

R₊
RIDE SAFE

BOOK YOUR RIDE NOW

DOWNLOAD THE APP NOW

@ridesafe.app

5 Xi: China 'deeply pained' by 'severe' Gaza situation



8 Egypt hikes bread prices for first time in decades



11 School is life for deaf children in Pakistan



16 Barca appoint Flick, Bayern name Kompany new coach



Wheel of progress: Amir opens Al-Zour Refinery

New megaproject helps Kuwait reach record capacity of 1.83m bpd



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah officially inaugurates the Al-Zour Refinery on May 29, 2024. — KUNA

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah officially inaugurated the Al-Zour Refinery on Wednesday, which marks the start of its full operations. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil Dr Emad Al-Atiqi expressed pride in the presence of HH the Amir and highlighted the significant milestone of reaching an unprecedented refining capacity of 1.83 million barrels per day across six refineries.

Three of these are in Kuwait (Mina Al-Ahmadi, Mina Abdullah and Al-Zour) producing 1.415 million barrels per day, and three are abroad (Duqm in Oman, Nghe Son in Vietnam and Milazzo in Italy), with Kuwait's share being 415,000 barrels per day. OPEC member Kuwait aims to reach a production capacity of 4 million bpd by 2035.

Al-Zour Refinery is a key project under Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's 2040 strategic plan, aiming to produce high-quality oil derivatives that meet international environmental standards and supply clean fuel locally. The refinery supports the New Kuwait vision for 2035 by enhancing product profitability, opening new global markets and reinforcing Kuwait's status as a major energy provider. The project has also created jobs for 667 national employees.

Acting CEO of the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company Wadha Al-Khatib emphasized the refinery's significance, noting its refining capacity of 615,000 barrels per day and its role in boosting Kuwait's export and marketing capabilities. Al-Zour Refinery is designed to handle various Kuwaiti oils, produce high-quality derivatives and export to over 30 countries while meeting local energy needs. The refinery includes the world's largest sulfur removal complex. (See Page 3)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cop held over extortion

KUWAIT: The public prosecution said on Wednesday it detained a policeman for extorting money from members of the Asian community. The prosecution said in a statement the policeman used to arrest the Asians and hold them illegally at a police station, then falsely accused them of trading in alcohol to extort money from them. The statement said the prosecution interrogated the policeman on charges of extortion and abusing his powers.

Lula pulls envoy from Zionist entity

BRASILIA: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva removed his ambassador to the Zionist entity from his post and sent him to serve as his special representative in Geneva amid a diplomatic spat between the two countries, the official gazette showed on Wednesday. The removal of Frederico Meyer comes a few months after Lula called him back to Brazil. — Reuters (See Page 5)

Houthis attack 6 ships in 3 seas

DUBAI: Yemen's Houthis launched attacks at six ships in three different seas, including the Marshall Islands-flagged bulk carrier Laax that was damaged after reporting a Houthi missile strike off the coast of Yemen. The Houthis also launched attacks against the Morea and Sealady vessels in the Red Sea, the Alba and Maersk Hartford in the Arabian Sea and the Minvera Antonia in the Mediterranean. — Reuters

Zionists pound Rafah, US won't change policy

GAZA: Street fighting and Zionist bombardment rocked Rafah in the Gaza Strip Wednesday, residents and officials said, a day after Zionist tanks rolled into the center of the city near the Egyptian border. The Zionist army pushed on with its mission to defeat Hamas in the war raging since Oct 7, despite a global outcry that intensified after a deadly strike set ablaze a crowded camp on Sunday night.

The UN Security Council was set to meet for a second day of emergency talks after that strike ignited a fire that Gaza officials said killed 45 people and injured about 250. UN chief Antonio Guterres was among the many leaders to voice revulsion at the bloodshed, demanding that "this horror must stop".

Delhi swelters in record heat

NEW DELHI: Temperatures in India's capital soared to a national record-high of 52.3 degrees Celsius on Wednesday, figures from the government's weather bureau showed, as it warned of dangerous heat levels in the sprawling megacity, causing students to faint in schools and drinking water taps to dry up. The India Meteorological Department (IMD), which reported "severe heat-wave conditions", published the temperature automatically on its website after it was recorded by a station in the Delhi suburb of Mungeshpur on Wednesday afternoon.

However, IMD meteorologist Soma Sen Roy cautioned that officers were

"checking out" whether the station had recorded it correctly. The recording not only broke the landmark 50C measurement for the first time ever in the city, but smashed the previous national record in the desert of Rajasthan by more than one degree Celsius.

The IMD has issued a red alert health notice for Delhi, which has an estimated population of more than 30 million people. The alert warns there is a "very high likelihood of developing heat illness and heat stroke in all ages", with "extreme care needed for vulnerable people". As people sought relief from the scorching temperatures, the electricity grid groaned under a record peak power demand of 8,302 megawatts, according to official data. Delhi city authorities on Wednesday also warned of dire water

Continued on Page 6

Continued on Page 6



GAZA: Palestinians fleeing with their belongings drive their donkey-drawn carriage in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on May 29, 2024. — AFP



NEW DELHI: A man rides his cycle on a hot summer day during a heatwave in Narela in the Indian capital on May 29, 2024. — Reuters



KRCS raises money for field hospital in Gaza

Kuwait affirms stance against aggression on Palestinians



KRCS provides medical equipment to help Gazans. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) launched on Wednesday a donation campaign via its website to back operating budgets for its field hospital in Gaza Strip. KRCS Chairperson Dr Hilal Al-Sayer said in a statement to KUNA that the campaign was launched with the aim of affirming society's commitment to support sustainable humanitarian activities and provide medications to the Palestinian brothers. He has indicated urgency for continuing support for "the brethren in Gaza that are witnessing work halts in many hospitals due to the Zionist offensives that have also destroyed a bevy of them."

The society has intensified work to finalize the hospital inauguration and begin actual operations as soon as possible, Dr Al-Sayer said, indicating that all needed equipment for the vital humanitarian project had already been sent into the enclave—in cooperation with the Palestinian and Egyptian Red Crescents. Dr Al-Sayer added that the society, since the onset of the occupa-



tion aggression on the strip, has been sending in relief, medical assistance, daily meals, and ambulance vehicles in collaboration "with local and international partners."

He has underlined the urgency of the

situation in the enclave, where many hospitals and medical centers have been damaged, calling upon private companies and citizens to donate via the KRCS electronic website, www.krcs.org/kw/ar, or directly at the soci-

ety's headquarters. The field hospital, which occupies a 750-square-meter plot of land, is equipped with medical devices and includes an operation room, intensive care units, baby incubators, an X-ray section, a pharmacy, and a laboratory.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Ministry of Foreign Affairs has affirmed its firm stance against Zionist aggression on Palestinian refugee camps in the city of Rafah. In a statement, the ministry mentioned that Kuwait renewed its call for the international community to pressurize and stop the aggression on innocent Palestinians in front of the eyes of the whole world without being accountable for those crimes. It stressed the deliberate targeting of the refugee camps in Rafah and the killing of innocent civilians, showing that this entity has no humanity and no peace. The ministry renewed its call for the importance of forcing peace solutions by the security council and respecting international laws. — KUNA

Information minister hails Bahrain's efforts

MANAMA: Kuwait's Minister of Information and Culture, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi has praised the progress and prosperity achieved in Kuwaiti-Bahraini relations, noting the Kingdom's endeavors and efforts in supporting joint Gulf and Arab action. The remarks were made during Minister Al-Mutairi's meeting with the Bahraini Minister of Information, Dr Ramzan bin Abdullah Al-Noaimi, on the occasion of his visit to the Kingdom to participate in the 54th session of the Council of Arab Information Ministers, hosted in Manama.

Minister Al-Mutairi expressed his confidence that Bahrain provides all the elements that would guarantee the success of the current session of the Council of Arab Information Ministers, especially after the great success it achieved in hosting and chairing the 33rd Arab Summit in mid-May. Al-Mutairi also expressed his wishes for the

Kingdom of Bahrain and its people for further renaissance and prosperity.

For his part, the Bahraini Minister said that Kuwait possesses a distinguished media system and expertise that has a clear contribution to expressing the bright reality of Gulf and Arab media, pointing to the Kingdom's interest in strengthening media cooperation with Kuwait in a way that serves their common interests. Minister Al-Noaimi stressed the strong and solid bonds of bilateral relations between the two countries, which are witnessing continuous development and growth under the support and care of both countries' leadership. The Bahraini Minister praised the keenness of both sides to develop the pace of bilateral cooperation between them in all fields, especially the media sector.

GCC praises Bahrain

Meanwhile, GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi has lauded Bahrain's hosting of the Gulf Radio and Television Festival since 1994, an event dedicated to honoring excelling youth and encouraging media creativity in the Gulf countries. Al-Budaiwi was speaking during his participation in the in-



Bahraini Minister of Information, Dr Ramzan bin Abdullah Al-Noaimi receives his Kuwaiti counterpart Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi. — KUNA

auguration of the festival's 16th edition, late on Tuesday, at Bahrain National Theater.

The activity was sponsored by the First Deputy of the Chair at the Supreme Council for Sports and Youth, Sheikh Khaled Bin Hamad. The GCC Secretary General expressed deep gratitude and appreciation to the government and people of the Kingdom of Bahrain for organizing the 16th session, which was complementary to the previous successful sessions.

He also praised the efforts of the

personnel serving at the radio and television stations in the GCC countries, affirming his keenness on boosting cooperation among the official television institutions in the council's member states. The activity was organized by the Bahraini Ministry of Information in cooperation with the radio and television authorities of the GCC countries, with the attendance of Arab ministers of information, including Kuwait Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, and elite figures of the media sector. — KUNA

Amir pays assiduous attention to public funds' protection

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, stated that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is paying great attention to the protection of public funds. Speaking at the Cabinet meeting after the new President of the State Audit Bureau, Essam Al-Roumi, took the legal oath, His Highness the Premier emphasized the State Audit Bureau's (SAB) pivotal role in preserving public funds. Protecting public funds is a responsibility of both the government and SAB, His Highness added.

He clarified that SAB has a clear role in supervising government work to make sure that public funds are not squandered and to facilitate the execution of development projects. His Highness the Premier noted that several development projects have been delayed due to the end of the Central Agency for Public Tenders' board stint. Earlier, the government agreed on a draft decree forming a new board for the CAPT.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmad disclosed that an enormous number of development projects are in the pipeline. He urged SAB to cooperate with the government to speed up the priority of these projects. His Highness the Premier instructed the ministers and other government officials to cooperate with SAB to accelerate the implementation of projects. "We are on the cusp of a new era of achievements for the best interests of the state and people both at home and abroad," he said. — KUNA

KPC CEO lauds Amir's support

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Chief Executive Officer Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah expressed his appreciation on Wednesday to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for supporting and attending the opening ceremony of Al-Zour Refinery. In a statement to KUNA, Sheikh Nawaf said that His Highness the Amir continuously supports Kuwait's oil sector in implementing the strategic long-term plan to raise its oil production capacity to 4 million barrels per day. Al-Zour Refinery is the world's largest grass-roots refinery with 615,000 bpd capacity, noting that the refinery will have high flexibility as it is designed to process various types of Kuwait crude, including Kuwait Heavy Crude (KHC) oil, which will be produced according to the KPC's upstream strategy. — KUNA



Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah

12th grade students start final exams



KUWAIT: The final exams for 12th grade students for the year 2023-2024 started on Wednesday for both sciences and arts disciplines. The 27,283 science students and the 14,817 arts students were eager to start their exams and do their best to succeed in their studies and build a bright future. —KUNA

SAB underlines importance of governance principles

KUWAIT: Undersecretary of Kuwait State Audit Bureau (SAB), Yousef Al-Mazrouei, has underscored the importance of establishing governance principles and contributing to the development of preventive oversight mechanisms that help predict future events and implement necessary proactive measures to confront them. In his statement on the sidelines of the "Internal Audit: Leadership and Sustainability" forum organized by the bureau on Wednesday, Al-Mazrouei emphasized that numerous variables that have resulted in economic impacts require collaborative efforts to address them.

The bureau is committed to enhancing and developing cooperation with all entities under its supervision to ensure the proper conduct of financial and accounting work and the fulfillment of their tasks, he explained. On his side, Director of Internal Audit Department at the Audit Bureau, Dr Adnan



Yousef Al-Mazrouei



Dr Adnan Al-Hasan

Al-Hasan, stated that the forum aims to improve the efficiency of internal auditing within the bureau and the entities it oversees.

The forum also aims to exchange experiences between internal audit offices and government entities, transfer expertise between the public and private sectors, and raise awareness among all government entities about the significance of internal auditing, Al-Hasan added. SAB has trained over 300 internal auditors in government entities and qualified about 35 trainers across governments to enhance efficiency and train internal auditors to perform their duties, he noted. — KUNA



Audience listening during the 'Internal Audit: Leadership and Sustainability' forum. — KUNA photos

Al-Zour Refinery inauguration a milestone in Kuwait's oil sector

One of the largest refining projects in the world boosts capacity to unprecedented levels



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah inaugurates the Al-Zour Refinery, marking the commencement of its full operations on Wednesday. — Photos by Amiri Diwan and Yasser Al-Zayyat



HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah waves after opening the Al-Zour Refinery.



Kuwait Times Deputy Editor-in-Chief Dr Ziad Al-Alyan, Health Minister Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi and KIPIC's Abdulrahman Al-Alyan are pictured during the event.

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: Under the presence and patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Al-Zour Refinery was inaugurated on Wednesday, marking the commencement of its full operations. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil Dr Emad Muhammad Al-Atiqi conveyed the privilege felt by the Kuwaiti oil sector in hosting His Highness the Amir at the event, while expressing heartfelt wishes for his protection and prosperity.

By inaugurating Al-Zour Refinery, The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil stated that the oil sector has succeeded in reaching an unprecedented refining capacity of 1.83 million barrels per day. This capacity, he noted, is distributed among six oil refineries, three of which are inside Kuwait: Mina Al-Ahmadi, Mina Abdullah, and Al-Zour, which produce (altogether), 1.415 million barrels per day, and three outside it, which are (Duqm) in the Sultanate of Oman, (Nghe Son) in Vietnam, and (Milazzo) in Italy, of which Kuwait's share of its total production is about 415,000 barrels per day.

International standards

During his speech, Al-Atiqi pointed to Al-Zour Refinery as one of the most important projects of the development plan in Kuwait, particularly as one of the key pillars of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's 2040 strategic plan. The plan aims to produce high-quality oil derivatives that comply with international environmental standards and requirements, while also supplying clean fuel to local power stations, addressing the escalating demand for electricity



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil Dr Emad Muhammad Al-Atiqi



Acting CEO of Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company Wadha Ahmed Al-Khatib

and energy fueled by population growth and urban expansion in the country.

Bringing the development vision of "New Kuwait 2035" into reality, he stated, "this pioneering project contributes to increasing the profitability of our products, opening new global markets for these products, and enhancing the leadership position of Kuwait as a major global energy provider." Additionally, he highlighted the project's contribution to creating job opportunities for national employees, with 667 individuals, recent graduates (with university degrees and diplomas) being engaged in the completion of this monumental national asset.

Amid the global intense competition in the oil sector, fast paced developments, along with the ongoing challenges, Al-Atiqi stressed that the sector is giving its full potential to remain competitive and maintain Kuwait's position as one of the most im-

portant countries producing oil and its derivatives. This, as he mentioned, has been achieved through the sector's commitment to investing in modern technologies and the development of the capabilities and skills of human capital that has long contributed to the country's wealth.

The acting CEO of the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company Engineer, Wadha Ahmed Al-Khatib, noted the importance of this day as it celebrates the full operation - which is considered one of the largest refining projects in the world, with a refining capacity of 615,000 barrels per day. She stated that the project, along with the environmental fuel project at the Mina Al-Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah refineries, mark the beginning of a new era in the progress of the Kuwaiti oil sector. "This advancement enables Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and its subsidiaries to expand their export and marketing

capabilities, allowing them to access new international markets," Khatib added.

Efficiency, eco-friendly practices

Describing Al-Zour Refinery, she highlighted its high flexibility in refining operations. "It is designed to process Kuwaiti oils of varying specifications, making it a vital strategic hub for handling heavy oils. The refinery has the capability to produce high-quality oil derivatives, including jet fuel, diesel, chemical naphtha, and low-sulfur fuel oil," added Khatib. These products, according to her, are exported to more than 30 regional and international countries via the refinery's sea island, while also meeting the local power plants' need for low-sulfur fuel oil for electricity production.

According to Khatib, the refinery also contains the largest complex of units for removing sulfur from waste oil and from the atmospheric distillation unit. The refinery raises the refining capacity of the country's refineries from 800,000 barrels per day to 1.415 million barrels per day. Additionally, Al-Zour Refinery is designed to utilize treated water for industrial and irrigation purposes. "It features special stations to monitor air quality and employs advanced furnaces and boilers to reduce emissions. This is part of an integrated environmental system which is aimed at controlling and monitoring environmental impact," she explained.

To fulfill Kuwait's commitment in achieving carbon neutrality by the year 2050, she concluded by noting that the oil sector is keen to play an active and influential role within global efforts in the field of energy transformation, contributing to confronting the challenges of climate change and environmental protection.



Staff and officials from the oil sector pose for group photos.



Handout pictures provided by the Al-Zour oil Refinery on May 29, 2024 shows a view of the facility.

Kuwait Times
Established 1961THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYANEditor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYANEDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24833199 Extn. 359
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 220
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125
P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.com

Amir congratulates information minister

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent cables of congratulations to the Information and Culture Minister Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and the Editor-in-Chief of Al-Arabi Al-Sagheer Magazine, Ibrahim Al-Mulaifi, on the occasion of winning the Arab Media Award during a ceremony held in Dubai on May 28. In the cable, His Highness the Amir praised the efforts spent by the team of Al-Arabi Al-Sagheer Magazine since its establishment four decades ago and their keenness to raise awareness about educating young people through priceless and valuable cultural topics, wishing the Information Minister and leaders of the magazine progress and prosperity. — KUNA

MoH holds workshop on oral health during WHO's assembly

VIENNA: The Kuwait Ministry of Health has organized, in cooperation with the ministries of health in Ireland and Canada, a workshop themed "Executing the action papers of the World Health Organization for oral health." The activity was held during meetings of the WHO General Assembly's 77th session, launched on Sunday. According to a statement released by Kuwait Permanent Mission to the UN and International Organizations in Geneva, the participating states presented their experience in implementing the international plan for oral health (2023-2030) by the WHO General Assembly in 2021.

Dr Aisha Al-Sumait, supervisor of the oral health department at the MoH, shed light in her address on Kuwait's remarkable program of providing medical and protective care at schools, in line with the WHO recommendations. Dr. Al-Sumait touched on in her statement the ministry's future plan for expanding medical services to citizens from birth to the age of 16, as part of the approach to achieving full care and stemming the spread of mouth diseases.

The activity was co-organized by Dr Abdulrahman Al-Gashaan, the health attaché of the State of Kuwait mission at the international health organizations in Geneva, a delegation from the MoH headed by Dr Munther Al-Hawasi, the assistant undersecretary for public health affairs, and the head of the international organizations' division at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health, Dr Mohammad Alfraih. It was attended by the State of Kuwait Ambassador and Permanent Representative at the UN and International Organizations in Geneva, Nasser Al-Hayen. — KUNA

Kuwait seeks integrated and comprehensive healthcare

Strategy aims to realize the concept of health for all

GENEVA: Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, Nasser Abdullah Al-Hayen, said that the Vision 2035 of his country materializes a deep belief that public health is a basic right for every human being. "The health strategy of Kuwait aims to realize the concept of health for all in keeping with the new strategy of the World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA)," he said in a speech to the 77th World Health Assembly of the World Medical Association (WMA) being held in Geneva.

Kuwait's health strategy seeks to provide comprehensive and integrated healthcare for all segments of society, covering all age categories, regardless of their social or economic backgrounds or nationalities, in a fair and equitable way, Ambassador Al-Hayen

affirmed. "Kuwait plays a noticeable role in providing healthcare and backing public health on a regional scale in a sustainable way in several countries.

"Kuwait also takes part in international humanitarian programs by helping provide effective support to the combat against communicable and non-communicable diseases in vulnerable communities," he pointed out. On the situation in the Gaza Strip, Ambassador Al-Hayen condemned the Zionist occupation forces for targeting the health facilities in defiance of the global attempts to "halt the criminal war on Gaza."

Regretting the tragic situation in Gaza, he urged the international community, notably the UN Security Council, to shoulder their responsibility for halting the atrocity in Gaza, restoring peace, and ensuring Gazans'

access to healthcare. Ambassador Al-Hayen reaffirmed Kuwait's support for the efforts aiming to restore peace in the Middle East on the basis of the two-state vision for establishing an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders and with Jerusalem as its capital city.

On Sunday, May 26, on the eve of the 77th World Health Assembly, WHPA launched its new strategy, calling for the health professions and key stakeholders to work together towards sustainable health workforces and strengthened health systems. The strategy, launched at a reception in Geneva celebrating the Alliance's 25th anniversary, aims to invigorate the WHPA's role as the only alliance bringing the expertise and concerns of the key health professions to the international stage. — KUNA



Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva Nasser Al-Hayen.



US Embassy honors distinguished active Kuwaiti alumni

KUWAIT: US Embassy hosted a vibrant reception and networking event at the Radisson Blu Hotel to honor distinguished and active Kuwaiti alumni who have studied in the United States. More than one hundred Kuwaiti alumni attended the reception to celebrate the enduring educational exchange between Kuwait and the United States.

US Ambassador to Kuwait, Karen Sasahara, underscored the profound historical ties between Kuwait and the United States, emphasizing the pivotal role that educational exchange plays in strengthening bilateral relations over the past six decades. She highlighted that five generations of Kuwaitis pursued their academic endeavors in the United States, contributing to the deepening of understanding and cooperation between the two nations.

Ambassador Sasahara remarked, "As someone from Boston, a city known for its rich academic her-



itage, I am proud to witness the transformative impact of educational exchange. Boston epitomizes the spirit of learning and critical thinking that defines the US education model. By fostering a robust network of alumni, we aim to facilitate ongoing collaboration and exchange between Kuwait and the United

States, thereby contributing to mutual prosperity and understanding." The event provided a platform for Kuwaiti alumni to share their enriching experiences studying in the United States. Moreover, it enhances further engagement within the local business community and the Embassy.

Modern technology helps in developing Arab media

DUBAI: Kuwaiti media professionals stressed the importance of benefiting from modern technology, considering it to be the basis of media development in the Arab world and building interactive relationships with the public. In separate statements to KUNA during their participation in the "Arab Media Summit," media professionals unanimously agreed on the importance of taking advantage of modern technologies and social media to enhance communication and improve the spread of information effectively in society.

Journalist and academic Dr Mohammad Al-Rumaihi expressed his thanks and appreciation to the UAE for organizing this summit, which brought together a large group of media professionals, writers, and specialists. He also stressed the need to investigate the quality of information provided by the media or social media to the public to improve communication.

Kuwaiti journalist Mohammed Al-Mulla said that achieving an ideal media environment in the Arab world requires governments and media institutions to provide the necessary support to achieve these factors, as well as cooperation between society and the public and private sectors. For his part, journalist and writer on Gulf affairs, Dr Issa Al-Amiri, said that the media industry worldwide is witnessing a major transformation based on the development of modern technologies in providing media content, which is now establishing new rules for media work that will shape the media landscape.

He stated that the most prominent modern technological developments are the use of artificial in-



Journalist and writer on Gulf affairs Dr Issa Al-Amiri



Kuwaiti journalist Mohammed Al-Mulla



Radio and television broadcaster Ali Najim



Journalist and academic Dr Mohammad Al-Rumaihi

telligence and the delivery of media materials through digital channels and social media, which play a vital role in expanding the circle of audiences and interacting with them. Radio and television broadcaster Ali Najim said that encouraging innovation, creativity, and supporting alternative media that provide diverse and attractive content to the public, such as podcasts, contributes to developing the media scene in the region. — KUNA

Kuwait, Saudi ministers discuss investment ties

RIYADH: Kuwait's Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs, Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf, and Saudi counterpart Khaled Al-Faleh on Wednesday explored ways to strengthen cooperation in the economic

and investment fields. In a statement to KUNA, Al-Mudhaf said that both sides agreed during a meeting after their participation in the GCC and Central Asia Investment Forum on the importance of strengthening mutual investments between both countries. They also discussed Kuwait's upcoming big projects, including Mubarak Port, Failaka Island, the GCC railway project, and the Kuwait-Saudi railway link, as well as various other topics of common interest. — KUNA



Scan & Subscribe
KD 20 a year

For Individuals Only



Scan Now

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



Tel: 24833199 Ext: 220



N Korea sends balloons of feces to the south as a 'gift'

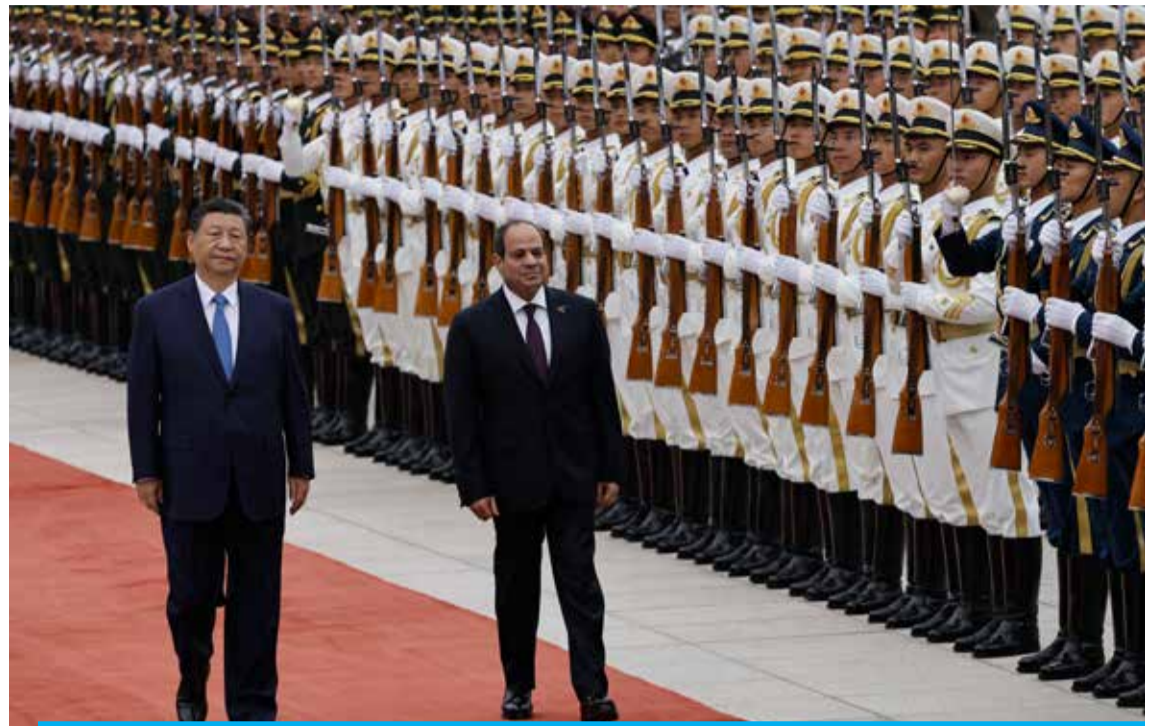
Lava spews again in Iceland

Page 6

Page 7



BEIJING: Students cheer as they rehearse before a welcome ceremony for Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on May 29, 2024. — AFP photos



Chinese President Xi Jinping and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi review the honor guard during the welcome ceremony.

Xi: China 'deeply pained' by 'severe' Gaza situation

Beijing's stance on Gaza serves its focus on undermining US credibility in Arab world: Analyst

BEIJING: President Xi Jinping told his Egyptian counterpart on Wednesday that China was "deeply pained" by the "extremely severe" situation in Gaza, as Beijing hosts Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and several other Arab leaders.

The talks between Xi, Sisi and other Arab dignitaries in China this week are aimed at building consensus between Beijing and the Arab nations, as well as presenting a "common voice" as the Zionist entity continues its assault on Gaza.

China has good relations with the Zionist entity but has supported the Palestinian cause for decades and has campaigned for a two-state solution. "The current round of the Palestinian-(Zionist) conflict has caused a large number of innocent Palestinian civilian casualties and the humanitarian situation in Gaza is extremely severe. China is deeply pained," Xi told Sisi in Beijing, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

"The top priority task now is an immediate ceasefire, in order to avoid spillover of conflict, impact on regional peace and stability, and so as to prevent a

more serious humanitarian crisis," Xi said.

Egypt, along with Qatar and the United States, have been engaged for months in talks aimed at securing a lasting truce between the Zionist entity and Hamas, accompanied by the release of hostages kidnapped by the Palestinian militant group.

"China appreciates the important role played by Egypt in cooling down the situation and delivering humanitarian relief," Xi said. He said China was ready to work with Egypt to continue to assist the people of Gaza "and push for an early, comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian issue".

Grand ceremony

Xi met Sisi in a grand ceremony outside Beijing's Great Hall of People on Wednesday afternoon, state media footage showed, with the national anthems of both countries blaring out.

During their discussion, Sisi stressed the need to stop the fighting in Gaza, "the extreme danger of (Zionist) military operations" underway in the Gazan city of Rafah, and "the resulting humanitarian traged-

ies and casualties", the Egyptian presidency said in a statement.

In recent years, Beijing has sought to build closer ties with Arab states and brokered a detente between Tehran and its long-time foe Saudi Arabia last year. Beijing also hosted rival Palestinian groups Hamas and Fatah last month for "in-depth and candid talks on promoting intra-Palestinian reconciliation".

United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan is among the delegates attending the forum, as well as a host of other regional leaders and diplomats.

Xi is set to deliver a keynote speech at the opening ceremony on Thursday, Beijing has said, aimed at building "common consensus" between China and Arab states. Top of the agenda will be the Zionist war on Gaza, for which Xi has sought an "international peace conference".

'Strategic opportunity'

China sees a "strategic opportunity to boost its

reputation and standing in the Arab world" by framing its efforts to end the conflict against US inaction, Ahmed Aboudouh, an associate fellow with the Chatham House Middle East and North Africa Programme, told AFP.

"This, in turn, serves Beijing's focus on undermining the US's credibility and influence in the region." "The longer the war, the easier for China to pursue this objective," he said.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met counterparts from Yemen and Sudan in Beijing on Tuesday, saying he hoped to "strengthen solidarity and coordination" with the Arab world. He also raised with his Yemeni counterpart Shaye Mohsen al-Zindani China's concerns over disruptive attacks on Red Sea shipping by Iran-backed Houthi forces acting in solidarity with Hamas.

"China calls for an end to the harassment of civilian vessels and to ensure the safety of waterways in the Red Sea," state news agency Xinhua quoted him as saying. — AFP

Brazil recalls envoy to Zionist entity: Diplomatic sources

BRASILIA: Brazil has recalled its ambassador to the Zionist entity, a diplomatic source told AFP Wednesday, ratcheting up tensions between the two countries over the entity's war in Gaza.

The nearly eight-month-old conflict has soured the Zionist entity's diplomatic ties with several nations, including Brazil, whose President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in February accused the country's government of genocide.

The Zionist entity reacted furiously, declaring the Brazilian leader persona non grata. The entity had previously summoned the South American country's ambassador Frederico Meyer to a meeting at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial center in Jerusalem, where he was publicly reprimanded in Hebrew without a translator present, said the Brazilian source.

This "humiliation" to which Meyer was subjected contributed to his permanent recall, the source said. The source said conditions had not been met for Meyer to return to the Zionist entity and there are no immediate plans to replace him.

Brazil will now be represented in the entity by diplomat Fabio Farias. The Zionist foreign ministry said in a statement it had not yet received "an official notification about the matter." Farias "will be summoned to the foreign ministry tomorrow for a meeting on the subject," said the ministry. Growing outcry

Lula, a prominent voice for the global south whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of the G20, has faced pushback at home from the far right over his comments. However, he has received support elsewhere in Latin America, notably from Colombia's President Gustavo Petro, who went so far as to sever ties with the Zionist entity.

Both Brazil and Colombia have supported South Africa's complaint against the entity to the International Court of Justice in The Hague, alleging the Gaza assault amounted to a breach of the Genocide Convention.

On Friday, Lula expressed his "tremendous sadness" after the Zionist army announced that it had recovered the bodies of three hostages, including that of a Brazilian who holds Zionist citizenship, Michel Nisenbaum. He added he was "committed to the efforts to free all the hostages, and to achieve a ceasefire and peace for the people of (the Zionist entity) and Palestine." — AFP

How Trump's hush money trial could affect 2024 poll

WASHINGTON: Jurors hearing the first-ever criminal trial of a former US president began their deliberations on Wednesday in Donald Trump's hush money case, weighing a verdict with potentially big implications for the 2024 White House race.

Trump has pleaded not guilty to 34 counts of falsifying business records to cover up a payment that bought the silence of porn star Stormy Daniels shortly before the 2016 election. Daniels had threatened to go public with her account of an alleged 2006 sexual encounter with Trump, a liaison he denies. The New York case is widely seen as the least consequential of the four criminal prosecutions Trump faces.

But it has meant the Republican presidential candidate spent more time in court than campaigning in recent weeks, and brought outsized attention to the only case likely to go to trial before his Nov 5 election face-off with Democratic President Joe Biden. Here is how three potential outcomes from the jury room — a guilty verdict, an acquittal or a hung jury — could affect the presidential campaign.

Guilty

Opinion polls show a guilty verdict could pose significant political danger for Trump in an election that will potentially be decided by just tens of thousands of votes in a handful of battleground states. One in four Republicans said they would not vote for Trump if he is found guilty in a criminal trial, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll of registered voters in April. In the same survey, 60 percent of independents said they would not vote for Trump if he were convicted of a crime.

Republican and Democratic consultants have mixed views about the impact of a guilty verdict. Whit Ayres, a Republican pollster, doubts that as many as a fourth of Republicans would actually shun Trump if he's convicted. But Ayres said even if just a small number of more moderate Republicans and independents are turned off by a guilty verdict, it could help Biden in a close election. However, Ayres said the nature of the New York case, which was brought by a Democratic prosecutor and relies on untested legal strategies, will help Trump and fellow Republicans frame a guilty verdict as a political hit job. "If I were trying to design a court case that would be easy



NEW YORK: Donald Trump raises his fist as he arrives for his criminal trial at Manhattan Criminal Court on May 29, 2024. — AFP

for Republicans to dismiss as a partisan witch hunt. I would design exactly the case that's being brought in New York," Ayres said.

Republican consultant Tricia McLaughlin, who worked on former Trump primary challenger Vivek Ramaswamy's campaign, said she thought a guilty verdict would have a psychological impact on Trump because he hates losing. It would also divert more financial resources to legal bills because he would be almost certain to appeal a guilty verdict, she added.

Not Guilty

Consultants from across the political spectrum agree on one thing: An acquittal would be a huge victory for Trump, especially because he has claimed the trial is a sham political persecution aimed at derailing his presidential bid.

On the campaign trail, the candidate could use a not-guilty verdict in New York to claim the other cases against him also have no legal merit, McLaughlin said. "It's great fodder for him," McLaughlin said. "He will say, 'I won this sham trial, this witch hunt in New York, and that's what's going to happen with the other trials.'"

Karen Finney, a Democratic consultant who worked in the Clinton White House, said for Trump's core supporters "an acquittal will make them feel vindicated and validated." But she said the lurid details that came out in trial testimony and the case's central allegation — that Trump

arranged a hush money payment to a porn star — could still damage him even if jurors find him not guilty. "What's come out during the case could turn off these suburban women that Trump still has a problem with," Finney said, although she said he would play an acquittal as a "huge victory."

Hung Jury

If the 12 jurors hearing Trump's case can't agree on an unanimous verdict, the result will be a hung jury and the judge will have to declare a mistrial, legal experts say. Trump will spin a mistrial as a victory, the political consultants and analysts said, but without the validation that an acquittal would give him. The trial has kept Trump in the news, something he likes, said John Feehery, a Republican consultant who has worked for congressional leaders. A mistrial would end that, he said, while simultaneously not giving Trump a "clean bill of health."

Democratic consultant Finney said that, whatever the verdict, Trump is expected to then be free of a gag order imposed by the trial judge. She expects Trump to lash out at his perceived enemies in even harsher ways once the trial concludes. Regardless of a hung jury, Finney added, the tawdry facts of the case are now in the public domain. A mistrial will also tell voters that at least some jurors believed Trump was guilty, she said. — Reuters

International

Lava spews again in Iceland

Reykjanes peninsula hadn't experienced an eruption for 8 centuries before March 2021

REYKJAVIK: A new volcano erupted on the Reykjanes peninsula in southwestern Iceland on Wednesday, spewing fountains of red-hot lava into the air shortly after authorities evacuated the nearby town of Grindavik. A large white cloud of smoke could be seen billowing up against the blue sky, with orange lava fountains bubbling out of a crack in the ground near Sundhnukagigar, north of Grindavik. The eruption was the fifth in six months on the Reykjanes peninsula.

Two hours after the start of the eruption, lava was flowing less than a kilometer from a defensive barrier protecting the fishing village of Grindavik, the barrier itself located about another kilometer from the northern tip of the town. Most of the 4,000 residents had evacuated Grindavik in November, prior to a December eruption. Lava flowed into the town's streets during another eruption in January, engulfing three homes.

While the large share of those who were in the town on Wednesday - for work or visits - left immediately, a few die-hard residents refused to leave, the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management said on its Facebook page. "Despite recommendations from response teams to leave the town, three residents remain in Grindavik. Such actions are not advisable," it said.

The nearby Blue Lagoon geothermal spa, Iceland's biggest tourist attraction known for its turquoise waters, said it had evacuated its facilities on Wednesday. Maia Biegatch, a 28-year-old French tourist, had just arrived at the Blue Lagoon when the eruption occurred. "We received alerts on our phones telling us to 'evacuate, evacuate', so we turned back," she told AFP. "It was a total surprise."

The eruption was, however, not expected to disrupt air traffic, with the international airport Keflavik "open and operating in the usual way", airport operator Isavia said on its website. "The eruption cloud reached an altitude of about 3.5 kilometers (2.2 miles) at the beginning of the eruption" and the length of the fissure was estimated at over one kilometer, the Iceland Meteorological Office said shortly after the eruption began at 12:46 pm (12:46 GMT).

Around 90 minutes later, the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management said the fissure had extended to 3.4 kilometers. The lava flow



GRINDAVIK: This handout picture released by the Icelandic Coast Guard on May 29, 2024 shows billowing smoke and flowing lava pouring out of a new fissure in western Iceland. — AFP

was heavy, estimated at between 1,500 and 2,000 cubic meters per second, the IMO said.

The eruption came almost three weeks after the end of a previous eruption that had been ongoing since March 16. In the past six months, volcanoes have erupted on the peninsula in December, January, February, and March.

'400 earthquakes'

The IMO had reported "intense earthquake activ-

ity" prior to Wednesday's eruption, with "about 400 earthquakes" measured in the past seven days near the Sundhnukagigar crater row. In addition, it said some 20 million cubic meters of magma had accumulated in the magma chamber below Svartsengi, where a power plant that supplies electricity and water to around 30,000 people on the peninsula is located.

The Svartsengi plant was evacuated and has largely been run remotely since the first eruption in the region in December, and barriers have been built to

protect it. Until March 2021, the Reykjanes peninsula had not experienced an eruption for eight centuries.

Further eruptions occurred in August 2022 and in July and December 2023, leading volcanologists to believe the start of a new era of seismic activity in the region had begun. Iceland is home to 33 active volcano systems, the highest number in Europe. It straddles the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, a crack in the ocean floor separating the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates. — AFP

Russian think tank floats idea of nuclear explosion

MOSCOW: A senior member of a Russian think tank whose ideas sometimes become government policy has suggested Moscow consider a "demonstrative" nuclear explosion to cow the West into refusing to allow Ukraine to use its arms against targets inside Russia. The proposal, by Dmitry Suslov, a member of the Moscow-based Council for Foreign and Defence Policy, was issued a day after President Vladimir Putin warned the West that NATO members in Europe were playing with fire by proposing to let Kyiv use Western weapons to strike deep inside Russia, something he said could trigger a global conflict.

Ukraine's leadership says it needs to be able to strike Russian forces and military targets inside Russia with long-range Western missiles to be able to defend itself and prevent air, missile and drone attacks, a view which has found some support among some Western countries but not yet with Washington.

Russia, which possesses the world's largest nuclear arsenal, has warned it would view such a step as a grave escalation that would pull NATO and the countries concerned into a direct conflict with Moscow, increasing the risk of nuclear war. Suslov, a member of the Council for Foreign and Defence Policy, a think tank praised by Putin who has said the authorities sometimes pick up its policy ideas, said Russia needed to act to dissuade the West from crossing a red line.

"To confirm the seriousness of Russia's intentions and to convince our opponents of Moscow's readiness to escalate, it is worth considering a demonstrative (i.e. non-combat) nuclear explosion," Suslov wrote in business magazine Profil. — Reuters

Ukrainians risk lives to flee draft via icy Romanian pass

ROMANIA: High in the snowy mountains of northern Romania, rescuers heard the trembling voice of a young Ukrainian man - one in a flood of fugitives now swelled by stricter conscription rules in the war-stricken country. "I'm so cold," the 21-year-old said. His back hurt after walking for three days over steep mountains with snow-covered peaks in May.

He was one of thousands who have been fleeing secretly across the border to EU member Romania as Ukraine has tightened its draft rules. They are "kids who never fought in their lives, scared to go to the battle front", Dan Benga, the head of Maramures Mountain Rescue, told AFP. "Many of them say that they'd rather come and die on the mountain than die in the war."

Struggling to contain the Russian offensive launched in February 2022, Ukraine has lowered the minimum age of mobilization from 27 to 25. The move has pushed more Ukrainians than ever to flee to Romania: almost 2,500 in the first four months of 2024, according to Romanian border police, twice as many as in the same period last year. They risk freezing in the mountains or drowning in the Tisa River that runs along part of the northern border.

Dead in the snow

Benga and a fellow rescuer were at 1,600 meters (5,200 feet) altitude when the young man's call reached them. Benga asked him for precise GPS coordinates and dispatched three rescuers to get him.

He was the 37th Ukrainian saved this year, one of more than 100 rescued in the area since the war started. But help comes too late for some. Earlier, Benga's team had been told of two bodies in the snow even higher up the mountain. They were brought down in body bags, on stretchers. The men had no identification on them and no baggage could be found. But Benga believed



BISTRA: Maramures Mountain Rescue servicemen carry the bodies of two Ukrainians found dead on a rough terrain, on a plateau close to Romania-Ukraine border in Maramures mountains on May 15, 2024. — AFP

they were two Ukrainians who had been reported missing almost a month ago. The sister of one of them had contacted him in desperation. "It's a tragedy," he said. Many of those who flee are ill equipped, with "no change of clothes, no provisions".

Since Russia invaded Ukraine, 23 Ukrainians have been found dead on Romanian soil, border police say. Of them, 13 were pulled from the Tisa river - a faster route than via the mountains, but dangerous because of the cold water and strong currents. Benga fears that as the snow melts, more bodies will be found.

Fugitive 'city of love'

Those who make it across the border go to immigration centers where they can request temporary protection, granted to Ukrainians fleeing the war. "The procedure takes approximately five minutes," said the director of one center, Simona Chioran.

Among the Ukrainians arriving there in vans and cars was a 29-year-old man travelling with his wife and daughter. He held his two-year-old in his arms as she slept, head resting on his shoulder, while he answered an immigration officer's questions. He would not tell AFP how he managed to get out of Ukraine.

Most Ukrainian men aged between 18 and 60 have been barred from leaving their country under martial law. But around 12,000 have made it to Romania since the beginning of the war, according to border police.

Locals say many soon leave for other countries, but some have settled near the border crossing of Sighe-tu Marmatiei, or Sighet, 90 kilometers (56 miles) from the immigration center. There, in a pizzeria near the wooden bridge over the Tisa river, a Ukrainian man in his late 40s told AFP he left just before the war and now helps some of the Ukrainian men who have fled. He asked not to be identified. — AFP

Zionists pound Rafah, US won't...

Continued from Page 1

Fighting has again flared in Rafah, where an AFP reporter said a Zionist helicopter fired guns and missiles at targets in the city center. Hamas's military wing said it was firing rockets at Zionist troops. AFP TV footage showed Palestinians with bloodied driftnets and bandaged limbs after being wounded in strikes near Khan Yunis, close to Rafah, being taken to the European Hospital on makeshift gurneys. "The rockets fell directly on us. I was hurled three meters... I don't know how I managed to get up on my feet," said one who did not give his name.

The Zionist army said three soldiers were killed in Rafah on Tuesday, raising to 292 its death toll in the Gaza campaign since the ground offensive started on Oct 27. The United States has been among the countries urging the Zionist entity to refrain from a full-scale offensive into Rafah, the last Gaza city to see ground fighting, because of the risk to civilians.

However, the White House said Tuesday that so far it had not seen the Zionist entity cross President Joe Biden's "red lines", with National Security Council spokesman John Kirby saying: "We have not seen them smash into Rafah. We have not seen them go in with large units, large numbers of troops, in columns and formations in some sort of coordinated maneuver against multiple targets on the ground."

"As a result of this strike on Sunday I have no policy changes to speak to," Kirby told a White House briefing. "It just happened, the (Zionists) are going to investigate it." Kirby added however that "this is not something that we've turned a blind eye to" when asked "how many

charred corpses" it would take for Biden to change course on the issue. A steady stream of civilians has been fleeing Rafah, the new hotspot in the grueling war, many carrying their belongings on their shoulders, in cars or on donkey-drawn carts. Before the Rafah offensive began on May 7, the United Nations had warned that up to 1.4 million people were sheltering there. Since then, one million have fled the area, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) has said.

Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Sunday's strike and ensuing fire a "tragic accident". The Zionist military said it was investigating the strike, and its spokesman Daniel Hagari said on Tuesday that "our munition alone could not have ignited a fire of this size". Gaza civil defense agency official Mohammad Al-Mughayyir said 21 more people were killed in a similar strike Tuesday "targeting the tents of displaced people" in western Rafah.

The Zionist offensive has killed at least 36,171 people in Gaza, mostly women and children. Malnutrition is widespread as aid deliveries have slowed to a trickle. In a new blow, an aid pier put in place by the US military off the coast was out of operation after part of it broke off, probably due to bad weather.

New fighting also hit other areas of Gaza, a besieged territory of 2.4 million people. In the north, Zionist military vehicles unleashed intense gunfire east of Gaza City, an AFP reporter said, and residents reported air strikes on parts of Jabalia. Three bodies were recovered from a house in Khan Yunis after it was shelled, the civil defense agency said. Nearly eight months into the deadliest Gaza war, the Zionist entity has faced ever louder opposition and cases before two Netherlands-based international courts. At the UN Security Council, Algeria has presented a draft resolution that "demands an immediate ceasefire respected by all parties" and the release of all hostages. — Agencies

Delhi swelters in record...

Continued from Page 1

shortages and ordered teams to clamp down on wastage. The temperature was more than 11 degrees higher than expected on the second day of intense record-breaking heat. The previous national record was 51C, set in 2016 in the region of Phalodi on the edge of Rajasthan's Thar Desert. India is no stranger to searing summer temperatures but years of scientific research have found climate change is causing heatwaves to become longer, more frequent and more intense. Three deaths were blamed on heat stroke on Tuesday in Jaipur in Rajasthan, media said, taking the toll to four in the city and at least 13 in the state.

"There is so much heat in Delhi that students are fainting, some are falling sick, some are facing dehydration. The students are facing a lot of trouble in this heat. The fans don't work in our institutions," said Nidhi, a student. Students also fainted in the heat at a government school in the eastern state of Bihar, news agency ANI said, with video images showing a girl lying on a classroom bench as teachers sprinkled her face with water and fanned her with a book. "Electrolyte imbalance is causing fainting, vomiting, and dizziness," said Rajnikanth Kumar, a doctor at the hospital treating the students.

People on the streets of Delhi said there was little they could do to avoid the heat. "Everyone wants to stay indoors," said snack-seller Roop Ram, 57, adding he struggled to sell his savory fritters. Ram, who lives with his wife and two sons in a cramped house, said they had a small fan but that did little to cool them down. They were counting down until the rainy season

arrives in July. "I am not sure what else we can do to cope," he said. "We are just waiting for the monsoon."

Rani, 60, who uses only one name, travels by bus for two hours each morning to sell jewelry to tourists at a makeshift street stall. "It is definitely hotter, but there is nothing we can do about it," she said, gulping water from a bottle she brought from home. "I try to refill the bottle from anyone around."

New Delhi authorities have also warned of the risk of water shortages as the capital swelters in headache-inducing heat. Delhi Water Minister Atishi, who only uses one name, said supplies had been halved in many areas to boost flow to "water-deficient areas". Atishi on Wednesday ordered state authorities to "immediately deploy 200 teams" to crack down on construction sites or commercial properties using domestic pipes to stem a "serious wastage of water". Authorities also imposed a fine of 2,000 rupees (\$24) on those wasting water, such as by washing cars.

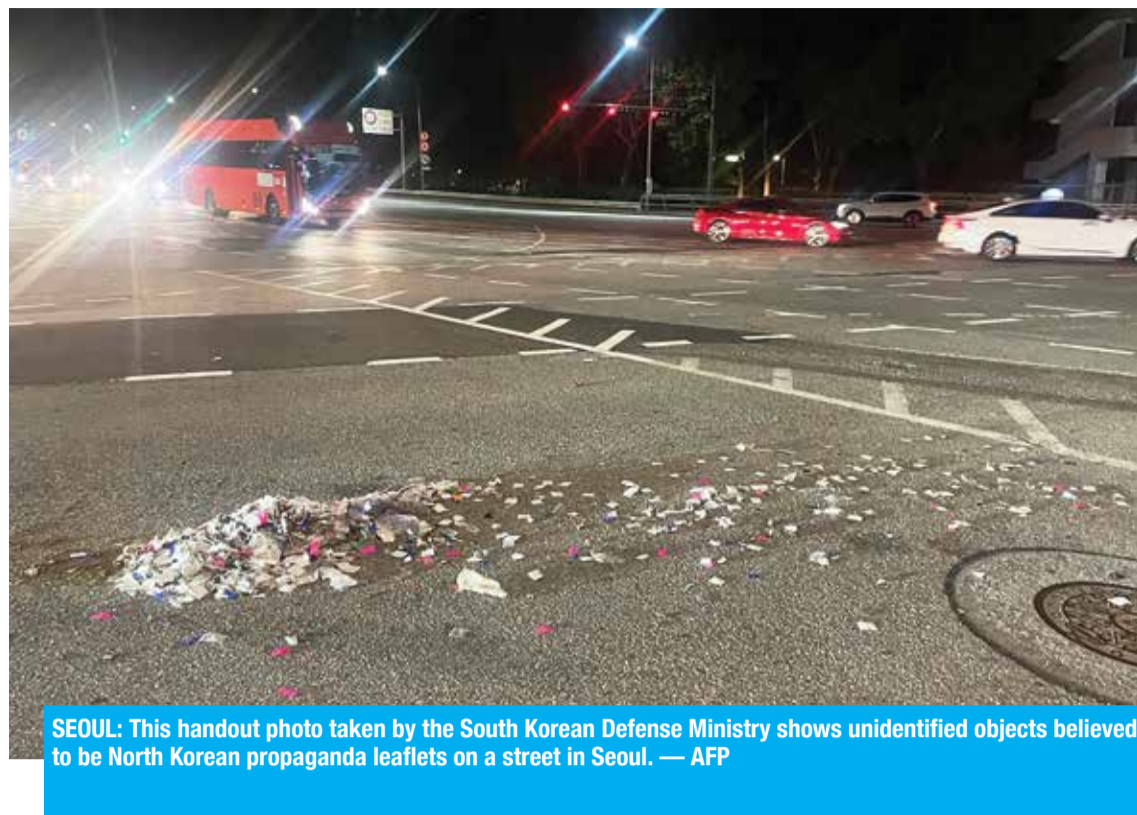
Delhi relies almost entirely on water from neighboring Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, both farming states with huge water demands. The highly polluted Yamuna River, a tributary of the Ganges, runs through Delhi but its flow is hugely reduced during the summer months. The federally-appointed lieutenant governor called for water to be handed out at construction sites and measures to shade their workers from the heat, while urging paid time off from noon to 3 pm, when temperatures peak, media said.

Residents handed out free cold drinks in Delhi's Narrela area on Wednesday, where temperatures had also ranged as high as 49.9 degrees C on Tuesday. A city court declined to hear a consumer case against a telecom company, citing the lack of an air conditioner or cooler in the court, as well as washrooms with scarce water supply. "In these circumstances, arguments cannot be heard," the court's panel of three said in a May 21 order made public this week. — Agencies

International



CHEORWON: A balloon believed to have been sent by North Korea, carrying various objects including what appeared to be trash and excrement, is seen over a rice field at Cheorwon, South Korea, May 29, 2024. — Reuters



SEOUL: This handout photo taken by the South Korean Defense Ministry shows unidentified objects believed to be North Korean propaganda leaflets on a street in Seoul. — AFP

N Korea sends balloons of feces to the south as a 'gift'

Move carries 'stern message' to S Korea to stop sending propaganda into North: Analyst

SEOUL: North Korea sent hundreds of balloons carrying trash and excrement across the heavily fortified border to South Korea on Wednesday, calling them "gifts of sincerity", prompting an angry response from Seoul, which said the act was base and dangerous. Photographs released by the South Korean military showed inflated balloons with plastic bags tied to them. Other images appeared to show trash strewn around collapsed balloons, with the word "excrement" written on a bag in one photograph.

By Wednesday afternoon, more than 260 balloons had been detected, and most of them have landed on the ground, carrying animal feces and rubbish, the South Korean military said in a statement, calling the act "base and dangerous". North Korea said the balloons were in retaliation for an ongoing propaganda campaign by North Korean defectors and activists in South Korea, who regularly send inflatables containing anti-Pyongyang leaflets, alongside food, medicine, money and USB sticks loaded with K-pop music videos and dramas across the border.

Kim Yo Jong, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's

sister and a powerful ruling party official, issued a statement in state media KCNA, slamming Seoul as "shameful, brazen" for criticizing the balloons while defending its citizens' own freedom of expression.

The North's balloons were "gifts of sincerity" for South Koreans who "cry for freedom of expression", she said, pledging to send dozens of times the number she said South Korea had sent into its territory. An official at Seoul's presidential office said the North might want to "test" the South's reaction but vowed to respond calmly.

Psychological warfare

"By putting rubbish and miscellaneous objects into balloons, they seem to want to test how our people would react and whether our government is indeed disrupted, and apart from direct provocations, how psychological warfare and small-scale complex threats would play out in our country," the official told reporters.

The South Korean military's explosives ordnance unit and chemical and biological warfare response

team were deployed to inspect and collect the objects, and an alert was issued warning residents to keep away and report any sightings to authorities.

On Sunday, North Korea's vice defense minister denounced balloons sent by South Korean activists, calling them "dirty things" and a "dangerous provocation," and warned that "mounds of waste-paper and filth" would be sent to the South in response.

North Korea also attempted to jam GPS signals in South Korea on early Wednesday morning, although no damage was reported, the Donga Ilbo newspaper said, citing multiple unnamed government sources. Seoul's defense ministry said it had no immediate comment on the report.

A previous South Korean government sought to block such campaigns, especially after a 2014 incident when the North tried to shoot down balloons, which triggered complaints from residents near the border. A ban on balloon launches introduced in 2021 was later ruled unconstitutional by a top court, which said it violated freedom of speech.

The two Koreas' large militaries face off across the

military border and North Korea routinely threatens to annihilate its neighbor.

Peter Ward, a research fellow at the Sejong Institute, said sending balloons was a far less risky than taking overt military action.

"These kinds of grey zone tactics are more difficult to counter and hold less risk of uncontrollable military escalation, even if they're horrid for the civilians who are ultimately targeted," he said.

North Korea has sent propaganda balloons across the border before, in 2016 for example, but their approach is a bit different this time, Cheong Seong-chang of the Sejong Institute told AFP. "Bags filled with toilet paper, trash and Chinese batteries were found," he said. "Also from witness statements that there was a 'distinctive smell' from the bag, it is likely they sent feces, probably animal feces, as well," he added.

"It's a stern message to South Korea that like the South, North Korea can send propaganda as well, and they should immediately stop doing it," Cheong said, adding the border would be "strongly controlled after this". — Agencies

Crackdown curbs Nigeria's 'spraying' cash culture

LAGOS: Dressed in a sparkling white jacket and sunglasses, the groom grooves with his bride as Afrobeats blast from the towering speakers and relatives slowly join them on the Lagos wedding hall dance floor. Furtively, almost shyly, one relative slips a few 500 naira notes from her purse and scatters them on the floor. Others follow but toss their offerings discreetly into silver bowls at their feet.

Gone is the wild, celebratory showering of clouds of naira notes over the heads of the dancing newlyweds, a show of appreciation known as "spraying" that is often a highpoint in Nigerian weddings, parties or live music performances. A crackdown by Nigeria's EFCC anti-corruption agency has rapidly changed the culture.

Already, the agency has targeted several celebrities for showering cash in public in a practice officials say disrespects the national currency. At weddings and concerts, Nigerians are now finding inventive ways to "spray", wary of the EFCC investigators catching them filmed in the act on social media.

At a recent wedding in the Ikeja district of Lagos, guests were encouraged to drop money into silver bowls rather than on the floor, though a few did spray cash briefly if quietly. The live band, also often showered with cash at celebrations, was adapting. "People

are spraying, but not like before, they don't want any problems," said one band member waiting to perform.

Some partygoers and wedding couples are even creating their own currencies so they can spray legally — one couple shared a video on social media showing notes printed with their portraits. Cubana Chief Priest, a celebrity who reached a deal with the EFCC after he was arrested for spraying, appeared recently at another party waving his phone at a singer, gesturing that he had legally transferred money to the band online.

The campaign comes as Nigeria's government looks for ways to stabilize the naira, which has seen a huge slide in value against the dollar since President Bola Ahmed Tinubu came to power and introduced economic reforms a year ago. For some Nigerian singers, the crackdown has been a blow. "Minus the booking fee, spraying money is a big part of my income," said singer Speedarlington in an Instagram message. "If you spray money you go to prison."

Respect currency

Nigeria's central bank says "any form of defacement of the currency is a form of ridicule on the nation" that can be punished with imprisonment. But the law has rarely been enforced before. For the anti-graft agency, the crackdown and media campaign to educate people is working, even if the practice has long been part of Nigeria's culture. "As far as the issue of culture is concerned, I don't think spraying or mutilating our currency should be a practice we should continue to encourage," EFCC acting spokesman Wilson Uwujaren told Arise news. "I don't see any other country in the world where such practice is permissible. We are determined to change that."

High-profile arrests

Spraying has its roots in Yoruba culture where dignitaries and performers were handed gifts of appreciation during celebrations, said Professor Ayodele Yusuf at the University of Lagos. Money is tossed or placed on the head, which is symbolic for Yoruba. Later, the practice spread to Nigeria's other ethnic groups and became a staple at weddings, birthdays and celebrations. Traditional fuji musicians — usually a mix of Yoruba language lyrics and drums — often "hail" celebrities by including them in their songs as they are sprayed. It is a troubling time for the naira. Since Tinubu came to office in 2023, Nigeria's currency has been battered by the reforms he introduced with a promise they would benefit the country in the long run. After Tinubu ended a complex exchange system, the naira fell from around 450 naira to the dollar a year ago to around 1,500 naira now.

Already the EFCC's high-profile arrests have curbed enthusiasm for spraying, at least in a very public way. A court last month sentenced one of Nigeria's most famous LGBTQ celebrities, a transgender woman known as Bobrisky, to six months in jail after she was found guilty of throwing banknotes at a film premiere.

Nigerian actor Oluwadarasimi Omosayin was also sentenced to six months in prison in February after she was filmed spraying and stepping on banknotes. But critics have questioned how some powerful figures and politicians filmed spraying were getting away untouched. For some, the crackdown is a headline-seeking campaign from an agency that should be focused on corruption. "They've destroyed weddings," said one Lagos attorney at a music event where bands used to be sprayed. — AFP

S Africa votes with ANC dominance in the balance

SOWETO: South African voters queued — many of them for hours — to cast their ballots on Wednesday in a landmark general election that has left the ruling ANC fighting to protect its three-decade-long exclusive grip on power. More than 27 million voters are registered for the most uncertain poll since the African National Congress (ANC) led the nation out of apartheid rule, but with voting delayed in many districts, some were forced to wait.

With opposition challenges from both the left and right, unemployment and crime at near record levels and a new generation growing up with no memory of the struggle against white-minority rule, the ruling party may lose its absolute majority and be forced to share power. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) reported that voting was proceeding smoothly in most of the country despite long queues at busy centers, but that seven percent of stations opened late because of delays in delivering election materials.

After voting, President Cyril Ramaphosa, who is seeking re-election, said: "I have no doubt whatsoever in my heart of hearts that the people will once again invest confidence in the ANC to continue leading this country." But John Steenhuisen, leader of the biggest opposition party the Democratic Alliance (DA), predicted no single party would win an outright majori-



JOHANNESBURG: Voters wait in line at the Intlonipho Primary School polling station in Orange Farm, south of Johannesburg on May 29, 2024. — AFP

ty, creating an opening for his party and an alliance of smaller outfits. "For the first time in 30 years, there's an opportunity for change in South Africa", he said after voting in his home city, Durban.

In Soweto, the president's hometown and the unofficial capital of the anti-apartheid battle, elderly ANC loyalists turned out early but, as the queues lengthened, there were signs of disillusionment among younger voters. Kqomotso Mtumba, a 44-year-old bank official, sporting burgundy and black beaded braids, said she voted ANC in the past but had now chosen an "upcom-

ing party" whose manifesto had impressed her. "The last party I voted for, their promises didn't work out so I'll be trying this one," she said.

Nkateko Maranele, 29, a fashion designer studying for a master's degree, complained about the organization of the poll and about the lethargy of her fellow young adults. "I have voted in one other national election and two provincial elections and this is by far the most disorganized, there was a lot of back and forth, it's like they don't know what they are doing," she said. "People are frustrated, angry and are demanding change, but the young people who are most affected are going nowhere to vote, waiting for change from their beds."

Voters will choose the 400 members of the National Assembly who in the coming weeks will then choose a president from among their number. For the first time since the advent of democracy in 1994, the ANC could be forced to negotiate a coalition to remain in government. "South Africa's general election is a watershed moment in the political history of the country," said Aleix Montana, an analyst at risk intelligence company Verisk Maplecroft. Under the leadership of the late Nelson Mandela, the ANC won freedom for black South Africans after decades of apartheid, then lifted millions out of poverty by creating a broad social welfare system.

But many in the country of 62 million are fed up with high unemployment, currently at 32.9 percent, rampant crime, corruption scandals, and regular power cuts and water shortages. The economy grew a meagre 0.6 percent in 2023, and polls suggest the ANC could win as little as 40 percent of the vote, down from 57 percent in 2019. — AFP



WASHINGTON: China's ambassador to the United States Xie Feng speaks to the media as he announces that China will send two young giant pandas to the US on May 29, 2024. — Reuters

Panda diplomacy: China to send two young pandas to US

WASHINGTON: China will send two young giant pandas to Washington, the United States' National Zoo said on Wednesday, months after the zoo returned three of the bears amid heightened tensions between the two global superpowers. The announcement follows increased engagement between Washington and Beijing that has put ties on a steadier footing since relations hit historic lows last year.

The Smithsonian's National Zoo said in a statement that it will welcome the pair of pandas, named Bao Li and Qing Bao, to Washington by the end of the year. China's ambassador to the US, Xie Feng, speaking to press at the zoo, encouraged people to "care for China-US relations just as you care for pandas."

"For the wellbeing of both peoples and the future of the world, China and the United States should choose to be partners, not rivals. Panda huggers should not be stigmatized. If there should be any protectionism, then let us protect biodiversity," Xie said.

Brandie Smith, director of the Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute (NZCBI), said the institute was thrilled about the continuation of the breeding and conservation partnership, noting that one of the bears is a descendent of pandas previously in Washington. "This historic moment is proof positive our collaboration with Chinese colleagues has made an irrefutable impact," Smith said.

Bao Li is a two-year-old male. His mother was born at the institute in 2013 and his grandparents Tian and Mei Xiang lived at NZCBI from 2000 to 2023. Qing Bao is a two-year-old female born to Qing Qing and mother Jia Mei. Once they arrive, the pair of pandas will be quarantined for 30 days and then have a few more weeks to settle into their new habitat, the zoo said. A public debut date has yet to be set. The departure of the three pandas from the zoo last November as loan agreements lapsed left Georgia's Zoo Atlanta as the only one in the U.S. with giant pandas, and that loan deal is set to expire later this year. San Diego Zoo is also set to welcome another two pandas. — Reuters

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2024

UAE, South Korea agree to slash import duties, strengthen ties

CEPA will scrap tariffs on more than 90% of imports of both nations

SEOUL: South Korea and the United Arab Emirates signed a trade agreement at a summit on Wednesday to sharply cut import duties and forge closer business and investment ties. "The special bond between the two leaders serves as an opportunity" to advance the countries' strategic partnership, the office of President Yoon Suk Yeol said in a statement.

The United Arab Emirates and South Korea signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) on Wednesday during the official visit by UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan to Seoul, UAE state news agency WAM also reported.

The Seoul summit, attended by UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, follows Yoon's state visit last year to Abu Dhabi and focused on energy and defense, as South Korea seeks to tap the investment potential of the energy-rich Gulf state. Yoon's office said the UAE reaffirmed last year's pledge of \$30 billion in investment for South Korean businesses, in areas from nuclear power and defense to hydrogen and solar energy.

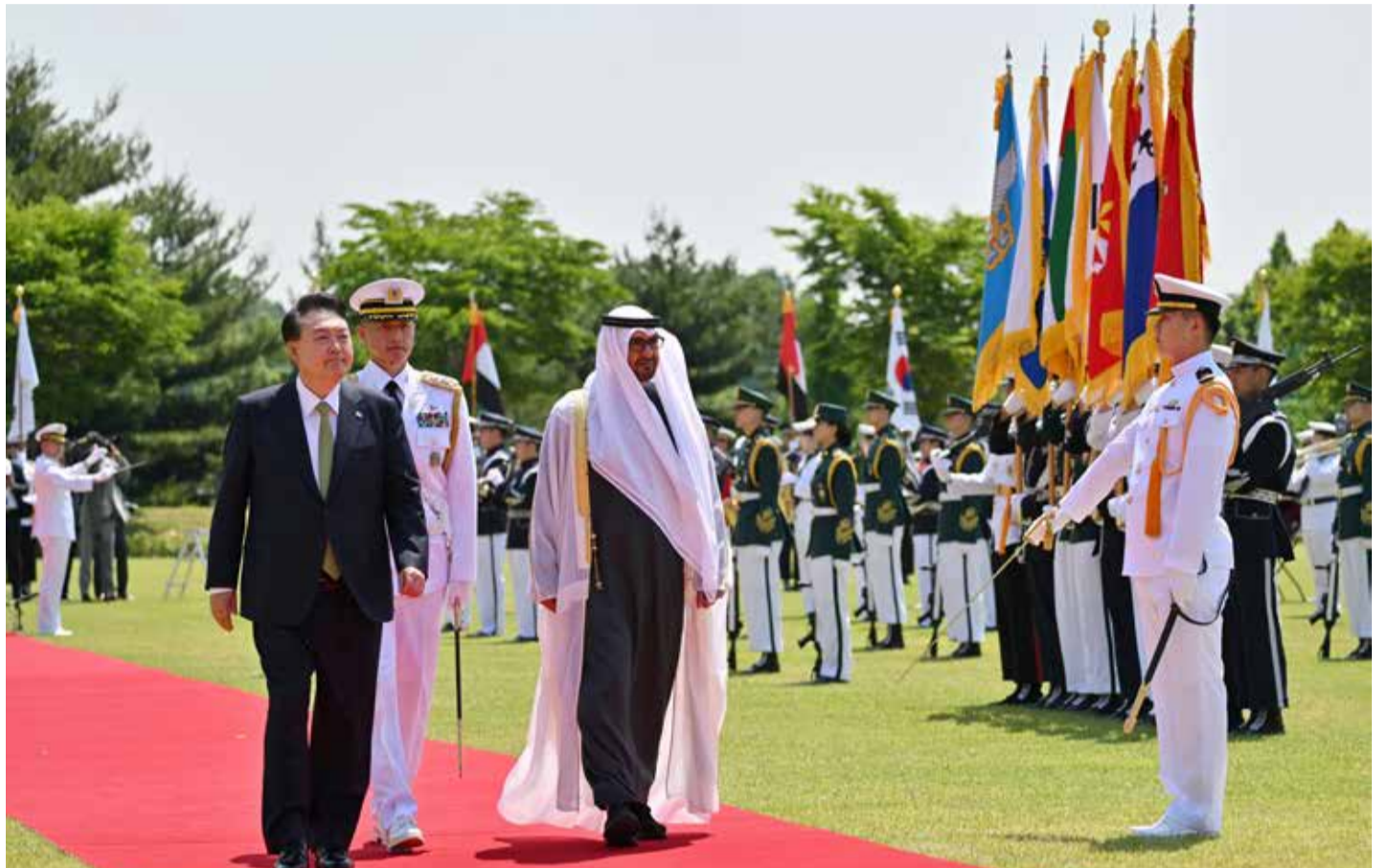
The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company signed a letter of intent for Hanwha Ocean and Samsung Heavy Industries to build at least six LNG carriers valued at about \$1.5 billion, it said.

Industry ministers formally signed a Comprehensive Economic Partner-

ship Agreement agreed in October that will remove all tariffs on South Korean arms exports when it is ratified, South Korea said.

South Korea has signed a series of global defense equipment contracts as part of its plans to become the world's fourth-largest defense exporter by 2027. The UAE will also drop import duty on automobiles over the next decade, while South Korea's tariffs on crude oil imports will be removed. The deal will eventually scrap tariffs on more than 90 percent of the imports of both nations.

"South Korea's crude oil imports from the UAE are expected to increase," Seoul's Minister of Trade Cheong In-kyo told a press conference, underlining the country's dependence on energy imports. The UAE is expected to sign a CEPA with Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines in the next few months, Minister of Foreign Trade Thani bin Ahmed Al-Zeyoudi said. On Tuesday, Sheikh Mohammed met the leaders of some of South Korea's top conglomerates including Jay Y. Lee of Samsung Electronics, SK Group Chairman Chey Tae-won and Kim Dong-kwan of Hanwha Group, which has emerged as a major defense contractor. No new arms deal was unveiled, but Yoon's office said both aim to boost cooperation of their defense industries. — Reuters



SEOUL: United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (right) and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol (left) inspect South Korean honor guards during a welcoming ceremony at the Presidential Office in Seoul, South Korea on May 29, 2024. — Reuters

June ECB rate cut a done deal: Poll

BENGALURU: A European Central Bank interest rate cut on June 6 appears certain, according to all 82 economists polled by Reuters, a majority of whom predicted two further reductions in September and December. But financial markets are pricing only two ECB rate cuts in total in 2024, a sharp pullback from six expected at the start of the year, presenting an uncommon situation where economic forecasters expect more rate reductions than traders.

Despite encouraging signs on inflation, a recent pickup in wage growth has raised questions over how fast the ECB may be able to lower rates. It has all but pre-announced a June cut through multiple hints from policymakers over recent months. All 82 economists in a May 21-28 Reuters poll predicted the ECB would reduce its deposit rate by 25 basis points to 3.75 percent on June 6.

But debate over how much room the ECB has to cut has become more heated with the US Federal Reserve remaining non-committal on the timing of its first cut, now set to come in September at the earliest and priced for November by markets. Still, an over two-thirds majority of those polled, 55 of 82, expected the ECB's Governing Council (GC) to cut twice more this year, in September and December. That was up from just over half in an April survey.

The majority view for three cuts in 2024 comes as some economists have scaled back their rate cut calls from 100 basis points or more this year. Only 22 percent now see the deposit rate at 3.00 percent or lower by end-2024, compared with nearly 40 percent last month.

"Faced with elevated uncertainty and activity accelerating faster than anticipated, we now think the GC will move more gradually this year," said Mariano Cena, senior European economist at Barclays.

"This would take place even if risks to the inflation outlook beyond this year are more symmetric and even potentially to the downside," said Cena, who recently shifted a follow-up cut in July to September. Asked what was more likely for ECB rate cuts this year, nearly three-quarters of economists, 25 of 34, said fewer than they expected rather than more. Of 77 common contributors in this and last month's surveys, over one-quarter, 20, now see fewer rate cuts. — Reuters

May 31 deadline to enter Borgan Bank's Kanz semi-annual draw

KUWAIT: Borgan Bank encourages its current and potential customers to participate in the Kanz semi-annual draw before May 31, 2024 for a chance to win a KD 500,000 cash prize. Kanz, the bank's popular savings and draw account reflects Borgan's continuous social responsibility efforts to give back to its community and customers as well as its commitment to spreading financial literacy and overall banking awareness.

"In every individual journey of pursuing a passion, realizing a dream, and seeking fulfillment, numerous success factors are at play. While one's financial ability marks only one of them, it remains a vital and determining factor," said Nasser Al-Qaisi, General



Nasser Al-Qaisi

Manager – Retail Banking at Borgan Bank.

"Our customers are a pillar of Borgan Bank's success and one of the ways we express our gratitude to them is by encouraging them to participate in our regular Kanz account draws, whether the monthly KD 2,000 draw that awards 20 winners, the semi-annual KD 500,000 draw that selects one customer, or the annual KD 1,500,000 draw that celebrates a lucky winner. We take pride in knowing that the Kanz draw cash prizes can be a stepping stone for our customers to realizing their dreams and fulfilling their aspirations."

Al-Qaisi added that even though winning the Kanz draw cash prize is determined by random selection, all Kanz customers benefit greatly from adopting the saving culture and making sound financial decisions. To enter the Kanz semi-annual draw, customers must open a Kanz account with a minimum deposit of KD 200 or the equivalent in USD, GBP, or EUR. Customers are encouraged to grow their Kanz account balance for higher chances of winning, whereby every KD 25 accounts for a draw entry – noting that May 31 is the eligibility deadline for any new deposits to be made as well as any new Kanz accounts to be opened. As a flagship product of Borgan's banking innovation, the Kanz account is also a testament to the Bank's commitment to promoting the culture of financial literacy among all segments of society. This comes as part of its support for the "Let's Be Aware"

IMF lifts China growth forecast, warns on risks

BEIJING: The International Monetary Fund on Wednesday raised its yearly growth forecast for China, but warned that Beijing's industrial policy risks a "misallocation" of resources and could harm trade. The world's number-two economy has been battered in recent years by a long-running debt crisis in the property market, which accounts for a quarter of gross domestic product, while weak consumer spending and persistent deflation are also dragging on growth.

But there are some signs of recovery: growth beat forecasts in the first quarter of the year, which Beijing described as a "good start". And the IMF said Wednesday that those figures and "recent policy measures" to lift the economy had allowed it to raise its growth forecast for the year to five percent – in line with a target set by authorities in March.

The Fund had initially projected 4.6

percent expansion, adding that it welcomed steps in recent weeks to boost the property market. "The ongoing housing market correction, which is necessary for steering the sector towards a more sustainable path, should continue," it said. But, it added that "a more comprehensive policy package would facilitate an efficient and less costly transition while safeguarding against downside risks".

It also warned Beijing's strong support for strategic industries risked a "misallocation" of resources and trade blowback. "Scaling back such policies and removing trade and investment restrictions would raise domestic productivity and ease fragmentation pressures," the latest report said.

Beijing has faced growing pressure in recent months to curb industrial "overcapacity", with the United States warning excessive state subsidies could flood global markets with cheap goods. A meeting of finance ministers and central bankers from the Group of Seven world powers this month saw them vow to present a "united front" against China's alleged unfair trade practices and industrial overcapacity. In the medium term, IMF Deputy Managing Director

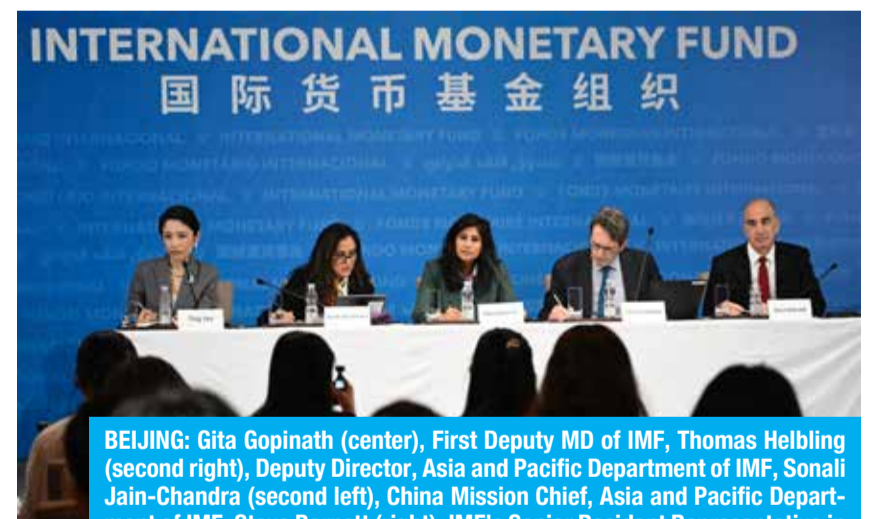
price represents 16 percent of the cost of making the bread, which has risen to 125 piastres from 115 last year. Supply Minister Ali Moselhy told the same press conference.

The country uses 8.5 million tons of wheat per year, Moselhy added. The finance ministry in March said it would allocate around 125 billion Egyptian pounds (\$2.66 billion) for bread subsidies in its 2024/2025 state budget and around 147 billion pounds for petroleum product subsidies.

In a letter of intent signed in November 2022, Egypt said it would allow most fuel product prices to rise to bring domestic prices more in line

(Diraya) banking awareness campaign, which was launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) in cooperation with Kuwaiti banks.

More information on opening a Kanz account, the draws, or any of the Bank's products and services, is available at any of Borgan Bank branches, through the Call Center at 1804080, and on the Borgan Bank website www.borgan.com.



BEIJING: Gita Gopinath (center), First Deputy MD of IMF, Thomas Helbling (second right), Deputy Director, Asia and Pacific Department of IMF, Sonali Jain-Chandra (second left), China Mission Chief, Asia and Pacific Department of IMF, Steve Barnett (right), IMF's Senior Resident Representative in China attend a press briefing in Beijing on May 29, 2024. — AFP

Gita Gopinath told a news conference in Beijing, "growth is expected to slow to 3.3 percent due to ageing demographics and slower productivity growth".

She also pointed to "significant fiscal challenges, especially for local governments", adding "sustained fiscal consolidation over the medium term is needed". This month, Beijing cut the minimum down payment rate for first-

time homebuyers and suggested the government could buy up commercial real estate – some of its most ambitious moves yet to lift the property market out of an unprecedented debt crisis. No details were provided on how many houses would be bought. A number of cities, including economic powerhouse Shanghai, have also removed some curbs on buying property. — AFP

Egypt to raise subsidized price of bread: PM

DUBAI/CAIRO: Egypt, often the world's biggest wheat importer, will raise the price of heavily subsidized bread to 20 piastres from 5 piastres from June. Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly said in a press conference on Wednesday. The new raised

with those in international energy markets. Egypt raised prices on a wide range of fuel products in its quarterly review in March. Egypt will start from next week paying 20-25 percent of arrears due to foreign energy companies. Madbouly also said at a press conference.

Egypt began accumulating arrears to companies and contractors during a long-running foreign currency shortage. The shortage has eased over the past month after the announcement of a record investment deal, a devaluation and an expansion of Egypt's current International Monetary Fund program. — Reuters

Business

Gulf Bank introduces 'One Trader' app to trade in Kuwait, international markets

'One platform, a world of opportunities' in partnership with EFG Hermes ONE

KUWAIT: In its ongoing efforts to provide the best investment services to its clients, Gulf Bank has announced a partnership with EFG Hermes ONE, the digital trading platform of EFG Hermes, a leading investment bank in the Middle East and North Africa. This partnership will introduce the "One Trader" digital trading application in Kuwait, under the slogan "One platform, a world of opportunities." This application offers the ability to track and trade in Kuwait, multiple MENA markets, and global exchanges through a wide array of asset classes with just a click of a button.

During an introductory session, Tareq Al-Saleh, Deputy General Manager of Investments at Gulf Bank, announced, "The new application, developed in collaboration with EFG Hermes, features a suite of tools designed to assist clients in making well-informed investment decisions and fostering long-term investment strategies."

He emphasized that the advanced trading platform offers Gulf Bank clients a seamless trading experience across local, regional, and international markets, all accessible through a single platform. Clients can conveniently access the platform via web browsers, iOS, and Android devices, ensuring a smooth, rapid, and secure investment experience with real-time updates on their stock performance.

He added, "We have updated our current platform, which was limited to the Kuwait Stock Exchange, to align with the latest online trading platforms. This makes investing in financial markets accessible to everyone, enabling current, and potential, clients to plan their financial future, and remove barriers to accessing global markets. Additionally, it enhances financial literacy by providing everyone with the tools and knowledge to start investing."

Various competitive advantages

Al-Saleh highlighted that the application offers several competitive advantages, including the ability for clients to trade multiple financial assets, and buy and sell orders in real-time for immediate execution across various markets. Clients can also track their executed and pending orders. He added that the portal allows clients to monitor their investment portfolios in real-time from anywhere, at any time, and to create watchlists for different markets and asset classes they have invested in.

He explained that clients can obtain real-time stock quotes, place orders (including conditional orders), and easily review, modify, or cancel these orders. Additionally, clients have access to market news throughout the trading session and can set up customized alerts to add, review, or delete notifications.



Tareq Al-Saleh:

- Clients can enjoy a seamless trading experience via mobile, ensuring a smooth, rapid, and secure experience
- Our goal is to make investing in financial markets accessible to everyone, enabling current, and potential, clients to plan their financial future.



Tareq Al-Saleh speaking during the symposium.

"The application provides access to real-time market information from an award-winning research team, along with live data and stock charting tools, which include a wide range of technical analysis features," Al-Saleh explained. He also noted that under Gulf Bank's 2025 strategy, which aims to provide products and services that meet the needs of high-net-worth individuals, the bank offers specialized products tailored to these clients. This includes the WISE investment service, Gulf Bank's leading digital portfolio management platform, as well as various investment solutions, and alternative investment opportunities. He mentioned that with the establishment of Gulf Capital Investment Company, an independent subsidiary of the bank, a comprehensive range of investment products and services is now available.

Furthermore, he highlighted that Gulf Bank has obtained approval from the Capital Markets Au-

thority to license Gulf Capital Investment Company, known as Invest GB, to participate in securities activities. These activities comprise portfolio management, investment advisory, custody and investment monitoring services, management of collective investment schemes, underwriting, and non-exchange registered securities brokerage.

Strategic partnership

Ahmed Waly, Global Head of Brokerage at EFG Hermes, an EFG Holding company, stressed the importance of the strategic partnership with Gulf Bank. He emphasized that this partnership reflects the company's dedicated efforts to grow its operations, and improve its range of top-notch financial solutions, aligning with the evolving trends and dynamics of the financial sector in the MENA region.

Waly further stated that this partnership is in line



Ahmed Waly:

This partnership is part of a shared vision to advance regional development through innovative strategies, and the implementation of new standards for excellence in financial services.

with the company's unwavering dedication to fostering integration among diverse financial markets. This is achieved through forging strategic alliances, with the goal of enhancing the trading environment within the financial market.

He pointed out that EFG Hermes aims to utilize its expertise and resources to deliver a secure and efficient trading experience for users through its award-winning online securities trading app, EFG Hermes ONE. He confirmed that partnering with Gulf Bank is part of a shared vision to advance regional development through innovative strategies and the implementation of new standards for excellence in financial services. Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti bank of the future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of their roles in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank gives its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience. Gulf Bank is committed to driving significant environmental, social and governance developments through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

Royal Mail accepts Czech billionaire's takeover proposal



A Royal Mail van drives near the home of Britain's former chief executive of the Post Office Paula Vennells in Bedford, Britain. - Reuters

LONDON: The owner of Britain's struggling Royal Mail said Wednesday it had accepted a takeover proposal from Czech billionaire Daniel Kretinsky worth £3.6 billion (\$4.6 billion). It comes after Kretinsky's conglomerate EP Group formalized an improved offer for International Distribution Services (IDS). "The IDS board believes that the offer from EP is fair and reasonable," IDS chairman Keith Williams said in a statement posted on the London Stock Exchange.

EP already has a stake of 27.6 percent in IDS, while the takeover is subject to shareholder and regulatory approvals. The deal for the former state monopoly Royal Mail must also be approved by the government, which is on course to change hands in a general election due July 4. Polls widely forecast the main opposition Labour party to win power after 14 years of rule by the Conservatives, currently led by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

His party privatized Royal Mail in 2013 after winning power three years earlier. The postal operator has since seen its core letters business ravaged as consumers increasingly communicate online, which has conversely helped its international parcels business, GLS. Britain's communications regulator Ofcom has proposed that Royal Mail cut delivery to five days, or even three days per week, potentially saving the company hundreds of millions of pounds. IDS has long called for a shakeup of the universal service obligation (USO), which stipulates that Royal Mail must deliver letters six days a week to all 32 million addresses in the UK for the price of a stamp. EP on Wednesday described IDS as "a strong business with solid foundations and the potential to become one of the leading postal logistics groups in Europe", subject to modernization that includes USO reform. At the same time, Kretinsky said his group "has the utmost respect for Royal Mail's history and tradition", adding that owning a business with more than 500 years of history "will come with enormous responsibility - not just to the employees but to the citizens who rely on its services every day".

The accepted offer was priced at 370 pence per IDS share. Following Wednesday's announcement, IDS stock was up 3.6 percent at 332.5 pence in London morning deals. "The group's international arm GLS has long been considered the jewel in the company's crown, enjoying a level of success which Royal Mail has found elusive," noted Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at Hargreaves Lansdown. - AFP

Quality of education critical for sustained economic growth in GCC

RIYADH: Economic growth in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region is expected to rebound to 2.8 percent and 4.7 percent in 2024 and 2025, respectively, according to the Spring 2024 Gulf Economic Update (GEU). The encouraging regional prospects and rebound are not just due to the anticipated recovery in oil output, as OPEC+ gradually relaxes production quotas during the second half of 2024, but also builds on the strong momentum of the non-oil economy, which is expected to continue to expand at a robust pace over the medium term. The commitment of the GCC to diversifying their economies highlights their strategic approach to fostering resilience and sustainable development during a volatile global economic period.

Despite diversification efforts, hydrocarbon receipts will remain crucial in shaping the region's fiscal and external balances in the medium term. As a result, GCC's fiscal surplus will continue to narrow in 2024, reaching 0.1 percent of GDP, while current account surplus is expected to reach 7.5 percent of GDP (compared to 8.4 percent of GDP in 2022).

For the GCC countries to build on their current diversification momentum and realize their full potential, the GEU report highlights the importance of education quality in fostering long term economic growth in GCC countries. The Special Focus section of this report, titled: Unlocking Prosperity: Transforming Education for Economic Breakthrough in the GCC, presents an overview of learning outcomes, analyzes progress in student learning overtime, and assesses students' performance in the GCC relative to countries with similar income levels.

In her remarks, the World Bank's GCC Country Director, Safaa El-Tayeb El-Kogali indicated that, "Good quality education prepares young people to access better employment opportunities and higher wages, increasing the potential to spur economic growth. Over the last decade, GCC countries have significantly improved learning outcomes. Yet, there is still scope for GCC countries to further improve in learning outcomes as they lag behind international benchmarks."

The quality of education is a major factor that is holding back human capital development in the region as well as the ability of GCC countries to compete at the

German inflation edges up as ECB braces for rate cut

FRANKFURT: German inflation edged up in May, data showed Wednesday, but analysts said it was due to one-off factors and would not deter the European Central Bank from starting to cut interest rates. Consumer prices in Europe's largest economy rose 2.4 percent from a year ago, according to preliminary data from federal statistics agency Destatis.

The figure, in line with analyst expectations, was up from 2.2 percent in April, and the first in-

crease in six months. But closely watched core inflation - which excludes volatile energy and food prices - was unchanged at three percent, despite expectations of a slight increase.

Observers said the uptick in the headline figure was caused mainly by the introduction of a flat-rate public transport ticket, costing just 49 euros (\$53), in May 2023, which distorted the year on year comparison. The rise is not expected to deter the central bank for the 20 countries that use the euro from beginning to cut rates at its meeting on June 6, with analysts predicting a quarter-point reduction.

Elmar Voelker from LBBW bank said the German data suggested inflation across the whole eurozone had ticked up in May. But he added that this "will not change anything for the ECB's decision next Thursday - (policymakers) had already an-

ounced that the inflation trend would be bumpier from now on," and they will push ahead with starting to cut. But they will be keenly watching inflation over the summer months to decide when to push ahead with further reductions, he added.

Beginning in mid-2022, the central bank aggressively hiked borrowing costs to tame inflation that soared following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and amid pandemic-linked supply chain woes. For the past few months, it has held its key deposit rate steady at a record high of four percent, as it awaits the right moment to start cutting. In May's German inflation figures, energy prices continued to fall, dropping 1.1 percent, Destatis said. Services inflation rose to 3.9 percent, from 3.4 percent in April. The German government forecasts inflation at 2.4 percent this year, following a 5.9-percent rate in 2023. - AFP



tion efforts. These include efforts to further improve the business environment, support the role of SMEs in the economy, and accelerate investments in renewable energy and green hydrogen. Growth is expected to further accelerate over the medium term supported by global demand recovery, increased investment in non-hydrocarbons and renewable energy. Inflation is forecast to converge to 2 percent over the medium term.

QATAR: Real GDP growth is projected to strengthen marginally in 2024 but remain modest at 2.1 percent. Non-oil growth will continue to be robust at 2.4 percent, driven by a growing tourism sector. The hydrocarbon sector is expected to decelerate to a 1.6 percent growth in 2024, affected by capacity constraints. Yet, a major boost is anticipated for the period Q42025 to 2027, with the North Field expansion project coming online.

SAUDI ARABIA: Following the contraction witnessed in 2023, real GDP is expected to grow by 2.5 percent in 2024, driven primarily by robust non-oil private activities (forecast to grow by 4.8 percent). With the voluntary oil production cuts ending in Q2-2024, and the expected gradual increase in production during the second half of 2024, overall oil GDP is expected to register a contraction of 0.8 percent in 2024. These trends are expected to be reversed in 2025, with oil output anticipated to ramp up aggressively resulting in 5.9 percent overall GDP growth.

UAE: Real GDP growth is projected to accelerate to 3.9 percent in 2024, fueled by OPEC+'s announced significant oil production hike in the second half of 2024 and a recovery in global economic activity. Oil output growth is projected to reach 5.8 percent in 2024. Non-oil output will remain robust and continue to support economic growth in 2024, expanding at 3.2 percent, driven by strong performance in the tourism, real estate, construction, transportation, and manufacturing sectors.

NBK joins official inauguration ceremony of Al-Zour Refinery

The largest refining facility in the world to be built in one phase



Hamad Al-Bahar and Isam Al-Sager during the celebration.



Hamad Al-Bahar, Isam Al-Sager and Nabil Marouf during the ceremony.



Hamad Al-Bahar and Isam Al-Sager.

Isam Al-Sager

- NBK is the bank of choice for KPC and its subsidiaries
- Our connection with the oil sector is deeply rooted and enduring, stretching back over several decades
- The successful operation of the refinery stands as a monumental achievement that aligns with Kuwait Development Plan, contributing substantially to the national economy

- NBK actively backs competitive global projects and aims to be the foremost partner for oil companies as they pursue expansion opportunities
- The exceptional service and expertise of our team have positioned NBK to attain the largest market share in the oil sector
- Our strategic partnership with KPC and its subsidiaries extends beyond financial support, encompassing the professional development of employees within the oil sector

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) participated in the official ceremony marking the full commissioning of Al-Zour Refinery, the largest refining facility in the world to be built in one phase. The event, hosted by Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC), a subsidiary of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), was held under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Hamad Al-Bahar, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group CEO, and Nabil Marouf, CEO of NBK Capital, represented NBK at the ceremony.

Added value

On this occasion, Vice Chairman and Group CEO, Isam Al-Sager, praised this historic milestone for Kuwait's oil sector, highlighting Al-Zour Refinery as one of the largest international projects supporting the nation's development agenda and contributing substantially to the national economy.

Al-Sager stated, "NBK is the bank of choice for deals involving KPC and its subsidiaries, serving as the primary financier of Kuwait's oil sector. Our longstanding and close historical ties with KPC and its subsidiaries extend over many decades. Furthermore, the bank has actively contributed to nurturing the talents and potential of young individuals within the sector's organizations over the years."

He elaborated on the bank's provision of substantial financing and leadership in numerous significant financing agreements for projects within the oil sector. This reflects NBK's confidence in the strong financial position of KPC and its subsidiaries, as well as their exceptional management capabilities to execute growth strategies aligned with the 2040 strategy. He stressed that the bank's extension of long-term financing for significant projects in the oil sector, like Al-Zour Refinery project, highlights its ongoing dedication to supporting competitive global initiatives. This underscores NBK's commitment to financing key strategic ventures across various sectors, with a notable emphasis on the oil industry. In this regard, the bank strengthens its position as the bank of choice for companies within the sector as they pursue expansion initiatives.

Furthermore, Al-Sager emphasized that NBK possesses numerous remarkable advantages that set it apart, positioning it as the top choice for spearheading primary financing endeavors within Kuwait's oil and gas sectors. He elaborated that foremost among these advantages is the bank's capacity to engage in substantial financing endeavors. Additionally, he highlighted the bank's adept and specialized team in the oil sector, capable of delivering financing services to the sector with exceptional efficiency and speed, thus enabling the bank to secure the predominant share of financing within

the local oil sector.

He also noted that beyond the financial collaboration, the strategic alliance between NBK and KPC along with its subsidiaries extends to training and development initiatives offered by the bank to oil sector employees. This partnership is gaining momentum, driven by the bank's steadfast dedication to this sector and its ongoing commitment to providing continuous support.

Large-scale financing

Some of the noteworthy financing deals for Kuwait oil sector in which NBK has been involved over the past decade include:

In 2015, NBK's substantial engagement primarily centered around addressing the banking requirements of contractors participating in Al-Zour Refinery project.

In 2016, NBK achieved a significant milestone by spearheading the financing for the KNPC Clean Fuels Project, valued at KD 1.2 billion. This represented the largest financing deal in Kuwaiti dinars in the country's history, with NBK contributing KD 400 million to the financing facility. The bank's appointment to lead the banking consortium for this project highlighted its prominent status and exceptional reputation among major international institutions, affirming its extensive experience in arranging large-scale loans and financing facilities.

In 2018, NBK played a pivotal role

as the lead arranger and lender for financing Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) LNG import terminal, amounting to KD 390 million. NBK's contribution to this financing totaled KD 140 million. Additionally, during the same year, the bank extended facilities of \$500 million in the international trade finance segment for Duqm Refinery project in Oman. This refinery is jointly owned by Oman Global Integrated Energy Group (OGI) and Kuwait Petroleum International, a subsidiary of KPC.

In October 2020, NBK arranged a syndicated loan totaling KD 1 billion for KPC, with NBK's portion of the syndicated loan facility standing at KD 360 million.

A landmark accomplishment

The announcement of the successful completion of Al-Zour Refinery units' operation by KIPIC, a subsidiary of KPC responsible for refining, processing, and marketing, marks a historic milestone. The refinery has reached its peak refining capacity of 615,000 barrels per day of Kuwait Light Export Crude (KEC), constituting 43.5 percent of the total refining capacity of the State of Kuwait. This achievement will boost Kuwait's exports of oil derivatives, particularly low-sulfur grades that align with environmental compatibility standards.

The construction of Al-Zour Refinery, which commenced in 2015, signifies

the establishment of the largest refinery in the world to be built in one phase and ranks among the top 10 refineries globally. This project comprises three independent mini-refineries engineered with advanced technical specifications. Remarkably, it includes the largest complex for desulfurization utilizing Atmospheric Residue Desulfurization (ARDS) to process residue generated in the crude distillation unit, marking a significant milestone in refining technology on a global scale.

The refinery stands as one of the pivotal initiatives outlined in KPC's 2040 strategy, aimed at bolstering the state's refining capacity. Its strategic objectives encompass various facets, including ensuring a secure and dependable supply to meet the Ministry of Electricity and Water's requirements for low-sulfur fuel oil (below 0.5 percent sulfur content). Moreover, the refinery aims to process Kuwait heavy crude oil to enhance economic yields and produce premium products of superior quality, thereby bolstering Kuwait's competitiveness in global markets.

Moreover, the refinery is set to make a substantial contribution to the nation's development strategy by encouraging private sector participation across the implementation and operational stages. This engagement is anticipated to create new job opportunities for Kuwaiti citizens and catalyze economic expansion in neighboring regions by improving investment prospects.



HOUSTON: ConocoPhillips Chairman & CEO Ryan Lance speaks during the CERAWEEK oil summit in Houston, Texas. — AFP

ConocoPhillips to take over Marathon Oil for \$22.5bn

NEW YORK: US energy giant ConocoPhillips announced Wednesday that it will acquire competitor Marathon Oil in an all-stock transaction valued at \$22.5 billion, including \$5.4 billion in debt, a major expansion despite pressure to move away from fossil fuels. The deal is the latest in a series of acquisitions in the US oil sector which run counter to calls to begin their energy transition as climate change takes hold.

It will enable ConocoPhillips to strengthen its position in shale oil and gas-rich regions such as the Bakken Basin in the northern United States and the Permian Basin in the south. The acquisition "further deepens our portfolio and fits within our financial framework, adding high-quality, low cost of supply inventory," ConocoPhillips chairman and chief executive officer Ryan Lance said in a company statement.

He said the company sees "significant synergy potential" in the merger. Marathon Oil chief Lee Tillman said it was a "proud moment to look back on what we achieved," and that ConocoPhillips was "the right home to build on that legacy." The deal, which is expected to close in the fourth quarter of this year, gives Marathon Oil shareholders 0.255 shares of ConocoPhillips common stock for each share of Marathon Oil common stock.

That represents a 14.7 percent premium over Marathon Oil's closing price on Tuesday. The deal should see ConocoPhillips achieve savings of \$500 million in the year after, according to the statement, largely due to reduced administrative and production costs. — AFP

What investors expect from India's election outcome

SINGAPORE/MUMBAI/BENGALURU: India's six-week long national election, the world's largest, has entered its final stage with votes scheduled to be counted on June 4.

Whoever emerges victorious in the election — be it the BJP-led NDA coalition or opposition alliance I.N.D.I.A. — the margin of victory may be smaller than earlier expected, analysts and informal betting markets are speculating. Here are the main themes and comments from over 10 fund managers Reuters spoke to on their expectations based on different scenarios.

How will markets react?

Indian equities outperformed most major markets in 2023 and are trading at expensive valuations. Yet, they could see a short-term boost if the Modi administration comes back to power in a rare third consecutive term for any Indian government, fund managers said, as it would suggest policy continuity and political stability. The benchmark BSE Sensex Index is up 4 percent so far this year, with a Reuters poll of equity analysts indicating the index could double the gains by the end of the year.

Foreign investors poured in a net \$20.74 billion into Indian equities last year, the most in emerging markets in Asia, but have pulled back this year ahead of the election. A lower margin of victory for Modi could lead to short-term volatility, fund managers said, while a win for the opposition could lead to a sharper correction due to policy uncertainty.

UK power grid needs upgrading to reach net zero: New study

LONDON: To reduce its emissions in line with national and global targets, the UK must overhaul how it produces, uses and distributes electricity. Millions of heat pumps, electric vehicles (EVs) and solar panels are planned in the UK. These can reduce emissions and lower household bills. However, they will also substantially raise the amount of power neighborhoods need over coming decades, particularly during peak demand periods like early evening. At other times, when the Sun is

"The market is looking at continuity, so a coalition government or another party winning is not the expectation," said Mittal Kalawadia, senior equity fund manager at Mumbai-based ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund. "There can be a knee-jerk reaction if the last scenario builds up," Kalawadia said.

Policy continuity

A third term for a Modi-led government will allow for continuity of policies, including improved fiscal management and keeping the currency stable. "In the last couple of years, India had a good amount of stability in terms of the current account gap and fiscal discipline, and inflation has been in check," said Ashish Gupta, chief investment officer at Mumbai-based Axis Mutual Fund, who expects the focus on macroeconomic stability to continue. "This has led to, both on debt as well as equity side, India's risk premium coming down," Gupta said.

Investors also expect the Modi government to continue focusing on turning the country into a manufacturing hub. Modi's government has courted foreign companies, including Apple and Tesla, to set up in India as they diversify their supply chains beyond China.

A clear electoral mandate and a government perceived as pro-business and investor-friendly will likely attract foreign investment inflows, said Vivek Bhutoria, co-portfolio manager at Federated Hermes' global emerging markets equity fund, based in London.

Tax stability

The election campaign has seen India's largest opposition party, the Congress, hint at policies aimed at addressing income inequalities in India but investors remain wary of such moves. "We would like the BJP to stay away (from) over-reliance on welfare schemes," said Gary Tan, portfolio manager at Allspring Global Investments in Singapore. Overde-

shining and electricity use is low, solar panels on homes and businesses could allow neighborhoods to export electricity to the network.

Much of the UK's electricity network was built in the 1950s and needs upgrading to accommodate this level of electricity usage. Around 15 percent of cables and almost half of substations may need replacing to meet the UK's net zero goal. Understanding how this will affect electricity networks on a street-by-street level is challenging. Houses and businesses are distributed differently within areas. Likewise, electricity networks are configured differently and will serve varying numbers of electric appliances. This will all affect whether existing networks are able to handle changes to electricity demand, and the parts of these networks that need upgrading.

My colleagues and I have mapped the places where



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) seal is pictured on a gate outside the RBI headquarters in Mumbai. — Reuters

pendence on such schemes can stress public finances and disrupt India's macro stability narrative, Tan said. Local media reports have also suggested the government may consider changes in capital gains tax, which the current administration has denied.

Nilesh Shah, chief executive officer of Kotak Mahindra Asset Management, does not expect the government to go down that route and instead introduce policies to deepen capital markets.

Sectors in focus

With the current government focused on spending on infrastructure and pushing manufacturing, fund managers are leaning towards sectors that benefit from these policies. Power, autos and infrastructure are some of the sectors that investors are positive on. "We are constructive on beneficiaries from India's focus on manufacturing such as capital goods firms, automobiles and metals," said Sanjay Bembalkar, co-head of equities at Mumbai-based Union Asset Management Company. — Reuters

the grid is most likely to need upgrades in the transition to net zero. Our maps depict the density of homes and small businesses, the arrangement of existing cables and substations, and the quantity of heat pumps, EVs and solar panels — now and in the future. Some areas have more public transport use and fewer cars, implying fewer EVs. Areas where heat networks are planned (pipes bringing hot water directly into homes from a central source like a power plant) are likely to see fewer heat pumps installed, whereas rural areas have more space for solar panels. Some of this information was drawn from National Grid and other operators. The scenario our research paints is not assured — different regions may deploy more or less green technologies. For example, a local network operator may assume higher EV uptake than elsewhere, or a local authority may decide to focus on heat networks rather than heat pumps. — Reuters

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2024



For deaf children in Pakistan, school is life

At a school for the deaf in Pakistan, the faces of students are animated, their smiles mischievous, as their hands twirl in tandem with their sign language teacher. The quiet classes exude joy, led often by teachers who are also deaf. "I have friends, I communicate with them, joke with them, we share our stories with each other about what we have done and not done, we support each other," said Qurat-ul-Ain, an 18-year-old deaf woman who joined the school a year ago.

do with a physical characteristic. Younger children learn with visuals: a word and a sign are associated with an image. Their peers turn their thumbs down for a wrong answer and make the applause sign — twisting hands — for a correct one.

Families learning to sign

Founded in 1998 by an American and funded with donations, Deaf Reach now has eight schools across the country, educating 2,000 students on a "pay what you can afford" basis, with 98 percent of children on scholarships. The vast majority of students at the school come from hearing families, who are also offered the chance to learn how to sign and break the language barrier with their son or daughter.

Adeela Ejaz explained how she struggled to come to terms with her first-born son — now 10 years old — being deaf. "When I couldn't understand what he was trying to say he would bang his head against the wall and floor," the 35-year-old told AFP.

"It was tough for everyone because no-one knew how to communicate with him. Everyone would tell us he is deaf but I wasn't prepared to accept that." The mother and son pair are now both learning to sign. "I am getting better at signing and

employment for more than 2,000 deaf people with around 50 Pakistani companies.

Huzaifa, 26, who became deaf after contracting a fever at a young age, was given a stitching apprenticeship at Deaf Reach to help him into the skilled workforce. "Teachers in the government school didn't know any sign language.

mobile or play outside. I never had a clue about what people were saying," said Faizan, 21, who has been at Deaf Reach for 11 years and dreams of working abroad. "Before learning how to sign I used to feel very weak mentally and had an inferiority complex and fear. But thankfully there is none of that anymore."



A student (second right) along with a teacher (right) welcome other students to school.

More than 200 pupils, children, and adults mostly from disadvantaged backgrounds, are among the few given a new fervor for life at this inner-city school in historic Lahore. Of more than a million deaf school-age children in Pakistan, less than five percent go to school. The figure is even lower for girls and, without a language to express themselves, many children are marginalized by society and even their families. "Life is a little difficult. There is a huge communication gap here where people generally don't know sign language," said Qurat-ul-Ain.

At the school run by charity Deaf Reach, pupils learn sign language in English and Urdu before progressing on to the national curriculum. Everyone has a name in sign language, which often has to



Students participate in class.

I am able to communicate with my son. He's now become so attached to me."

The program makes extensive use of technology, and offers an online dictionary and a phone app. It has also found em-



A teacher (center) leads a class of hearing-impaired students.

They would just write notes on the board and tell us to copy it. We used to get really disheartened, and I would be extremely worried for my future," he told AFP.

His family pushed for him to become educated, helping him to learn the basics of sign language before he received formal coaching. "My parents never threw me away. They spared no effort in ensuring I was able to continue my education," he said. Without their dedication, he said: "I'd be working as a day laborer somewhere, cutting leaves or cementing walls."

Isolated and fearful

Sign language varies from one country to another, with its own associated culture, and regional variations sometimes exist. According to the World Federation of the Deaf, 80 percent of the approximately 70 million deaf people in the world have no access to education.

"I used to sit idly at home, use the

Attitudes towards people with disabilities are slowly improving in Pakistan, which has introduced laws against discrimination. "We have seen over the years the mentality change tremendously. From many people hiding their deaf children, feeling embarrassed, ashamed," noted Daniel Marc Lanthier, director of operations of the foundation behind Deaf Reach.

Nowadays families are "coming out in the open, asking for education for their children, asking to find employment for them," he said, though much work remains. "With a million deaf children who don't have access to school, it's a huge challenge, it's a huge goal to be met." — AFP



Hearing-impaired youths operate sewing machines in a vocational training center at the school.



A student gestures the sign for "love" during class.



Youths attending a computer class at the school.



Teachers teach students by signing.

Starless and forever alone: More 'rogue' planets discovered



This NASA hand-out illustration released on May 28, 2024 shows an ice-encrusted, Earth-mass rogue planet drifting through space alone. — AFP

The Euclid space telescope has discovered seven more rogue planets, shining a light on the dark and lonely worlds floating freely through the universe untethered to any star. Without being bound to a star, as the Earth is to the Sun, there are no days or years on these planets, which languish in perpetual night. Yet scientists believe there is a chance they could be able to host life - and estimate there may be trillions dotted throughout the Milky Way.

Last week the European Space Agency released the Euclid telescope's first scientific results since the mission launched in July. Among the discoveries were seven new free-floating planets, gas giants at least four times the mass of Jupiter. They were spotted in the Orion Nebula, the nearest star-forming region to Earth, roughly 1,500 light years away.

Euclid also confirmed the existence of dozens of other previously detected rogue planets. Spanish astronomer Eduardo Martin, the lead author of a pre-print study published on arXiv.org Friday, said this was likely just the "tip of the iceberg".

Because they do not reflect the light of a star, spotting rogue planets is like

"finding a needle in a haystack", Martin told AFP. Younger planets, such as those discovered by Euclid, are hotter, making them a little easier to see.

'Awe and mystery'

Some research has suggested there are around 20 rogue planets for every star, which could put their number in the trillions in our home galaxy alone. Given there are thought to be hundreds of billions of galaxies across the universe, the potential number of free-floating worlds becomes difficult to fathom.

When NASA's Roman space telescope launches in 2027 it is expected find many more rogue planets, possibly offering clarity about how many could be out there. Gavin Coleman, an astronomer at the Queen Mary University of London who was not involved in the Euclid research, said these strange worlds often evoked "feelings of awe and mystery". "We've all grown up with the Sun in the sky, and so to think of a planet just drifting throughout space with no star on their horizon is fascinating," he told AFP.

But not all rogue planets wander alone. Four of the more than 20 con-

firmed by Euclid are believed to be binaries - two planets orbiting each other in a single system.

Could they host life?

If rogue planets are habitable, they could be a key target in humanity's search for extraterrestrial life. "Some of our closest neighbors are likely rogue planets," Martin said. Lacking heat from a nearby star, free-floating planets are believed to be cold, with frozen surfaces. That means any life-supporting energy would have to come from inside the planet. Most of Neptune's energy comes from within, Coleman pointed out. And geothermal vents allow animals to survive on Earth that have never seen the Sun's rays. But even under the best conditions, this extreme isolation would likely be able to support only bacterial and microbial life, Coleman said.

Advantage of being alone

Rogue planets could be thought of as traversing a lonely path through the cosmos. But "being around a star has its downsides", said study co-author Christopher Conelice, professor of ex-

tragalactic astronomy at the UK's University of Manchester.

One particular downside comes to mind. Once the Sun becomes a red giant - in an estimated 7.6 billion years - it will greatly expand, swallowing the Earth. Rogue planets do not have to worry about eventually being destroyed by a star. "These things will last forever," Conelice told AFP. "If you don't mind the cold temperatures you could survive on these planets for eternity."

The Euclid study also offered clues to how rogue planets are created, Conelice said. Some could be formed in the outer part of a solar system before getting detached from their star and floating away. But the study indicates that many rogue planets may be created as a "natural byproduct" of the star-formation process, he said. This suggests a "really close connection between stars and planets and how they form", he said. "There's no firm answers yet," he added. — AFP

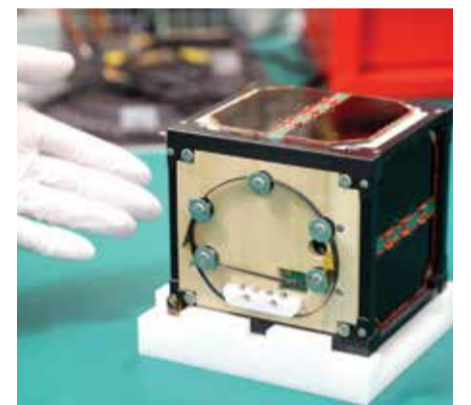
World's first wooden satellite built by Japan researchers

The world's first wooden satellite has been built by Japanese researchers who said their tiny cuboid craft will be blasted off on a SpaceX rocket in September. Each side of the experimental satellite developed by scientists at Kyoto University and logging company Sumitomo Forestry measures just 10 centimeters (four inches).

The creators expect the wooden material will burn up completely when the device re-enters the atmosphere - potentially providing a way to avoid the generation of metal particles when a retired satellite returns to Earth.

These metal particles could have a negative impact on the environment and telecommunications, the developers said as they announced the satellite's completion on Tuesday. "Satellites that are not made of metal should become mainstream," Takao Doi, an astronaut and special professor at Kyoto University, told a press conference.

The developers plan to hand the satellite, made from magnolia wood and named LignoSat, to space agency JAXA next week. It will be sent into space on a SpaceX rocket from the Kennedy Space Center in September, bound for the International Space Station (ISS), they said. — AFP



This photo shows the world's first wooden satellite made from wood and named LignoSat, developed by scientists at Kyoto University and logging company Sumitomo Forestry. — AFP



PhD student Kei Misumi puts on a clean suit before entering a clean room at Tokyo University. — AFP photos



Inside a semiconductor 'clean room' in Tokyo

To study semiconductors at Japan's top university, first you need the right clothes - protective overalls, shoe covers, plastic gloves and a lightweight balaclava to keep your hair out of the way. Then, surgical mask in place, you step inside an "air shower" to remove all the dust from your body that could potentially contaminate the precision equipment.

Now, you are ready to enter the University of Tokyo's clean room, a highly controlled space where microchips are handled. Clean rooms, a vital part of semiconductor factories, are also

found at such universities, where aspiring tech innovators conduct research.

Chips are an indispensable part of the modern economy, used in everything from smartphones to cars and weapons. That has made them politically sensitive, with the industry frequently caught in the crossfire as the United States and China tussle over access to advanced tech.

Japan is also ramping up its efforts to revive its once-world-leading chip industry: the government has promised up to \$25 billion in subsidies to help triple sales of domestically produced

chips by 2030.

Taiwanese chip behemoth TSMC opened a semiconductor factory in southern Japan in February and is planning a second facility for more advanced chips. And a multi-billion-dollar joint venture called Rapidus, involving Sony, Toyota, IBM and others, aims to mass produce next-generation logic chips in Japan from 2027.

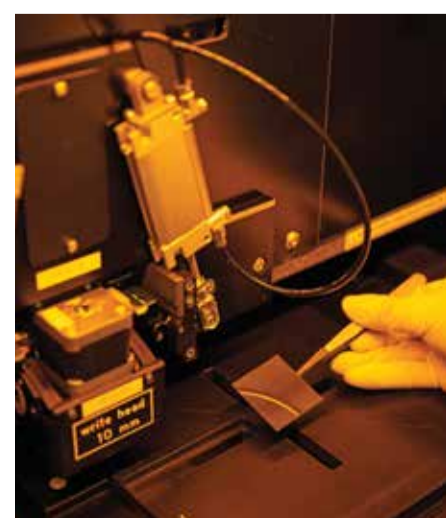
Chip expert and University of Tokyo professor Tadahiro Kuroda said Japan's push into a sector where it was once dominant feels like "spring has returned". At the university's 600

square-meter (6,500 square-foot) chip lab, filled with cutting-edge machines, students use tweezers to handle the delicate materials.

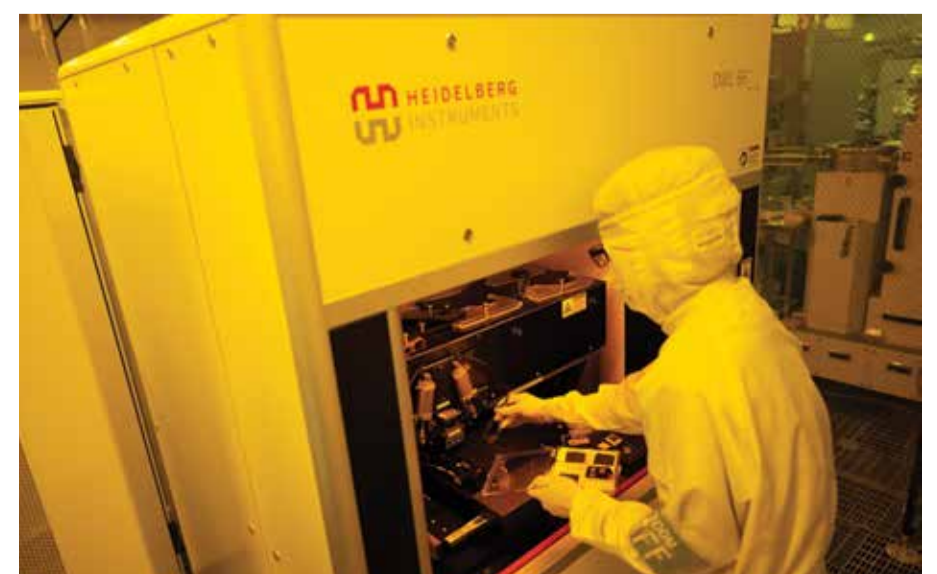
With pipettes, they drip a red liquid chemical onto gleaming, pristine silicon wafers designed to contain a dizzying number of tiny transistors. PhD student Kei Misumi, 27, who regularly works in the clean room, told AFP he hopes such advanced technology will further enrich people's lives. — AFP



Misumi (center) and professor Yoshio Mita (left) working with semiconductors.



Misumi handles a chip with a pair of tweezers.





This photo shows one of the sections of the library.



The main entrance to the library.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS: AN ICONIC HUB FOR RESEARCHERS



Part of the collections housed at the Library of Congress in Washington.



A collection of books and publications seen at the Library of Congress.

The Library of Congress, the largest library in the world, lies in the heart of Washington and contains a very precious collection including 137 million items in up to 470 languages. It's an iconic hub for researchers and scientists.

The library, founded in 1,800, boasts more than 51 million books and publications, four million records, 17 million photographs, 5.6 million maps, eight million music records, and 75 unique manuscripts, making it the number one cultural foundation in the US and the favorite reference for researchers and literati worldwide.

It was born when the second American president John Adams signed a bill to transfer the state administration's headquarters to Washington, with the establishment of a library with various references for aiding members of the government and legislators.

The priceless and huge collection of books and publications features two huge reading chambers - and managers organize participation in cultural exhibitions. The 39-hectare building, a stone's throw from the Capitol, displays paper and digital items.

President Thomas Jefferson is credited for re-laying the library's cornerstones after the former building was burnt to ashes by the British forces in 1814. He too offered his personal cultural belongings for the renewed edifice. In 1815, Congress agreed to purchase Jefferson's collection which included 6,487 books that became the basis for the library's ever-expanding collection.

The library, which was reopened to the public in 1897, features three main



buildings, the first of which is the Jefferson section founded in 1897. Known as the main Congress Library, John Adams' section which was opened in 1938, is distinguished with 12 floors designated for books. The third building is Madison's section, inaugurated in 1981 for Congress research and for keeping law references.

The library offers diverse services for people with special needs, including

audio and visual facilities and devices. The Middle East section is the largest among its divisions. It was established in 1945 in the aftermath of World War II, amid mounting public interest in the Middle East. Arabic-language books are the largest collection in the Middle East section, encompassing no less than 400,000 books and 2,000 manuscripts. Dating back to the seventh and ninth centuries, it features items and

publications covering medicine, sciences, religion, literature, philosophy and astronomy. It also contains some of the oldest translated copies of the Quran into Latin, dating back to 1694, in addition to newspapers, magazines and journals, including copies of the Egyptian Al-Ahram since it was founded in 1870. — KUNA

4,000 historic French state dinner menus up for auction

From cooking for dictators to rushing to accommodate Barack Obama's love of cheese - a collection of French state dinner menus offered a unique insight into 150 years of diplomatic and gastronomic history on Wednesday. The 4,000-plus menus were on display in Paris before going up for auction on Friday, with the oldest dating back to an imperial dinner given by Napoleon III in 1868 that carries a few wine stains from the moment.

They offer a who's who of royalty, statesmen and dictators, from John F. Kennedy and Nelson Mandela to Saddam Hussein and Vladimir Putin - right up to the sumptuous meal at Versailles for King Charles III last year. They were obsessively collected by a Lyons-based chef, Christophe Marguin, who has put them up for auction with the Millon auction house at estimations ranging from 10 to 1,500 euros (\$1,600) per lot.

Some are printed on beautiful silk, and one for US president Jimmy Carter features an original lithograph by painter Marc Chagall. They hint at the complex logistics that surround diplomatic moments - such as the commemorations for the 70th anniversary of the D-Day land-



A photo shows a menu ahead of a state banquet at the Palace of Versailles.

ings in 2014 when then-president Francois Hollande had to dash from a meal with Obama to another with Putin.

Having enjoyed a blue lobster salad and grilled sea bass, Obama messed with the delicate timing by asking for a cheese course that was not on the tight menu schedule "almost causing a diplomatic incident," auctioneer Alexandre Millon told AFP.

Those logistics pale compared to the meal for 23,000 local mayors, held in the Tuileries Gardens in 1900, that required seven kilometers of tablecloth, 125,000

plates, 600 cooks, 2,200 servers, 2,000 kilos of salmon, 1,200 liters of mayonnaise and 39,000 bottles of wine.

"We see the evolution of international relations. Visits at the end of the 19th century were much rarer, so they were exceptional events with several meals at the Elysee, sometimes at Versailles ... often with military parades and a program of opera or theatre," said Millon.

Some menus carried subtle messages. When France was trying to ensure close ties with both Russia and Britain in 1897, the dinner for Russian Tsar Nicolas II included both Sturgeon from the Volga and "Ananas a la Victoria" - a pineapple dessert named after the British queen.

It is the French president who usually has the final call on the menu, but there is back-and-forth to ensure it fits the tastes of the guests. For one visit, Queen Elizabeth II was offered two choices - with foie gras or without - for fear of offending her environmentally-conscious son Charles. "But it was the queen that decided, and clearly she liked foie gras, so it stayed in," Millon said. — AFP



Guests attend a state banquet at the Palace of Versailles, west of Paris, on September 20, 2023, on the first day of a British royal state visit to France. — AFP photos



The EarthCARE satellite on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket launches from Vandenberg Space Force base in Lompoc, California, on May 28, 2024. — AFP

Satellite to probe how clouds affect climate

A rocket carrying a sophisticated satellite blasted off late Tuesday from California on a mission to investigate what role clouds could play in the fight against climate change. The EarthCARE orbiter, the result of collaboration between the European Space Agency (ESA) and Japan's JAXA space agency, launched on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Vandenberg air base at 3:20 pm local time (2220 GMT). "The hold-down clamps have released Falcon 9 and we have begun our flight," ESA said on its web site.

The two-tonne satellite will orbit nearly 400 kilometers (250 miles) above Earth for three years. "Tonight's launch is a reminder that space is not only about exploring distant galaxies and planets. It is about understanding our beautiful but fragile Earth," ESA Director Josef Aschbacher said in a video posted Tuesday on social media.

Clouds - from cumulus and cirrus to cumulonimbus - are a varied and complicated phenomenon. Their composition depends on where they are located in the troposphere, Earth's lowest layer of atmosphere, explained Dominique Gillieron, head of the ESA's Earth observation projects department. "They are one of the main contributors to how the climate changes - and one of the least understood," Gillieron told AFP.

The troposphere starts at around eight kilometers (five miles) above the polar regions, but near the equator it begins at around 18 kilometers (11 miles) up. This means that clouds affect the cli-

mate differently depending on their altitude and latitude.

White and bright cumulus clouds, which are made out of water droplets, sit low and work like a parasol, reflecting the Sun's radiation back into space and cooling the atmosphere. Higher up, cirrus clouds made of ice crystals allow solar radiation to pass through, heating up our world. Cirrus clouds then trap in the heat like a blanket, Gillieron said.

Parasol or blanket?

Understanding the nature of clouds has become essential, said Simonetta Cheli, head of the ESA's Earth observation programs. EarthCARE will become the first satellite to measure both the vertical and horizontal distribution of clouds, she told a press conference.

Two of the satellite's instruments will flash light at the clouds to probe their depths. One of them, involving light detection and ranging, or LIDAR, will use a laser pulse to measure both clouds and aerosols, which are tiny particles such as dust, pollen or human-emitted pollutants like smoke or ash. Aerosols are the precursors to clouds, Gillieron explained. The satellite's radar will pierce through the clouds to measure how much water they contain, and track cloud speed. Other instruments will measure shape and temperature. The data will form the first complete picture of clouds from the perspective of a satellite, and help update climate models that estimate how quickly our world will warm. — AFP

Sports

Giants slide past over visiting Phillies 1-0 in 10th inning

Devers had four hits and a key triple, as Boston beat host Baltimore

SAN FRANCISCO: Tyler Fitzgerald raced from second to third, then third to home on consecutive fly balls in the bottom of the 10th inning Tuesday night, lifting the San Francisco Giants to a 1-0 victory over the visiting Philadelphia Phillies. Starting with the extra-innings courtesy baserunner on second, the Phillies elected to walk Heliot Ramos intentionally before Wilmer Flores' fly to center field got Fitzgerald to third. Luis Matos then lifted a pitch by Matt Strahm (3-1) to left field, just deep enough to allow Fitzgerald to dive home ahead of a strong throw by Brandon Marsh. In a game that featured just one extra-base hit—a double by Phillies catcher J.T. Realmuto leading off the sixth—scoring opportunities were in scarce supply over the first nine innings. The Phillies failed in their five chances with a runner in scoring position, while Giants hitters went 0-for-9. For nine innings, the game remained scoreless thanks to the work of Phillies starter Zack Wheeler and three relievers, and five Giants pitchers in a bullpen game. Wheeler worked the first six innings, allowing just a pair of singles and two walks. He struck out nine.

Blue Jays 7, White Sox 2

Davis Schneider had three hits and three RBIs and Kevin Gausman pitched six strong innings to boost visiting Toronto to a victory over slumping Chicago. Chicago drew within 3-1 on Nicky Lopez's RBI double in the third but was otherwise unable to solve Gausman (4-3), who gave up one run while scattering four hits across six innings. Lopez had two hits for the White Sox. Eight Blue Jays had at least one hit, with Danny Jansen, Daulton Varsho and George Springer contributing two apiece. Toronto broke things open with a three-run eighth, which featured four straight two-out hits, including Justin Turner's two-run single.

Padres 4, Marlins 0

Knuckleballer Matt Waldron threw seven strong innings and reliever Jeremiah Estrada set an expansion-era MLB record as San Diego won its second straight over visiting Miami. Estrada struck out the side in a non-save situation in the ninth, extending his record of consecutive batters struck out to 13. Waldron (3-5), the only knuckleballer in the majors, scattered six hits, struck out eight—all on knuckleballs—and did not walk a batter. Jurickson Profar homered, singled and drove in three runs for the Padres, who have won three in a row. Marlins left-hander Jesus

Luzardo (2-4) allowed three runs and seven hits in six innings. He struck out four and walked two for Miami, which has dropped three of four.

Red Sox 8, Orioles 3

Rafael Devers had four hits, including a key triple, as Boston beat host Baltimore. Wilner Abreu and Rob Refsnyder homered for the Red Sox, who held the Orioles scoreless after the first inning and evened the three-game series at a game apiece. Brayan Bello (6-2) was charged with three runs on five hits and struck out seven during his five-plus innings. Trailing 4-3, the Orioles loaded the bases with no outs in the sixth. Boston reliever Brennan Bernardino doused the threat as Baltimore's season-best five-game winning streak ended. Orioles starter Grayson Rodriguez (5-2) struck out 10 over six innings, giving up four runs.

Dodgers 5, Mets 2 (Game 1, 10 innings)

Mookie Betts delivered the tiebreaking RBI single leading off the 10th inning and Los Angeles overcame a late two-run deficit to defeat host New York in the first game of a doubleheader. Freddie Freeman hit a two-run homer one out later to provide insurance for the Dodgers, who avoided their first six-game losing streak since 2019. Freeman began the comeback with a run-scoring single in the eighth for Los Angeles, which forced extra innings on Chris Taylor's RBI safety squeeze in the ninth. Daniel Hudson (2-1) escaped a bases-loaded jam in the ninth. Blake Treinen recorded his first save with a 1-2-3 10th. Francisco Lindor hit a two-run homer for the Mets.

Dodgers 3, Mets 0 (Game 2)

Gavin Stone tossed seven strong innings and Will Smith and Miguel Vargas hit solo home runs for visiting Los Angeles, which beat New York to complete a doubleheader sweep. Miguel Rojas had a run-scoring double in the second inning, while Stone (5-2) scattered three hits and recorded seven strikeouts and no walks while not allowing a runner past first base. Mark Vientos, Francisco Lindor and Brandon Nimmo had singles for the Mets, who have scored three runs or fewer 11 times this month. New York starter Jose Quintana (1-5) gave up three runs on eight hits over six innings.

Cubs 6, Brewers 3 (10 innings)

Michael Tauchman singled in the go-ahead run to



CHICAGO: Toronto Blue Jays infielder Bo Bichette (11) throws to infielder Davis Schneider (36) for a force out at second base in the seventh inning against the Chicago White Sox at Guaranteed Rate Field. — Reuters

ignite a five-run 10th inning as visiting Chicago snapped a five-game losing streak with a victory over Milwaukee. Cubs rookie Ben Brown tossed seven hitless innings, allowing just two fifth-inning walks, before being lifted after 93 pitches. The 24-year-old right-hander struck out a career-high 10. Michael Busch staked the Cubs to a 1-0 lead against starter Freddy Peralta, opening the third inning with his eighth homer. Peralta allowed one run on three hits and struck out 11 in 5 2/3 innings. Milwaukee, held to one hit through 8 2/3 innings, tied it 1-1 on Willy Adames' two-out RBI single in the ninth inning off Hector Neris (5-0).

Angels 4, Yankees 3

Taylor Ward hit a two-run double in the eighth inning and Los Angeles rallied for a victory over New York in Anaheim, Calif., to end a three-game losing streak. Kevin Pillar hit a two-run home run and starter Griffin Canning gave up three runs over five innings for the Angels, who had lost six of their

previous seven home games. Pillar had three hits and Luis Rengifo had three hits and two runs. Juan Soto hit a first-inning home run and Anthony Volpe extended his hitting streak to 20 games as the Yankees dropped back-to-back games and fell to 2-2 to open a nine-game California road trip.

Braves 2, Nationals 0

Max Fried pitched eight scoreless innings and Marcell Ozuna blasted his National League-leading 16th home run of the season to help Atlanta defeat visiting Washington. Fried (5-2) allowed seven hits, walked one and struck out six. He has two complete games this year but was removed after throwing 103 pitches on Tuesday. Raisel Iglesias pitched a perfect ninth, striking out the final two batters, to earn his 13th save. Ozuna broke a scoreless tie in the seventh. He didn't miss a cutter down the middle from reliever Jacob Barnes (2-2) and hit it 413 feet to left-center field. Washington starter Jake Irvin allowed only two hits, walked two and struck out a career-high 10. — Reuters

News in Brief

Afghanistan favorites for T20

KABUL: A young Afghan side with an average age of just 25 have vowed to give audiences back home rare cause for jubilation at the T20 World Cup after a breakthrough performance at the 50-over showpiece. Kabul's skies were raked with fireworks when Afghanistan celebrated their stunning eight-wicket victory against Pakistan in the ODI World Cup in October. They finished sixth, ahead of defending champions England—who they also beat—stoking hopes for the T20 tournament in the United States and West Indies starting on Saturday. "In the past when we would defeat a bigger team, our victory was tagged as an 'upset'." 22-year-old Sediqullah Atal told AFP on the phone from their training camp in the West Indies. — AFP

Usyk set for Fury rematch

RIYADH: Undisputed heavyweight world champion Oleksandr Usyk and British heavyweight Tyson Fury will meet on Dec 21 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in a rematch of their bout that took place earlier this month, organisers said on Wednesday. Usyk—now the WBA, WBC, IBF and WBO champion—defeated Fury by split decision in a thrilling contest at the Kingdom Arena in Riyadh to become the first undisputed heavyweight champion since the end of Lennox Lewis' reign in April 2000. Following the fight, Usyk said he would grant Fury an immediate rematch according to the clause in the fight contract. "The rematch between the Undisputed Champion Oleksandr Usyk and the Champion Tyson Fury is now scheduled on the 21 of December 2024 during Riyadh Season," Saudi entertainment head and organiser Turki Alalshikh said in a post on X. "The world will watch another historical fight again. Our commitment to boxing fans continues. We hope you enjoy it." — Reuters

Indian Grand Prix called off

BENGALURU: MotoGP's Indian Grand Prix has been cancelled due to operational considerations, series organisers said on Wednesday, adding that the inaugural Kazakhstan Grand Prix would instead take place in that time period. Last year's Indian Grand Prix at the Buddh International Circuit in Noida took place in hot and humid conditions in September and was shortened by three laps after MotoGP riders asked for race distances to be adjusted. The event is set to return in an earlier slot in the 2025 season. "The FIM, IRTA and Dorna Sports announce that the Indian Grand Prix will not take place in 2024, with MotoGP postponing its return to the country to early 2025 due to operational considerations," MotoGP said in a statement. "Following advice from the Government of Uttar Pradesh as the state continues its long-term commitment to MotoGP, the sport will return to Buddh International Circuit in March 2025, when weather conditions are expected to be optimal for spectators and riders alike." Kazakhstan's Grand Prix, which was initially scheduled to take place in June, was this month postponed due to severe weather and flooding across central Asia, which caused nearly 117,000 people to be evacuated. — Reuters

Australia chase treble as cricket eyes grip in lucrative US market

PERTH: Australia will be aiming to become the first team to possess all three of cricket's global titles at the same time, but a bigger success will be if the T20 World Cup next month can help the game crack a lucrative market in the United States.

Australia won a hat-trick of one-day World Cups between 1999-2007 and, going by their heady success in recent global events, they are close to recreating that 'golden era'. Under Pat Cummins, they won the World Test Championship title and the one-day World Cup last year - beating a formidable India in both the finals.

The onus is now on Mitchell Marsh to lead Australia to another successful campaign, which would make them the reigning world champions in all three formats of the game. It is not going to be a cakewalk of course.

India have not won a global trophy in more than a decade despite dominating the business side of the game and coming agonisingly close on two occasions last year itself. That they run the world's richest T20 league and yet have not won a 20-overs World Cup since the inaugural edition in 2007 does not sit well with the fans.

It could well be the last limited-overs World Cup for captain Rohit Sharma and stalwart Virat Kohli and nothing would please their fans more than watching them do the victory lap on June 29 in Bridgetown. England's 50-overs title defence fizzled out in India last year and they will do everything they can to prevent another meltdown, which could have serious ramifications on the future of captain Jos Butler and coach Matthew Mott. They have gambled on Jofra Archer's fitness despite the speedster's several aborted comeback attempts from back and elbow injuries, while test captain Ben Stokes has opted out.

Nepali cop looks to handcuff World Cup bowlers

KATHMANDU: Nepal's Dipendra Singh Airee is a 24-year-old policeman dubbed "The Tiger", who hopes to use his record-breaking batting skills to boost his nation at the T20 World Cup. Last September, Nepal's victory by a staggering 273 runs against Mongolia was the biggest margin by runs in all T20s—but Airee's astonishing part in that win included the fastest T20 fifty in just nine balls.

The rising star smashed sixes from each of the first six balls he faced, before completing his quickfire half-century to beat the previous record of 12 balls. Then in April against Qatar, he became the third man to hit six sixes in a single over in a T20 international. But he has also shown himself to be a stellar fielder, pulling off sensational catches and spectacular run outs—and hopes to provide a performance to make his Himalayan nation proud.



NEW YORK: A batter from Long Island United Cricket Club hits the ball as they play during the Commonwealth Cricket League at Eisenhower Park in New York on May 19, 2024 in New York City. — AFP

Other challengers

Also in the reckoning will be Pakistan, who have brought back Babar Azam as captain of the side and appointed Gary Kirsten as the coach hoping their collaboration will yield a second T20 World Cup title for them. South Africa will arrive with a bunch of power-hitters but their bowling resources look rather thin, while New Zealand will be determined to shed their 'nearly-man' tag under Kane Williamson's inspiring leadership.

Co-hosts West Indies will also be in the reckoning having handed the coaching reins to Daren Sammy, who led them to both of their T20 World Cup titles. The ninth edition of the tournament will feature a re-

cord 20 teams, including the United States, who will be making their World Cup debut as the co-hosts of the event. The US will stage 16 matches, including the June 9 India v Pakistan blockbuster at the brand new 34,000-seater Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in Long Island, New York. There was considerable buzz around the launch of the Major League Cricket in the U.S. last year and the 2028 Los Angeles Games will feature the T20 format for the first time at an Olympics.

A successful organisation of the 20-team jamboree could go a long way in helping cricket gain foothold in a sporting landscape dominated by baseball, basketball, ice hockey and American football. — Reuters

"I will do my best to play a role to make the team victorious", Airee told Nepal's Kantipur Television earlier this month. "I get motivated by the support I get from everyone," he added. "They call me by the name 'tiger' and that motivates me further. It makes me want to do as much as possible, to give my 110 percent."

'Among the finest'

Nepal head to the 20-nation World Cup sitting a lowly 17th in the ICC rankings, but Nepal's chief selector Dipendra Chaudhary said Airee could make all the difference. "His off-spin bowling is among the finest," Chaudhary told AFP. "His fitness, work ethic, and team spirit stand out."

"I believe when we look back he will be counted as one of Nepal's best players in history", Chaudhary added. "He is very talented and hardworking. He began his career as a medium-paced bowler before transitioning into a batsman and now serving as an all-rounder."

Airee said he was "very happy" to be going to the World Cup, recalling how he watched the last tournament from Nepal on a giant screen projected in a market. "When we qualified, I was crying from the bottom

of my heart," he told Kantipur in an interview.

'Remarkably gifted'

Humble and media-shy, Airee first played in the 2016 Under-19 World Cup. "He was raw but remarkably gifted: He was noticed by the system at a young age," Chaudhary said, adding that the policeman has a natural "shy demeanour".

"He is extremely humble and speaks very little," he said. "He is very ethical in his work and spends most of his time on the ground." The T20 World Cup begins Saturday, co-hosted by the United States and West Indies, with Nepal's first game on June 4 in Dallas.

"We have prepared enough for the World Cup, but frankly other teams are better than us," Chaudhary said. "But it is a game, and we hope for good games and a good performance." Nepal's preparation had been overshadowed by a push to include controversial star Sandeep Lamichhane in the squad, after the ex-skipper and spin bowler was denied a US visa.

Lamichhane, 23, was once the poster boy for cricket in Nepal, but was not included in the original squad because he was convicted of raping a young woman in a Kathmandu hotel in 2022. His eight-year sentence for rape was quashed on appeal this month. — AFP

Sports

From fan bus to team bus: Dortmund's Edin Terzic primed for Real Madrid

Doubters remain despite Terzic's record in charge of Dortmund

DORTMUND: Saturday's clash with Real Madrid will not be coach Edin Terzic's first Champions League final experience with Borussia Dortmund—but this time around he will be closer to the action.

Jurgen Klopp was in the dugout the last time Dortmund made a Champions League final, which they lost 2-1 to rivals Bayern Munich at Wembley—the same venue as Saturday's showpiece.

Born just outside Dortmund, Terzic—the lifelong BVB fan who rose through the ranks to take over as manager—said Tuesday being in the crowd for the 2013 final was part of his “personal story as to why I'm sitting here today”.

While veterans Mats Hummels and Marco Reus took the pitch alongside current coaches Nuri Sahin and Sven Bender 11 years ago, Terzic, then an assistant coach for Dortmund's U-17s, made the pilgrimage in an unofficial capacity.

“My trip in 2013 was as a fan. Mats Hummels, Marco Reus, Nuri Sahin, Sven Bender, they were on the team bus. I was on the fan bus. “We all have a personal story and I don't really want to put mine in the foreground. It's just about us going on a journey together.”

‘Not only a fan’

Terzic's tale is a rarity in international football but has at times counted against him, giving rise to a perception he is in the job on the weight of the romance of his story rather than his skill with the clipboard.

Speaking with DAZN on Tuesday, he said “it's not like I was sitting in the stands and someone said ‘we'll take him.’ “I wasn't only a fan—I worked here, as a

junior coach, a scout, an assistant coach and then a manager if the professional side.”

The doubters remain despite Terzic's record in charge of Dortmund. As an interim coach, Terzic took Dortmund to the German Cup in 2021 just a few months after taking over.

In his first full season he had Dortmund on course for the Bundesliga title until a last-day 2-2 draw with Mainz saw Bayern win for the 11th straight season.

At the end of his second full season, Terzic has Dortmund in the Champions League final—something that only Klopp and Ottmar Hitzfeld have done before. Speaking with journalists on Tuesday, Terzic said that fateful day against Mainz was “a part of the path to success” which continued on Saturday. “It was not the nicest day, but what I experienced I will not forget. “It's part of us, of me.”

‘The final boss’

Bayern's narrow loss in the other semi-final this season, defeated 4-3 over two legs, deprived Dortmund of a chance at revenge.

Terzic's men will instead line-up against Real, one of the few teams more decorated than Bayern in Europe.

Champions League winners in 1997 when they beat a highly fancied Juventus 3-1 in Munich, Dortmund have overcome the odds as underdogs before.

The statistics however show just how up against it Dortmund will be on Saturday.

Real have won the competition 14 times—six of which have come since Dortmund's last appearance. Los Blancos have not lost any of their past

phenomenon in 2007.

The Florida native turned professional in 2010 at the tender age of 15 and one year later won the Dubai Ladies Masters Championship on the Ladies European Tour (LET), becoming the youngest professional to win on the tour.

Perhaps the crowning moment of her career came in 2014 when she won her only major, the Chevron Championship (then named the Kraft Nabisco Championship). She was controversially denied a second major title in 2017 when she was hit with a four-shot penalty during the closing holes of the ANA Inspiration—later renamed the Chevron Championship—for a third-round rules infraction that had been brought to the attention of officials by a television viewer.

She subsequently lost in a play-off to Ryu So-yeon, one of four times that Thompson finished runner-up or tied for second at a major. LPGA tour commissioner Mollie Marcoux Samaan paid tribute to her: “Lexi's impact extends far beyond the golf course... (her) remarkable career and the way she has conducted herself both on and off the course have inspired countless girls around the world to pursue their goals with passion and perseverance.”

The coach, who turns 65 on June 10, is adored by his players, a result of his “quiet leadership”, the title of his autobiography. Ancelotti knows how to keep players pulling together in the right direction, even in tough moments.

Brazilian forward Rodrygo Goes has endured dry spells in front of goal but Ancelotti has always backed him. “There are times when you score every time you touch the ball, and there are times when you shoot a lot and fail,” said Ancelotti in November. “It will pass.” With Ancelotti keeping his confidence steady, Rodrygo did not panic and soon hit a rich vein of form.

Vinicius Junior is another who struggled but with Ancelotti's guidance has found his top level at the perfect time. “It's work well done,” said Ancelotti. “He has great talent and has added great quality of movement without the ball.” Creating such warm feeling with his players helps them accept his decisions. Midfielders Eduardo Camavinga and Aurelien Tchouameni have both played in defence on occasion, without kicking up a fuss.

On top of his man management, Ancelotti has also made several important tactical decisions this season. Sometimes his work in that area goes unappreciated. “This team is well-trained,” said Ancelotti a



MADRID: Real Madrid's players attend a training session at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid ahead of their Champions League final football match against Borussia Dortmund. — AFP

eight finals dating back to 1981, when Terzic was not yet born. The 41-year-old joked it was about time Real lost a final. “Our goal is to win the Champions League. And if you want to win the Champions League, you have to beat the champions.” And

now, the absolute champion in the history of football and especially in this competition awaits us. “To use a bit of modern language, they're the final boss. “Statistically they're on track to win it again this year—but none of that counts.” — AFP

Lexi Thompson to retire from golf at season end

LANCASTER: American golfer Lexi Thompson announced Tuesday that she will retire from the LPGA tour at the end of the 2024 season. Thompson, 29, is an 11-time LPGA tour winner, a major champion, a two-time Olympian and a six-time US Solheim Cup team member.

“While it is never easy to say goodbye, it is indeed time. At the end of 2024, I will be stepping away from a full professional golf schedule,” said Thompson on social media. “I will always look for ways to contribute to the sport and inspire the next generation of golfers. And of course, I look forward to a little time for myself.”

The announcement comes just days before the start of the US Women's Open, in which Thompson will compete for the 18th consecutive year after first playing in the tournament as a 12-year-old

Ancelotti's ‘quiet leadership’ key to his CL success

MADRID: Real Madrid's superstars usually grab the headlines but quietly steering the ship in the direction of Champions League success yet again is coach Carlo Ancelotti.

If Real Madrid beat Borussia Dortmund at Wembley on Saturday Ancelotti can become the first coach to lift the trophy five times.

The Italian is already the most decorated manager in the history of the tournament, winning it twice with AC Milan in 2003 and 2007, and then twice with Madrid in 2014 and 2022.

With the latter Ancelotti surpassed Liverpool manager Bob Paisley and his Madrid predecessor Zinedine Zidane, who boast three each, to become “Mister Champions”.

Ancelotti won the competition twice as a player with Milan, but his exploits as a coach have become the stuff of legend, along with his recent trophy celebrations—sunglasses on, cigar in hand.



Lexi Thompson

News of Thompson's retirement took the golf world by surprise, with world number one Nelly Korda leading the tributes ahead of this week's US Women's Open. “I honestly heard probably 15 minutes ago that she's retiring,” Korda said during a press conference in Lancaster.

“It's sad to see that she's obviously leaving and not going to be out here with us anymore, but she's had an amazing career, and I wish her the best in this new chapter of her life.” — AFP



MADRID: Real Madrid's Italian coach Carlo Ancelotti gives a press conference at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid ahead of their Champions League final football match against Borussia Dortmund. — AFP

year ago, a rare boastful comment from the coach, usually content to play up to his avuncular image.

Ancelotti's first big decision of the season was how to deploy new arrival Jude Bellingham. The central midfielder started the campaign as part of the attack and it paid instant dividends, with Bellingham scoring 13 goals in his first 13 games. — AFP

PSG withhold Mbappe's wages due to dispute

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain have not paid Kylian Mbappe his wages for April as well as a mega-bucks bonus amid a financial dispute between the club and the player as he prepares to leave the French champions, sources close to the talks told AFP on Wednesday.

PSG's decision to withhold Mbappe's salary is related to an agreement between the two parties made last year, at the start of the season, when the player accepted to waive part of a bonus due to him, the source said.

However, the source stated the talks between the club and the France captain were “relaxed” and that there was hope of reaching “a positive conclusion.” “Everything is being sorted out,” the source said without confirming the amount of money due to Mbappe.

However, another source contacted by AFP said PSG had also decided not to pay Mbappe a bonus owed, meaning the amount of money in question totalled some 80 million euros (\$86.8m), confirming figures reported by sports daily L'Equipe. The same source said the club had decided not to make the payments without warning Mbappe and without an agreement being reached between the parties.

Neither Mbappe's entourage nor PSG immediately responded when contacted by AFP for comment. Mbappe's contract expires on June 30 and he has already confirmed he will leave PSG after seven years, with Real Madrid expected to be his next destination.

The two camps admitted at the beginning of this year Mbappe had agreed to waive part of a huge bonus that was due to him in order to be reinstated to the PSG squad after he was frozen out of the team at the beginning of the season.

The total amount of these bonuses is between 60 and 70 million euros, according to a source close to the club. Waiving that sum was seen as a way of Mbappe helping PSG recoup some money given that they will not receive a transfer fee for the 25-year-old when he departs. However, another source said Mbappe did in fact receive that bonus in February.

Mbappe signed his last contract with PSG in 2022, a two-year deal worth some 72 million euros before tax. On top of that there was a stratospheric signing-on fee of 150 million euros, to be paid in three instalments, and a loyalty bonus of 70 million euros for the first year and 80 million euros for the second year. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752

Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300

Change of Name

I, Mohamed Nijam Uddin Ahmed, holder of Indian Passport No. M5765018 issued at Guwahati. Resident of Vill- Borpukhuri PS & Dist - Hojai Assam (India), PIN - 782435. I have changed my name from Mohammed Nijam Uddin Ahmed to Nijam Uddin Ahmed. (#5610, 28/05/2024)

I Neethu Jose holder of Indian passport no N6512046 issued at Cochin, Indian permanent address No. Thekkevayalil House, Thidand PO, Pin 686123, Kottayam, Kerala, India. Present hereby declare that hence forth my name will be read as given name Neethu and surname Kurian. (#5608, 27/05/2024)

ALORF HOSPITAL is looking for the following QUALITY MANAGER

- ▶ Must be 35-40 years of age preferably female, preferably Filipino or Indian.
- ▶ Degree in Hospital Administration, or Quality Management.
- ▶ Must have 2 years' experience in Quality Management and have experience in Accreditation process in hospital.
- ▶ Can understand Arabic and English Language (writing, reading and speaking) & have computer skills.

Send your resume to alorfmed@alorf.com or contact 2 205 2555 ext. # 740/741 or +965 6708 6378 look for Ms. Lynn

For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL hotline 128

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

Edwards, Towns keep Timberwolves finals series alive as Mavs downed

Visitors now have a slender lifeline to cling to as they head to game five



DALLAS: P.J. Washington #25 of the Dallas Mavericks attempts a shot against Rudy Gobert #27 of the Minnesota Timberwolves during the fourth quarter in Game Four of the Western Conference Finals at American Airlines Center in Dallas, Texas. — AFP

LOS ANGELES: Anthony Edwards scored 29 points and Karl-Anthony Towns produced a crucial late burst of long-range shooting as the Minnesota Timberwolves defeated the Dallas Mavericks 105-100. On Tuesday to keep their NBA Western Conference finals series alive. The Timberwolves, trailing 3-0 in the best-of-seven series heading into game four, held off a furious late rally to close out a battling victory at the Mavericks' home arena.

Edwards led the Minnesota scoring but the decisive contribution came from Towns, who drained a trio of three-pointers to help the Timberwolves take a 98-92 lead with less than two minutes remaining. "Game four, down 3-0, this ain't no time to have any doubts," Towns said of his flurry of scoring. "I just wanted to go out and be aggressive, shoot my shot and be

confident with every shot I shoot.

"Defensively I wanted to be as disciplined as possible. And offensively - just don't lose any confidence and don't lose any aggression." After Towns put Minnesota six points clear, Edwards extended the cushion to 100-92 via a jump shot with 1min 47sec left on the clock to leave the visitors in control.

But there was still time for Dallas to give the third seeds a nervous finale, closing to within three at 100-97 before Edwards' sublime pull-up jumper from 21 feet put the Timberwolves five points clear with 40 seconds left.

The visitors held that advantage through to the buzzer and now have a slender lifeline to cling to as they head to game five back in Minneapolis on Thursday. Edwards said he had been determined to prevent

Dallas clinching a clean sweep.

"I've never been swept in my career, even though I've been to the playoffs three times," Edwards told TNT television. "I took it personally. "I definitely didn't want to get swept, especially here on their home court, hearing the fans talking trash all day. I think we came out and competed at a high level today. "I think I was aggressive. I didn't shy away from the ball and they kept giving it to me and trusting me," added Edwards.

Doncic demands better

Dallas were left frustrated after losing despite another triple double from Luka Doncic, who finished with 28 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists. Doncic however had an off-night from long range, making just four-of-11 from three-point distance. As a team, Dallas

went 14-from-40 outside the arc.

"This one's on me," Doncic said. "We got to do better. They've won one game, we've just got to focus on the next one." "It was close in the end but we couldn't finish. So they won and now we just have to focus on the next one."

Towns finished with 25 points, with Mike Conley adding 14 and Rudy Gobert 13. Mavericks coach Jason Kidd saluted the contribution of Timberwolves talisman Edwards. "He's been playing at a high level all season," Kidd said. "He's one of the best young players - in fact you can take the 'young' part off - he's one of the best players in this league.

"Give Minnesota credit. They fought and they found a way to extend the series, and now it goes back to Minnesota." — AFP

Djokovic shrugs off troubles in winning start

PARIS: Defending champion Novak Djokovic shrugged off his recent troubles to sweep to his 93rd career win at the French Open on Tuesday, extending his run of first round Roland Garros victories to a perfect 20.

Djokovic, chasing a fourth title in Paris and record 25th Grand Slam triumph, came through against 142nd-ranked French wildcard Pierre-Hugues Herbert 6-4, 7-6 (7/3), 6-4. The 37-year-old, who saw career-long rival and 14-time champion Rafael Nadal exit the tournament on Monday, had arrived under a cloud. For the first time since 2018, he is without a title and has yet to reach a final this season.

He has also endured recent misfortunes being accidentally hit on the head by a metal water bottle in Rome and then suffering stomach problems in Geneva. "It was a solid performance," said Djokovic. "I could have done better, especially on the return, but bravo to him for serving well.

"It's a victory in three sets, that's what matters at this moment. I felt better compared to the last few weeks. I was focused. I encouraged myself, I am satisfied with my state of mind." Djokovic, who has advanced to the French Open quarter-finals or better every year since 2010, will face Spain's 63rd-ranked Roberto Carballes Baena for a place in the last 32.

Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka, a semi-finalist in 2023, over-powered Russian teenager Erika Andrejeva 6-1, 6-2 in just 68 minutes under the roof of Court Philippe Chatrier as heavy rain caused a five-hour delay to action around the grounds.

World number two Sabalenka fired 27 winners past the 100th-ranked Andrejeva and broke serve five times in a dominant display. "I'm trying to do well on clay, it is tough conditions here but I enjoy playing here and I'm just trying to bring my best tennis every time - whatever the surface," said Sabalenka. — AFP

Barca appoint Flick, Bayern appoint Kompany as new head coaches

MADRID: Barcelona have appointed former Germany and Bayern Munich manager Hansi Flick as head coach on a two-year contract, the La Liga club said on Wednesday. Flick, who has not managed a club since being sacked by Germany in September 2023, will be tasked with reviving Barcelona's fortunes after the Catalan side failed to win any trophies this season under Xavi Hernandez, who was dismissed on Friday. In a statement, the club said it had "chosen a man well known for his teams' high pressing, intense and daring style of play which has brought him great success at club level and international level, winning pretty much all there is to win in the world of football".

Flick said it was an honor and a dream to be the Barcelona coach. "I'm really looking forward to start working for this amazing club. Since I have arrived I have seen that everyone loves this club and does everything they can for its success," he told Barca TV.

"In the first team there is a good mix of experienced players and talented young players. I think we have to work to be able to improve... I won a few titles with Bayern Munich and I'd like to continue this path at Barcelona." Barcelona highlighted the 59-year-old's success during the 2019-20 season at the helm of Bayern, with whom he won six trophies - the Bundesliga, the German Cup, the Champions League, the German Super Cup, the UEFA Super Cup and the Club World Cup.

Xavi was sacked last week after a trophy-less season in which Barca finished 10 points behind

champions Real Madrid, lost the Spanish Super Cup final to their arch-rivals and were knocked out of the Champions League by Paris St Germain in the last eight. The German filling Xavi's shoes faces a tough challenge ahead with fixing Barca's on-field struggles amid turmoil off the pitch, including deepening financial problems and a refereeing scandal that could drag on for years.

Earlier, Bayern Munich have appointed Vincent Kompany as their new manager on a deal until June 2027 after the Belgian parted ways with Burnley following their relegation from the Premier League, the two clubs announced on Wednesday.

"We understand the allure and prestige of a club like Bayern Munich and respect Vincent's ambition to explore new opportunities," Burnley said in a statement. Bayern CEO Jan-Christian Dreessen said: "We all at the club agree that Vincent Kompany is the right coach for FC Bayern and are very much looking forward to working with him."

Bayern, Bundesliga champions in the previous 11 seasons, finished third behind Bayer Leverkusen and VfB Stuttgart. They were also unable to win domestic or European silverware for the first time in more than a decade, leading to the departure of coach Thomas Tuchel, which was announced in February.

The arrival of Kompany ends a months-long search for the successor of Tuchel, with several potential candidates deciding to remain in their current jobs. Bayern explored several candidates for the vacant managerial role including Leverkusen's Xabi Alonso, former coach Julian Nagelsmann and Austrian Ralf Rangnick prior to appointing Kompany. "I look forward to this challenge at Bayern," Kompany said. "It is an honor to work for this club. Bayern are an institution in international football.

"As a coach you have to just like your personality. I love having possession, being creative,



Hansi Flick



Vincent Kompany

and we also have to be aggressive and courageous on the pitch." In his short managerial career, Kompany, who played 360 matches in all competitions for Manchester City and won four Premier League titles, has garnered a reputation for playing free-flowing and possession-based football.

He began his coaching career at Belgian club Anderlecht and spent two seasons there before joining Burnley in 2022, where his approach worked a treat in the second-tier Championship as the Lancashire club secured promotion with seven games to spare.

However, Burnley's insistence on sticking to that style against teams of a higher calibre in the Premier League meant they found it hard going in the top-flight and were relegated after finishing 19th with 24 points and just five wins. Bayern will hope that Kompany's attacking philosophy can be more effectively employed with the quality of players in the Bavarian club's squad, and his experience of playing in the Bundesliga for two years with Hamburger SV is an added bonus. — AFP



PARIS: Serbia's Novak Djokovic plays a forehand return to France's Pierre-Hugues Herbert during their men's singles match on Court Philippe-Chatrier on day three of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros Complex in Paris. — AFP