The Women's World Cup will take place in South America for the first time after Brazil was chosen to host the 2027 edition at a FIFA congress Friday marked by debate about the war in Gaza. After the success of Australia and New Zealand last year, FIFA members picked Brazil over a European bid in a push to expand women's football to new continents.

Delegates meeting in Bangkok voted by 119 votes to 78 to send the 10th Women's World Cup to the land of samba football, beating a joint bid from Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. The decision sparked celebrations from the Brazilian bid team.

Brazilian Football Confederation President Ednaldo Rodrigues hailed it as a "victory for Latin American football and for women's football in Latin America". Brazil, home of women's football great Marta, scored higher than its European rival in FIFA's evaluation report. FIFA inspectors had noted the "tremendous impact on women's football in the region" that South America hosting the Women's World Cup would have.

Brazil's bid includes 10 stadiums used for the men's World Cup in 2014, with Rio de Janeiro's famous Maracana lined up for the opening match and final. But work needs to be done, in particular to the Amazonia stadium in Manaus which has stood almost unused for a decade.

Unlike their male counterparts, who have won five World Cups, Brazil's women have never lifted the trophy and made a group-stage exit in 2023. Last year's tournament set records, including earning \$570 million in commercial revenue.

On the pitch it defied fears that increasing the size from 24 to 32 teams would dilute the spectacle, with over 1.4 million fans streaming through the turnstiles to witness a host of shocks. Gone were



BANGKOK: FIFA President Gianni Infantino announces Brazil as the hosts of the 2027 Women's World Cup during the 74th FIFA Congress in Bangkok.

the lopsided scorelines that were a feature of previous World Cups, reflecting a growth in the standard of women's football.

Seven teams notched their first World Cup wins and the United States and Germany, who between them had won six of the previous eight tournaments, were both dumped out early. The only sour note came in the aftermath of last year's final in Sydney, in which Spain beat England 1-0.

Spanish football federation chief Luis Rubiales sparked outrage when he forcibly kissed midfielder Jenni Hermoso during the medal ceremony, and now faces prosecution for sexual assault.

The 74th FIFA congress, making its debut in Thailand, made its choice by open vote for the first time as the organisation seeks to move on from the corruption and shady dealing that dogged it in the past. Delegates had their choice simplified last month when the United States and Mexico withdrew their joint bid, deciding instead to focus on trying to win the right to stage the 2031 edition.

As the Brazil tournament approaches, the focus will be on the huge financial disparity between men's and women's football. Prize money for the 2023 Women's World Cup was a record \$110 million, but that was still far short of the \$440 million on offer to teams at the 2022 men's finals in Qatar. — AFP

Zverev equals Becker record to set up Rome final with Jarry

ROME: Germany's Alexander Zverev equalled compatriot Boris Becker's record by reaching an 11th Masters final on Friday when he ended the Rome Open giant-killing run of Alejandro Tabilo to set-up a title showdown against Nicolas Jarry.

World number five Zverev, who lifted the Rome trophy in 2017, battled back to see off Tabilo 1-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 to tie Becker's record for the most Masters finals by a German since the series began in 1990. Third seed Zverev looked like he would become the latest high-ranking victim of an unusual men's tournament when he was battered in a sensational opening set.

But Zverev battled back and after coming through a tight second set his class eventually showed, making the final at the Foro Italico for the third time. "I was just hanging on in the second set. I brought my energy up. I was really just hanging on and waiting and the patience was kind of good today," Zverev said on court.

"He hit me off the court in the first set and I did not play well at all, but he was a big reason why. He gave me no rhythm and I am happy I turned it around in the tie-break and ran away in the third set." Tabilo's run to the last four had become one of the stories of a tournament which was shed of a host of top men players either to pre-event injuries or shock early eliminations. The 26-year-old Chilean had defeated world number one Novak Djokovic in the third round and the 32nd-ranked player showed little fear of Zverev until he began to play more passively in the second set tie-break.

Jarry ends Paul's hopes

Zverev will be a big favourite to win Sunday's championship match when he faces Tabilo's countryman Jarry, who won his first Masters 1000 semi-fi-



ROME: Germany's Alexander Zverev returns to Chile's Alejandro Tabilo during a semi final of the Men's ATP Rome Open tennis tournament at Foro Italico in Rome. — AFP

nal against Tommy Paul 6-3, 6-7 (3/7), 6-3. Jarry is guaranteed to move up to a career-high number 17 in the world rankings after reaching his seventh ATP final. The 28-year-old is hunting his fourth tour title after coming through a more prosaic encounter with American Paul than Zverev had with Tabilo. Jarry took the first set after breaking in game eight.

Paul fought back and won a more eventful second set, but instead of pushing on he missed the chance to become the first American to reach the Rome final since Andre Agassi 22 years ago. Jarry sealed the deal after wasting four match points in the most dramatic game of the contest, setting up the biggest match of his career.

"I was able to come back with my tennis in the third set, play very aggressive. To finish the match is never easy but I made it through and it's an amazing feeling," said Jarry. "I think that in those moments I play my best tennis, when I have to give it all and I go for it." Italian fans will have something to cheer for on Sunday after Sara Errani and Jasmine Paolini reached the women's doubles final where they will face Coco Gauff and Erin Routliffe. Home supporters were denied the chance to see world number two Jannik Sinner and former Wimbledon finalist Matteo Berrettini who pulled out before the event started. — AFP