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NEWS IN BRIEF

Pan-Gulf visa in full swing

RIYADH: Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Jassem Al-Budaiwi said on Thursday that the unified GCC tourist visa project has made much headway, pointing to new Gulf projects ahead. Budaiwi said the Gulf tourist visa project, which was adopted during the 44th GCC summit in Doha, would contribute to promoting tourism in the member states. The Gulf bloc is working diligently to achieve pan-Gulf integration and several achievements have been made in this regard, he noted. The GCC has already notched up a host of political, military and economic accomplishments, he said, adding that economic integration necessitates further work and endeavor, given that there are joint water security, media and educational projects. — KUNA



Rafah image shared 44m times

PARIS: An AI-generated image bearing the words "All eyes on Rafah" has been shared by more than 44 million Instagram accounts since Monday after a deadly Zionist strike at a camp for displaced Palestinians in the Gazan city. Chilean-US actor Pedro Pascal, top models Bella and Gigi Hadid, who are of Palestinian descent, and French football star Ousmane Dembele are among the celebrities to have shared it on Instagram. The slogan "All eyes on Rafah" has also been widely shared in other publications and social networks, especially X, where the hashtag #alleyesonrafah has attracted almost one million hits. — AFP

Saudi eyes Aramco share sale

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia is eyeing a landmark secondary share offering in oil giant Aramco, pending final approval from Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, people with knowledge of the matter said on Thursday. The share offering on Riyadh's Saudi Exchange, which the sources said is expected to be launched on Sunday, is the culmination of a years-long effort to sell another chunk in one of the world's most valuable companies after its record-setting IPO in 2019 raised \$29.4 billion. Sources told Reuters last week the offering could happen as soon as June, with one adding it could raise around \$10 billion. — Reuters



KUWAIT: A laborer works outdoors in this illustrative image.

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The Public Authority of Manpower said on Thursday that an annual ban on working under the sun for companies with outdoor sites will start on June 1 and continue for three months. The ban, which was first introduced in 2015, prohibits working under the sun from 11 in the morning until 4 in the evening daily until the end of August.

The ban is aimed at protecting workers from the serious impact of the scorching heat of the sun in summer, when the mercury soars above 50 degrees Celsius. Acting director of the Authority Marzouq Al-Otaibi said in a statement on the authority's X account that special teams from the authority will visit worksites to ensure that the decision is implemented in full.

He said that those teams will take necessary legal actions against violators after alerting them to the violations. Otaibi said the decision aims to provide protection to workers who toil under harsh climatic conditions in

the summer, adding that it also aims at regulating work and not cutting working hours. He said the implementation of the ban in the past several years was well received by many companies in Kuwait. In addition, it complies with Kuwait's commitment to meet international labor standards. Otaibi said people can contact the Authority on 24936192 to inform of any violation.

Meanwhile, power consumption in Kuwait almost touched the critical level of 16,000 MW as the temperature soared to just below 50 degrees Celsius in some parts of the country. The ministry of electricity and water's consumption gauge showed consumption reached 15,928 MW as temperatures hit 48 degrees in Jahra, 47 C at the Airport and 42 C in Kuwait City. The met department is forecasting a further rise in temperature on Friday. Kuwait, with limited production capacity, is scheduled to start on Saturday receiving 500 MW of electricity daily from the GCC power grid for the duration of summer.

Dr Zakir Naik visits Kuwait, defiant despite legal woes

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: Islamic preacher and orator Dr Zakir Naik said the Zionist massacres in Gaza have "opened the eyes" of people around the world to the plight of Palestinians. "For the first time in history, genocide is being broadcast live on TV and social media," he told Kuwait Times in an exclusive interview.

The renowned — and controversial — Indian televangelist is on his sixth visit to Kuwait, although he

is puzzled and a bit miffed that he hasn't been able to speak in public here. He nevertheless has had a busy schedule of private meetings and events, with the indefatigable 58-year-old sitting down for the wide-ranging interview with Kuwait Times at around midnight.

Dressed in a kurta after changing from his trademark suit and tie, Dr Naik pulled no punches as he spoke about his legal troubles in India, labeling them as politically motivated and "fabricated" by the Modi government. "Interpol has rejected three requests by the Indian government to issue red notices against me," he pointed out.

Dr Naik views his exile as a blessing, with the digital-savvy orator garnering millions of followers on social media since the charges were brought against him. His speeches are broadcast on his Peace TV channel and the Al Hidaayah platform, which he calls the "halal version of Netflix". (See Page 3)



KUWAIT: Popular Islamic televangelist Dr Zakir Naik gestures during an exclusive interview with Kuwait Times on May 30, 2024. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait, Saudi approve study for railway link

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr Noura Al-Mashaan announced on Thursday the Kuwaiti-Saudi High Steering Committee has approved the feasibility study outcomes for the railway connection project between Kuwait City and Riyadh at its sixth meeting.

"The agreement between the two

brotherly countries reflects a shared will to build a sustainable and interconnected future in the region," Mashaan said in a statement to KUNA. She welcomed the visit of the Saudi delegation, led by Minister of Transport and Logistics Saleh Al-Jasser, describing the visit as "an important step" in strengthening strategic cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

Mashaan added that this visit represents an effective bridge for exchanging expertise and deepening regional partnerships, culminating in the sixth meeting of the steering

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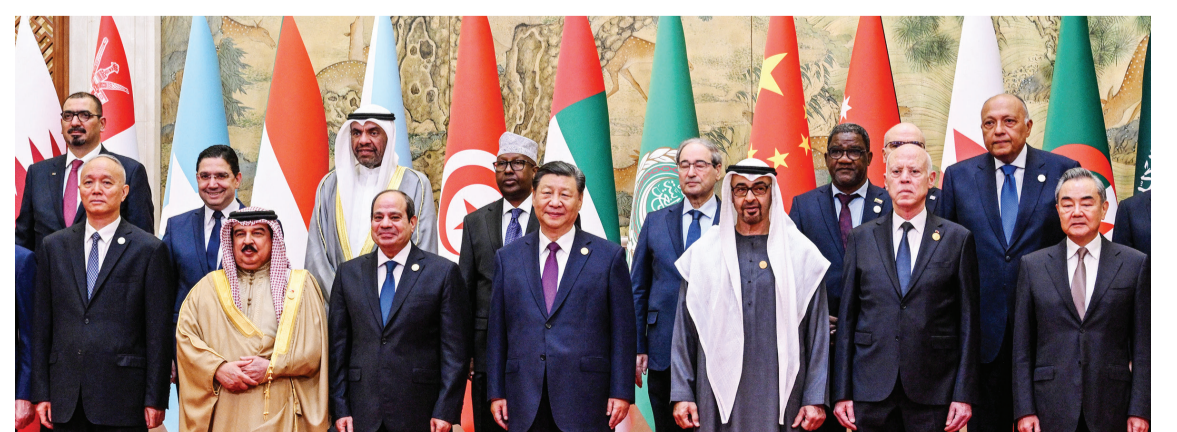
KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr Noura Al-Mashaan with Saudi Minister of Transport and Logistics Saleh Al-Jasser and other officials. — KUNA

Xi calls for Middle East peace meet

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping called on Thursday for a peace conference to end the war between the Zionist entity and Hamas, as he addressed Arab leaders at a forum aimed at bolstering ties with the region. Xi is hosting Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, Emirati President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, and several other Arab leaders.

Itself an oil producer, China has also long imported crude from the Middle East, where it has sought to expand its influence in recent years. It has positioned itself as a more neutral actor on the Zionist-Palestinian conflict than its rival the

Continued on Page 6



BEIJING: Chinese and Arab leaders pose for a family photo ahead of the opening ceremony of the 10th Ministerial Meeting of China-Arab States Cooperation Forum at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse on May 30, 2024. — Reuters (See Page 2)



Local

Forum pushes Sino-Arab ties to broader horizons

Kuwait to host third Arab-Chinese summit in 2030

KUWAIT: Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya headed his country's delegation partaking in the 10th ministerial conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, held in Beijing on Thursday. Addressing the gathering, Al-Yahya commended bilateral cooperation and successful partnership between the Arab League and China, as well as the level of strategic relations between Kuwait and China.

He touted the 20th anniversary of forging Arab-Sino cooperation, pointing out shared views at partaking in international events, particularly regarding Arab causes. He also announced that Kuwait would host the third Arab-Chinese summit in 2030, underscoring that his country commits itself to pushing forward Arab-Chinese cooperation to broader horizons. The Kuwaiti foreign minister pointed out the challenges the region is facing, primarily the Palestinian cause, which remains "a bleeding wound in the hearts of all Arab peoples."

In this context, he restated Kuwait's condemnation of the ongoing military aggression by occupying forces in Rafah City and its concomitant unprecedented humanitarian crisis as well as breaches of international humanitarian law. Sounding the alarm about conflict spillover, the minister underlined that it is essential to cease military operations and allow humanitarian and relief aid into the Gaza Strip immediately.

Furthermore, Al-Yahya stressed the need to keep funding the UN refugee agency, UNRWA, and to throw much weight behind a full UN Palestinian membership, along with an independent and sovereign Palestinian state on the 1967 borderline with East Jerusalem as its capital. On the other hand, he expounded on Kuwait's national plan designed to achieve sustainable development goals, including infrastructure, human capital, human resources, and technology localization.

He spoke highly of constructive cooperation re-

garding a host of issues of mutual interest, such as sustainable development, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, climate change, regional security, terrorism, extremism, maritime freedom in line with international law, and food and water security.

In another development, China and Arab countries adopted a joint statement on the Palestinian issue on Thursday as they held the 10th ministerial conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum in Beijing, state-run Xinhua News Agency reported. The joint statement expresses the deep concerns of China and Arab states over the prolonged conflict in Gaza, which has resulted in a humanitarian crisis, according to the agency.

It emphasizes the firm stance and important consensus of the two sides in promoting a ceasefire in Gaza, ensuring humanitarian aid, opposing the forced displacement of Palestinian people, supporting Palestine's full membership in the UN, and steadfastly working toward an early resolution of the Palestinian issue based on the two-state solution. At the conference, the two sides also adopted the Beijing Declaration and the forum's execution plan for 2024-2026, the report said.

The Beijing Declaration reviews the important consensus and progress in implementing the outcomes of the first China-Arab States Summit and clarifies the practical path for promoting the building of a China-Arab community with a shared future. It reaffirms that China and Arab states will continue to support each other on core interests, deepen pragmatic cooperation, and expound on their shared positions on political resolution of regional hot issues, dialogue among civilizations, global governance, counter-terrorism, human rights, artificial intelligence, climate change, etc.

The execution plan charts the course for strengthening the building of a forum mechanism in the next two years and promoting bilateral and multilateral



Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya attends the event.

cooperation in fields such as politics, economy and trade, investment, finance, infrastructure, resources and environment, cultural exchange, aerospace, education, and health. In addition, China signed a number of bilateral and multilateral cooperation documents with the participating countries and the General Secretariat of the Arab League.

Trade between China and the Arab League has witnessed robust expansion as the two sides have bolstered economic cooperation since the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum was established 20 years ago, Xinhua said, citing customs data. Total goods trade volume between China and members of the Arab League surged to CNY 2.8 trillion (\$393.5 billion) in 2023 from CNY 303.8 billion (\$42.2 billion)

in 2004, according to China's General Administration of Customs.

In the first four months of 2024, China's imports and exports with the Arab League climbed 3.8 percent year on year to a historic high of CNY 946.2 billion (\$133.2 billion), accounting for 6.9 percent of the country's total foreign trade value. China is the largest source of automobile imports, as well as textiles and garments, to the Arab League, while the member states are China's largest import source of energy products. In the first four months of 2024, China imported CNY 397.3 billion (\$54.8 billion) worth of energy products from the Arab League, or 38 percent of China's total energy product imports in this period. — KUNA

In my view

Diwan of 'Martyrs of Glory'

By Dr Nermin Al-Houty

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I received an invitation last week from the Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation to attend the ceremony of handing out the prizes of the 'Diwan of the Martyrs of Glory.' The event was held on Sunday, May 26, at Al-Babtain Library. The ceremony was characterized by diplomatic, media, and cultural presence and evening that brought many lovers of the land of peace, Palestine, and supporters of the 'Martyrs of Glory' cause.

The ceremony began with Kuwait's national anthem and recitation from the Quran, followed by a speech by Saud Abdulaziz Al-Babtain, the Head of the Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation (the best successor to the best predecessor). The smile did not leave the face of Saud during his speech, and despite that, his words carried many sad feelings about losing his father. It is so hard to stand in the place of the most dear person, yet this is the norm in this life, and there is no objection to Almighty's will, so we are hearing Saud Abdulaziz Al-Babtain and seeing him following the steps of his father in preserving the legacy he left behind and upholding his will to care for Arabic poetry.

Saud Abdulaziz Al-Babtain stands guard today at the gate of Arab poetry, a knight who defends the word to remain faithful to the trust of his father, which is to keep Arab poetry under the sun that shines from the pride of the Gulf. Al-Babtain Library remains a beacon from which poetry emanates to enrich the Arab poetry river with their words, so the Arab poetry glows, emanating from the land of Kuwait to the world. Final word: "Our bet was, is, and will always be, God willing, linked to our absolute confidence in the consciences of our poets, their national sense, and their national responsibility towards the just cause of their nation."



Abdullah Boftain, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times, welcomes Indonesian Ambassador Lena Maryana. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Indonesia culture celebrated as envoy visits Kuwait Times and Kuwait News

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: Indonesian Ambassador to Kuwait Lena Maryana paid a special visit to Kuwait Times and Kuwait News on Thursday. As the first female envoy from ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) to Kuwait, her visit fostered insightful conversations with the staff about their shared values in women's empowerment and embracing inclusivity. Accompanied by Jana Alnaqeeb, PR and CSR Manager of Kuwait Times, the ambassador enjoyed an immersive tour, learning about the process of gathering, crafting and disseminating news. She visited all the newspaper's departments, including the editorial section, social media section, archives room, studio, and printing press.

During her tour, Ambassador Maryana generously gifted Kuwait Times and Kuwait News a cherished sculpture showcasing a traditional Indonesian house, which was warmly accepted as a valuable addition to the newspaper's cultural collectibles. Her visit to the archives room sparked discussions about Indonesia's rich history and culture, highlighting interesting facts such as the country's recognition and embrace of diverse religions, its 360+ dialects, and the country's growing



Ambassador Maryana in the printing press.

support for women in political and essential roles.

Youssef Abu-Ghazaleh, Kuwait Times archivist, shared with Maryana significant dates in the newspaper's archives' publications, including Indonesia's 50th Independence Day and the day when the state of Palestine was born and recognized by multiple countries, particularly Indonesia was one of them. The ambassador also viewed Kuwait Times' special editions covering remarkable events in Kuwait, such as a Miami concert and Om-Kalthoum's most recent concert, which incited the ambassador to engage with the staff in conversations about shared love of art and musical favorites.

At the studio, the young staff of the newspaper interviewed Ambassador Maryana, resulting in a valuable and enjoyable dialogue for the younger generation. She shared her thoughts on the similarities and differences between Kuwaiti and Indonesian cultures, her favorite Kuwaiti local dishes, and taught a few Indonesian phrases like "Good morning" which is "Selamat pagi" and "Thank you,"



Jana Alnaqeeb, PR and CSR Manager of Kuwait Times, receives a traditional Indonesian house sculpture from the Indonesian ambassador as a gift.



Youssef Abu-Ghazaleh, Kuwait Times Archivist, shares significant dates in history from Kuwait Times archives with Ambassador Maryana.



Ambassador Maryana in the editorial section of the newspaper.

which is, "Terimakasih". The visit concluded with Maryana sharing inspiring advice for young people, emphasizing the importance of acquiring key values to become influential individuals and perhaps future ambassadors in the world.

KFAED participates in SIDS4 conference

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) participated on Thursday in the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4), held in Antigua and Barbuda from May 27 to 30, under the theme "Charting the Course toward Resilient Prosperity." The conference aimed to assess the ability of SIDS to achieve sustainable development and reach an internationally agreed-upon future plan.

The Kuwaiti delegation was led by Kuwait's Ambassador to Cuba Adel Al-Adgham representing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The delegation also included the Director of Operations at the Kuwait Fund Abdullah Al-Mesaibih and the Deputy Director of Operations for Latin America and the Caribbean Nesf Al-Nesf.

On the sidelines of the conference, Al-Nesf delivered an introductory lecture on the Fund's develop-



KFAED participates in the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) in Antigua and Barbuda under the theme 'Charting the Course toward Resilient Prosperity.' — KUNA photos

mental contributions in addressing environmental, social, and economic challenges faced by SIDS since 1976. He highlighted the Fund's support for sustainable development projects and disaster recovery

programs to safeguard their communities and economies from challenges such as food security, rising sea levels, ocean management, and other adverse effects of climate change. — KUNA



Local

Dr Zakir Naik: From doctor of the body to doctor of the soul

Amid controversy and support, popular televangelist in Kuwait on low-key visit

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: Despite being wanted by India for allegations of money laundering and inciting extremism through hate speeches, Dr Zakir Naik, a popular Islamic preacher, has seen his followers increase tenfold both in India and around the world since leaving his country. His speeches have long drawn tens of thousands at live events and reached millions more through televised broadcasts and social media platforms. In an exclusive interview with Kuwait Times, he affirmed that all the charges against him are politically motivated. "They are fabricated, all false. Most of the Indians know it, and even the government knows it."

Presently a permanent resident of Malaysia, Dr Naik, who said that he has been offered nationality by 15 countries, acknowledged his longing for India. Nevertheless, he stated: "My life is dedicated to dawah (the act of inviting people to Islam), for the sake of Allah." He quoted a Quranic verse that echoes his beliefs: "And whoever leaves his home, migrating for the sake of Allah and His Messenger, and death overtakes him, then his reward has already become incumbent upon Allah. And Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (An-Nisaa 4:100)

Dr Naik's latest visit to Kuwait is his sixth, after an eight-year gap, and saw him reuniting with old friends and engaging in low-profile religious talks. But this visit is different from his previous visit in 2013 when he delivered a public talk at one of Kuwait's parks, drawing around 25,000 people, which was described as "the largest gathering for a religious talk in Kuwait".

Obviously, becoming a religious preacher wasn't in Naik's plan when he joined medical school; however, he felt compelled to shift his career after being inspired by Shaikh Ahmed Deedat, who, according to Naik, transformed him from "a doctor of the body to a doctor of the soul". Yet, his medical background has strongly influenced his preaching activities, as he has stated that one of his favorite topics of discussion is the Quran and modern science.



KUWAIT: Popular Islamic televangelist Dr Zakir Naik gestures during an exclusive interview with Kuwait Times on May 30, 2024. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

"When I chose to become a doctor, it was because I thought it was the best profession," Dr Naik explained. "However, after encountering the verse, 'And whose words are better than one who invites to Allah, does righteousness, and says, indeed, I am of the Muslims.' (Fussilat 41:33) I changed my mind."

Noticing the widespread misconceptions surrounding Islam, Naik noted that there are 20 most common questions asked about the religion, which he gathered in one book. He said that some of these questions persist over time, influenced by the era and prevailing issues. Previously, a common question was, "Why are men allowed to have more than one wife?" Now, the predominant question is about "jihad", a concept he believes is widely misunderstood.

Naik explained that the word jihad isn't solely about fighting in wars; it means, "to strive and struggle". In this context, jihad encompasses striving and struggling against one's own evil inclinations and working to improve society. "Even if a student strives and struggles to pass an examination, we can say he is doing jihad," he said.

Of course one cannot mention jihad without speaking of the jihad that Palestinians are experiencing every day, which brought Naik to another common question about Islam: "If Allah is so powerful, why doesn't he make the Palestinians win?" Replying, he urged people to believe that "If Allah wants so, he can make the Palestinians win in one day, even in one hour. But Allah has his own plans." Describing the incompatible divine's wisdom, he remarked that for 75 years, 80 percent of non-Muslims believed that Palestinians are terrorists. But, since October 7, for the first time in history humankind is witnessing genocide telecast live.

Dr Naik described this incident as "eye opening", marking an unprecedented shift in global perspective. The world witnessed a 180-degree transformation, with vast numbers of non-Muslims protesting in support of Palestinians and Western nations condemning the Zionist entity for its oppressive actions.

Not to mention learning lessons from the profound amount of patience, persistence and strength that the Palestinians have shown. "You can witness a

mother's child being killed, martyred and her response simply is 'Alhamdulillah, if I had five more children, I would sacrifice all of them for Allah', he said. When non-Muslims encounter such behavior, he believes that they will indeed wonder what kind of religion is this? Which makes it another indirect way used by God to invite people to Islam.

As he mentioned, this is Allah's way of spreading dawah, reminding us that we all must contribute to this activity. Dawah is not solely the responsibility of Islamic educators or preachers, he said. "It is a responsibility of all Muslims. Whatever knowledge you have, even if it is just one verse, you must spread it. Eventually, Allah will continue to increase your knowledge."

Dr Naik concluded with an inspiring message about the vital role of unity in Islam, calling it the most powerful force against any enemy. He urged the Muslim community to rise above discrimination and internal conflicts, reminding everyone that our common bond is our faith in the one true God. He underscored his message with the verse: "Hold firmly to the rope of Allah and be not divided." (Al-Imran 3:103)



Kuwait's Minister of Information and Culture and his Bahraini counterpart honor winners of the Arab Media Excellence Award. — KUNA photos

Minister honors winners of Media Excellence Award

MANAMA: A ceremony was held in Manama on Wednesday to honor the laureates of the eighth Arab Media Excellence Award on the sidelines of the 54th session of the Arab Information Ministers' Council. The ceremony gathered Kuwait's Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, his Bahraini counterpart Ramzan Al-Naeimi, and Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League for Media and Communication Affairs Ahmad Rashid Khattabi.

The award, sponsored by Kuwait and themed this year "media of crisis, disasters, and risks," aimed to promote the professionalism of Arab media people. Kuwait TV's "Gaza," written and presented by Hawraa Khaleb and directed by Meshal Al-Shemmeri, won the best TV reportage category of the award. "Al-Walad wa Al-Asfoura" (The Boy and Sparrow) of Egypt's Cairo News TV, telling the story of a Palestinian boy who was evicted from his home by the Zionist occupation forces, won the best TV report award. "Ardh Al-Hejarah" (The Land of Stones), of the Iraqi Media Network, on the Palestinian-Zionist conflict, won the best documentary award.

Morocco's SNRT won the best radio report award



for its chain of reports themed "Zelzal Al-Haouz" (Earthquake of Al-Haouz). Algeria Radio's "Risks of Desertification and Drought" won the best educational promo award. The category of the award for printed press was given to Egypt's Mibtada website for its investigative reportage on "families deleted from Palestinian registers due to genocide." The oped article award was given to Mohammad Aswab, a journalist for Maghreb Arab Press (MAP), for his story "Sa'osamih Al-Husseini" (I'll call him Hussein).

The digital media award for the best video was given to "Hatha Wajebona" of Kuwait's new media sector. The video was compiled by Sara Haidar and

directed by Bashaer Al-Sayegh. Saudi Press Agency won the award for the best investigative report by King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief), which documents the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to deliver aid to residents in the Gaza Strip.

The best photo award was given to Libya's Hassan Al-Majdoub for his "Hal Najawna" (Have we survived) photo. Dr Nawal Al-Sherif, of Libya; Wael Al-Dahdoh, the reporter of the Al-Jazeera news network from Gaza; and Palestine TV were also honored at the ceremony for their struggle to uncover the crimes of the Zionist occupation forces. — KUNA

Ministry unveils link for licenses

KUWAIT: The Minister of Social Affairs, Family Affairs, and Childhood and the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, unveiled the Ministry's intention to issue licenses for private nurseries electronically via an application automatically connected to the Sahel application on Thursday. Minister Al-Huwailah confirmed in a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that this service will allow citizens to apply for licenses for private nurseries within the framework of the Ministry's plan, which is aimed at digital transformation, ending the documentary cycle, and facilitating all procedures with various services provided to citizens.

She pointed out the Ministry's keenness to finalize all technical procedures related to it so that it will be in service soon after the completion of the integrated electronic link with the application (Sahel) and a number of government agencies such as the Ministry of Interior, Education, Health, Kuwait Municipality, and the Disability and Fire Authority to speed up the pace of work and simplify procedures for citizens.

The minister explained that the application will allow citizens to follow up on the procedures in all steps transparently through email, SMS text messages, and easy application notifications. She stressed the need for full digital transformation and electronic connectivity to all the Ministry's services in accordance with government's directives on the basic objectives of the development plan, including digital transformation and integrated automated connectivity between state institutions.

On the other hand, the minister held a meeting with Ministry officials and affiliated bodies, such as the Commission for People with Disabilities and the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, in the presence of the undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Dr. Khalid Al-Ajmi. She reviewed a visual presentation that includes the mechanism of this electronic application, its objectives, and the mechanism of activating the automatic link with government agencies. She pointed out the need to develop an integrated strategic plan to provide the best services, address the needs of citizens, overcome obstacles, facilitate transactions, implement the open door policy, and make all efforts to serve citizens in the best possible way. — KUNA

KPC to provide environmentally friendly derivatives

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Chief Executive Officer Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah confirmed on Thursday the company's commitment to providing its customers in global markets with safe supplies of crude oil and environmentally friendly oil derivatives. This was stated in an opening speech delivered by Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah during the fourth conference in the field of energy transformation, organized by the research and technology department at the corporation in cooperation with the Japanese Cooperation Center for Petroleum and Sustainable Energy (JCPSE).

Al-Sabah praised the joint bilateral relations and mutual cooperation between Kuwait and Japan, praising the continuous support from the Embassy of Japan in Kuwait and the Japan Cooperation Center in this regard. It is reported that the foundation was launched in October with its Energy Transformation Strategy 2050, stressing that it is preparing a roadmap for Kuwait towards a sustainable future.



He explained that the strategy aims to significantly reduce emissions, harness advanced technologies to produce cleaner oil derivatives, and use renewable sources to power the operations of the corporation and its subsidiaries. He pointed out that the energy transition strategy comes in line with the commitment of Kuwait to international agreements related to climate change.

For his part, Japan's Ambassador to Kuwait, Yasunari Morino, in a speech at the conference, expressed the embassy's readiness to provide support and overcome obstacles to Japanese companies in order to strengthen relations between the two countries. The CEO of the Center praised Japanese Petroleum and Sustainable Energy Cooperation Tsuyoshi Nakai in his speech on the relations between his country and Kuwait in general and the relations



Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Chief Executive Officer Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah delivers a speech during the fourth conference in the field of energy transformation. — KUNA photos

between the Center and the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation in particular.

The conference discussed the actual measures to achieve the climate goals through strategic energy transformation initiatives for Kuwait in general and for the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and its subsidiaries in particular, in addition to the exchange of scientific, technical, and economic experiences in this field with Japan. The speakers also discussed the future energy challenges facing the states of Kuwait and Japan related to climate action and the outcomes of the conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Conven-

tion on Climate Change (COP28).

The conference included a panel discussion between the managing director of planning and finance at KPC Badr Al-Attar and the CEO of the Japan Petroleum and Sustainable Energy Cooperation Center, during which they discussed the energy transformation initiatives, their roadmap, and the challenges facing the implementation of these initiatives. The conference was attended by a group of leaders of the corporation, subsidiaries, technical experts from the Kuwaiti oil sector, local, regional, and international institutions, government agencies, and senior executives from the states of Kuwait and Japan. — KUNA

GCC-Central Asia Investment Forum discusses trade, ties

RIYADH: The GCC and Central Asia Investment Forum was hosted on Wednesday in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, with Kuwaiti Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf's participation. Delivering an inaugural speech in the forum, Saudi Investment Minister Khalid Al-Falih stressed the necessity of exploiting natural resources and reserves in Central Asian countries to address challenges facing the world's countries.

He touched upon historical and cultural relations between the GCC and Central Asian states to pave the way for investment strategic dialogue and find different channels to increase commerce in all domains. He elaborated that the Central Asian countries have fertile land that will enable them to exploit agricultural development and rivers to be invested in producing hydroelectric energy, in addition to vast areas for wind energy. Al-Falih noted that Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have large reserves of oil and gas, and Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan own reserves of gold and minerals. Kazakhstan also enjoys the largest reserves of uranium in the world, which is an important element in non-carbon energy.

Speaking to KUNA in a statement, Al-Mudhaf said the forum is an opportunity to enhance Gulf strategic partnerships with the world's countries and open wider doors for investment through enhanced communication between the public and private sectors of the GCC and Central Asian states. He thanked Saudi Arabia for its hospitality and warm reception, lauding the development in the Kingdom over the last few years, under the leadership of King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Furthermore, Assistant Director General of Kuwait's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Imad Al-Zaid, said, in a similar statement to KUNA, that the chamber is participating in the forum to meet with representatives of the private and public sectors and discuss how to enhance bilateral cooperation and communication for broader opportunities and investment. The aim of participation is to find new horizons of cooperation, he said, considering the forum a chance to learn about available opportunities in the participating states.— KUNA

NBK promotes fraud awareness

Bank organizes cybersecurity sessions at Amra Bint Hazm, Universal American Schools



KUWAIT: Reflecting its dedication to spreading financial awareness across all sectors of society under the umbrella of the "Let's Be Aware" campaign introduced by the Central Bank of Kuwait, in cooperation with local banks and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized two cybersecurity sessions at two schools, public and private, thereby expanding its efforts to promote awareness on fraud risks to include the educational sector.

The sessions delivered to the students of Amra Bint Hazm School and Universal American School highlighted the different types and risks of cyber-fraud and the required protection precautions. The sessions also included educating students on the principles of cybersecurity and tips to protect their accounts from fraudulent messages, by using strong, long hard-to-guess passwords which con-



Sarah Al-Amad

tain letters, numbers, and symbols, and changing them frequently.

Speaking on this, Sarah Al-Amad, Senior Communications Officer at National Bank of Kuwait said, "NBK is always dedicated to promoting banking and financial culture in the

society. It is a pleasure to extend our awareness efforts to students in public and private schools to familiarize them with cybersecurity and educate them on the different types of fraud and required security precautions." "The engagement was great, with students not only enjoying the session but also gaining valuable insights that will undoubtedly benefit them in navigating online and protect them from cyber fraud," she noted.

"Organizing such awareness activities underscore NBK's proactive approach in educating and empowering individuals to steer clear of fraud. As one of the leading financial institutions in Kuwait and across the region, NBK frequently organizes various activities to raise awareness on all topics related to the banking sector to help combat fraud and financial crime," she added. NBK shares educational content on all its social me-

dia and other digital channels to warn customers against fictitious investments whether in cash, commodities, virtual currencies or real estate.

Moreover, the bank always warns customers against all fraud types via SMS, e-mail or phone calls by publishing material on its social media platforms to warn customers from clicking ads with unknown sources like those promising highly lucrative returns, enticing them to register their personal information on fake trading platforms to obtain profits, or accounts claiming offering financial aids. It is worth mentioning that NBK is a key promoter and participant in all CBK's campaigns and initiatives to increase financial and banking awareness among different segments of society. The bank also ranked first in promoting the "Let's Be Aware" campaign in 2023 according to CBK, outperforming all local banks.

LuLu World Food promotion sets sail on sea of flavors

KUWAIT: LuLu Hypermarket, the region's leading retailer, has taken customers on a delicious journey around the world with 'LuLu World Food' promotion. The two-week celebration of all things food kicked off on 29 May across all LuLu Hypermarket outlets in Kuwait. The grand opening ceremony held at the hypermarket's Al Rai outlet on 29 May was a star-studded event, graced by the presence of renowned Indian Master Chef Season 8 winner Chef Mohammed Ashiq, Chef Prachi Agarkar (Master Chef Season 8), and the highly-regarded Kuwaiti Arabic Chef Terra Hamada.

LuLu Kuwait's top management and representatives of the event's sponsors also joined the festivities. The LuLu World Food promotion proved to be a smorgasbord of amazing offers and discounts across all food categories. From groceries, fresh produce, and meat and seafood to frozen foods, dairy products, and even home appliances



and kitchen essentials, there was something for everyone. Shoppers had the opportunity to participate in a variety of exciting contests and competitions held throughout the promotion period at all LuLu Hypermarket outlets.

Aspiring chefs put their culinary skills to the test in various competitions across different cuisines, including Arabic, Indian, Italian, Continental, Filipino, and coming up with a variety of dishes, including desserts. Additionally, 'Wow the Master Chef' competition allowed contestants to impress Chefs Ashiq, Prachi, and Terra Hamada with their fragrant dishes.

The heartwarming 'Mom & Me' competition was not to be missed, where mothers and children teamed up to create healthy salad masterpieces. Young chefs also shone bright on their own in the 'Master Junior Chef' contests, with categories for age groups 6-10 and 11-15. Coffee enthusiasts showcased their latte art and brewing skills in the Barista Competition, while crafty bakers put their cake decorating talents on display in the Cake Challenge. There were enticing prizes for all winners, including consolation prizes for all the participants. For those seeking cooking inspiration, there were chat sessions with the Master Chefs and live cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs.

The LuLu World Food promotion was a true celebration of global gastronomy, with the hypermarket serving the world on a platter to its customers through a variety of cuisines like Mexican, Korean, Italian, Spanish, Thai, and many more. 'Desi Dhaba' gave shoppers a taste of Northern India and for health-conscious foodies, the 'Healthy Eats' section offered fresh salads, cheeses, and olives. Meat lovers rejoiced at the 'Meet a Meat' section, while seafood lovers swam in a sea of flavors at the 'Go Fish' section. The sweet-toothed soothed their sweet cravings with the 'Best Bake' and 'Cake so Cookies' sections, while the traditionalists delved into traditional flavorful spices of Kerala at the 'Naadan Thattukada' corner. A must-visit for all was the 'Kitchen-Must-Have' section that offered essential kitchenware to elevate culinary creations.

The highlight of the promotion was the special Global



Cuisine Street Food' counters at all outlets of the hypermarket, which offered a taste of South Indian, North Indian, Mexican, Korean, Italian, Spanish, Continental, and more dishes to whet every taste bud. Throughout the promotion, LuLu Hypermarket excited visitors and shoppers alike with some of the biggest and longest food items ever seen.

The amazing 'Longest Taco Shawarma', the 'Biggest Burger', and the 'Biggest Pizza', as well as the 'Biggest Biryani' and the 'Longest Zings Fillet', blew everyone's minds. The wondrous displays continued with the 'Biggest Barbecue', a 'Biryani Dhamaka', the 'Longest Mexican Crispy Wrap Sandwich', the 'Longest Lotus Cake' and much more. This promotion was made possible by the support of sponsors such as Alvazan, Bayara, Afia, Betty Crocker, Nature Valley, Americana, Sadia, Lamb Weston, Arla, Puck, Kraft, Kitco, Nestle, IFFCO, Noor, London Dairy, McCain, President, Panasonic, Kenwood, and Moulinex.

The "LuLu World Food" promotion may have drawn to a close, but the culinary adventures it ignited are just beginning. With a newfound appreciation for global cuisines, exciting recipes to try, and kitchens equipped with fantastic finds, LuLu Hypermarket's customers are now perfectly prepared to embark on a delicious journey of their own. From exploring the spice markets of Morocco, to savoring the fresh seafood of the Mediterranean, or indulging in the rich curries of India, their taste buds will be their compass.



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Experts warn of heat risks as India temperatures climb again

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PRAGUE: Czech President Petr Pavel presents a state award to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in Prague, Czech Republic, May 30, 2024. — Reuters

NATO meets as calls mount to let Kyiv use Western arms in Russia

Macron, Biden to discuss Ukraine, Mideast after marking D-Day

PRAGUE: NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg pushed at the start of a meeting of the alliance's foreign ministers on Thursday to let Ukraine use Western weapons to strike inside Russia, a move sought by Kyiv but opposed for now by its chief backer Washington. The two-day meeting in Prague is meant to focus on efforts to hammer out a package of support for Ukraine at NATO's summit in Washington in July.

But the swirling debate over whether to let Kyiv use arms sent by Western backers to strike inside Russia risks overshadowing the talks. Ukraine has been pressing its supporters, led by the United States, to allow it to use the longer-range weaponry they supply to hit targets on Russian soil.

Some countries including Britain and the Netherlands say Kyiv has the right to use their weapons to strike military targets in Russia. Norway's Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide added his support Thursday, telling NRK television that Kyiv should not have to fight "with one hand tied behind its back".

But the United States and Germany have long opposed allowing Kyiv to strike over the border, out of fear it could drag them closer to direct conflict

with Moscow. "The last weeks and months, most of the heavy fighting has taken place actually along the border between Russia and Ukraine," Stoltenberg said ahead of the opening dinner with ministers.

"Therefore I believe that time has come to reconsider some of these restrictions to enable the Ukrainians to really defend themselves." French President Emmanuel Macron appeared to shift the dial forward on Tuesday when he said Ukraine should be allowed to "neutralize" bases in Russia used to launch strikes.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, however, remained less committal, saying Ukraine should act within the law—and Berlin had not supplied weapons that could hit Russia anyway.

Across the Atlantic, the White House said it still opposed Ukraine using US arms to strike inside Russia, though Secretary of State Antony Blinken hinted that strategy could change. Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned there would be "serious consequences" if Western countries gave approval to Ukraine. "NATO member states, the United States, and capitals in Europe in recent days and weeks have been entering a new round of es-

calations in tensions," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday.

Those pressing for Ukraine to be given a freer rein say they hope momentum is building for Washington and others to change course as Kyiv struggles to stop Russia's offensive in the Kharkiv region.

"I understand the concerns, I understand that there are weapon systems which can be used quite far away," Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky said. "But I feel that we are even moving on that in the international sphere."

Meanwhile, President Emmanuel Macron will host Joe Biden next week for the US leader's first state visit to France after both men attend commemorations for the World War II D-Day landings, with talks set to grapple with Ukraine, the Middle East and trade. Biden's visit on June 8 in Paris will come after the June 6 ceremony in Normandy marking 80 years since the D-Day landings. In a separate statement, the White House said Biden would be in France from June 5 to June 9. About a million people are expected to attend the D-Day commemorations in France, including King Charles III and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. All in all, about 25 heads of

government or state are expected to attend.

With Russia's war against Ukraine in its third year, Biden and Macron are expected to discuss further Western support for Kyiv on the sidelines of the D-Day ceremonies and during Biden's state visit.

The high-profile events will provide both Biden, 81, and Macron, 46, with an opportunity to burnish their image with voters.

Macron's camp faces an uphill struggle to narrow a gap with the far right before France votes in European Parliament elections on June 9. Biden is campaigning for re-election against Donald Trump, seeking to return to the White House in the November presidential ballot.

On June 6, Biden will speak and participate in ceremonies with his wife Jill Biden to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Allied landings in Normandy, "which paved the way for the liberation of France and Europe", the White House said in the statement. "Seventy-three thousand brave Americans landed at Utah and Omaha beaches in Normandy on June 6, 1944, and the president will greet American veterans and their family members while in France to honour their sacrifice," the statement added. — AFP

ANC set to lose majority after watershed vote

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's ruling ANC was on course to lose its 30-year-old unchallenged majority on Thursday after voters queued long into the night to cast their ballots, preliminary results and projections showed. With a fifth of votes tallied, the ANC was leading but with a score of 44 percent—well down on the 57 percent it won in 2019 -- followed by the liberal Democratic Alliance (DA) at 25 percent, according to authorities. The leftist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) was in third place with nine percent of the vote, trailed by former president Jacob Zuma's uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) on eight.

The final results are not expected to be known before the weekend. "The broad church of the ANC has taken a substantial knock. This is a shock to the system for the ANC and ultimately will also be a shock to the system for the average South African, who has only known ANC rule since 1994," said political analyst Daniel Silke.

"It redraws the political boundaries of South Africa and creates a degree of uncertainty". If President Cyril Ramaphosa's party is confirmed as dropping below 50 percent, it would force him to seek coal-



DURBAN, South Africa: Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) officials empty a ballot box during the vote counting process at Addington Primary School voting station during South Africa's general election in Durban on May 29, 2024. — AFP

ition partners to be re-elected to form a new government. That would be a historic evolution in the country's democratic journey, which was underlined by newspaper headlines on Thursday.

"SA on the cusp of shift in politics," read the front page of daily BusinessDay. "The people have spoken," headlined The Citizen. The ANC has dominat-

ed South Africa's democracy with an unbroken run of five presidents from the party. The party remains respected for its leading role in overthrowing white minority rule, and its progressive social welfare and black economic empowerment policies are credited by supporters with helping millions of black families out of poverty. — AFP

dormant railway projects. The long-envisioned Trans-Afghan Railway aims to eventually connect Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan with 700 kilometers of track, backed by the three countries that have established a working group. "People have been talking about the Trans-Afghan Railway for more than 100 years," said Andrew Grantham, news editor of the UK-based Railway Gazette International, a media outlet dedicated to covering developments in the rail sector.

In addition to foodstuffs and logs from Russia, fuel and other materials arrive in Hairatan from Central Asian republics and China, with the Taliban government aspiring to see those goods traverse Afghanistan by rail under their rule. "Trans-Afghan will become the economic corridor between Central Asia and South Asia," said Mohammad Shafiq Mahmood, head of the Balkh railway authority in Mazar-i-Sharif. It is one of two railway projects the Taliban authorities are pursuing in a bid to better connect Afghanistan—a country wracked by decades of war and poverty that has never built its own railways. — AFP

ed South Africa's democracy with an unbroken run of five presidents from the party. The party remains respected for its leading role in overthrowing white minority rule, and its progressive social welfare and black economic empowerment policies are credited by supporters with helping millions of black families out of poverty. — AFP



HAIRATAN, Afghanistan: In this photograph taken on March 5, 2024, a freight train arrives from Uzbekistan at the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan Friendship Bridge in the border town of Hairatan, Balkh province. — AFP

Taliban harbors big dreams for Afghan rail

HAIRATAN, Afghanistan: On the edge of the Afghan border with Uzbekistan, where the railway abruptly stops, throngs of young men transfer sacks of wheat or flour from freight trains to trucks.

Every day, 3,500 tons of flour and 1,500 tons of wheat are unloaded by hand at the border town of Hairatan in northern Afghanistan to trucks that brave mountain passes and war-damaged roads to ferry goods around the country. Renovations are under way to connect the rundown track with Mazar-i-Sharif, the north's largest city, and according to the Taliban authorities, it will come into operation from June. Just 75 kilometers (47 miles) long, it is an important part of the Taliban government's ambitions to revive several

Shadowy oligarch's power looms large in Georgia

CHORVILA, Georgia: In his garden in Chorvila, a tiny village overlooking the Caucasus mountains, Mamia Machavariani filled an empty soda bottle with homemade beverage, heaping praise on billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili. "No one has done as much for Georgia as he has," Machavariani told AFP, as cattle wandered the quiet streets outside his home in western Georgia. Ivanishvili is a reclusive figure, but his ruling Georgian Dream party has sparked some of the Caucasus country's largest demonstrations in years, introducing divisive "foreign influence" legislation targeting NGOs and the media.

Signs of his face and name are nowhere to be found in his hometown, but his party's flag proudly flew over the village's hotel, and residents gushed about his donations to the local hospital and schools when his name was mentioned. "I don't know him personally, but I have high hopes for him," said Machavariani, praising the oligarch's construction of a multimillion-dollar tree park near the coastal city of Batumi.

One of Ivanishvili's most famous projects, nicknamed the "glassle", is a sprawling steel-and-glass villa towering above Tbilisi's old town that has drawn criticism from locals. But Machavariani had nothing but praise for Ivanishvili, Georgia's richest man. "Georgia often overlooks his kindness and focuses on the negatives," he said.

Since founding Georgian Dream 12 years ago, Ivanishvili has been a divisive figure in Tbilisi, ruling his party from behind the scenes after briefly serving as prime minister from 2012 to 2013. He makes public appearances sparingly, giving an impassioned defence of the controversial "foreign influence" law in a rare speech laden with anti-Western rhetoric in April.

The opposition has accused him of being sympathetic towards Russia, the country where he made his fortune in the 1990s, but his party has rejected this. In the nearby town of Sachkhere, police cars patrolled outside Georgian Dream's local headquarters, and many residents were hesitant to talk. "I do not watch or observe political developments," Ketevan Toroshelidze, a 46-year-old ice cream vendor at the local market said, stocking her fridge on the street. — AFP

International

Escalating violence strikes fear into West Bank school

Zionist settlers use 'tear gas and stun grenades' against schoolchildren

Gunmen in Bangladesh murder Rohingya teacher and student

COX'S BAZAR, Bangladesh: Gunmen in Bangladesh have killed a teacher and a student in a Rohingya refugee camp for refusing to return to Myanmar to fight, their parents said Thursday. Hundreds of Rohingya boys and young men have been seized from refugee camps in Bangladesh, where they had sought safety after Myanmar's military drove about 750,000 members of the persecuted Muslim minority out of the country in 2017. Now Rohingya militants working with the Myanmar junta are recruiting the refugees, according to camp residents, UN reports and analysts. The militants say their fellow Rohingya need to ally with Myanmar's army—the same forces who drove them into exile—to face a common enemy in another Myanmar rebel force, the Arakan Army (AA).

Police said the two men, student Nur Absar, 22, and teacher Nur Faisal, 21, were killed by "unknown assailants" in Kutupalong camp in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district.

"One died on the spot, another died in hospital," said Arefin Jewel, a police spokesman in Kutupalong. "We are investigating whether it is a case of forced recruitment." But Faisal's father blamed the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO). "The RSO went to my son's school and wanted to recruit him," Zakir Ahmed, 45, told AFP. "My son refused."

Ahmed said his son had also been working as a community guard to stop the gunmen who prowled the camps to press-gang youths. "He was also working as a night guard to save other young Rohingya from forced recruitment by armed groups," he said. "RSO gunmen shot them. RSO killed my son." Aman Ullah, 40, the father of student Nur Absar, also blamed the RSO.

"They tried to recruit him," Ullah said. "They have become the name of terror here". Thomas Kean from the International Crisis Group think-tank told AFP the "tragic killings only highlight the growing threat that refugees face from Rohingya armed groups".

"For years now the groups have largely been allowed to operate with impunity, and refugees are really at breaking point," he added. Kean said his research showed that since March "thousands of refugees" had been recruited by Rohingya armed groups and sent to Myanmar.

The Rohingya fighters are battling alongside Myanmar's regular army in Rakhine State. They are fighting forces including the AA, which says it wants greater autonomy for the ethnic Rakhine population in the state, which is also home to around 600,000 Rohingya. This month the AA took control of Buthidaung, a Rohingya-majority town not far from Bangladesh. Several Rohingya diaspora groups claimed that fighters forced Rohingya to flee, then looted and burned their homes—claims the AA called "propaganda".

According to a report by the United Nations refugee agency seen by AFP, at least 1,870 refugees—more than a quarter of them children or youths—were recruited into the armed groups during a two-month period between March and May. More than three-quarters were taken by force, the UN report said, including by "abduction, kidnapping and coercion".

The UN children's fund said it was "appalled" by the attack. "UNICEF strongly condemns any attack against schools... which must always be a safe space for children, and for the staff delivering this essential service," country chief Sheldon Yett said. —AFP

URIF, Palestinian Territories: A rusty barbed wire fence towers above the students entering Urif high school in the Zionist-occupied West Bank, where spiraling violence since October 7 has struck fear into Palestinians.

"We tell the students ... to come to school together and not on their own, because we do not know when their (settlers) attack will be," said Mazin Shehadeh, vice-principal for the high school located in a village south of the city of Nablus. On the hill above the village sits the Zionist settlement of Yitzhar, from where Palestinians say settlers descend to attack them.

"Every day when we arrive, we inspect the area around the school for fear that there might be explosive devices," said the educator, whose office floor was charred black by what he said was an arson attack. Zionist entity has occupied the West Bank since 1967 and now some 490,000 people from Zionist entity live across the Palestinian territory in settlements that are considered illegal under international law. Palestinians have long faced harassment by settlers, but the number of attacks has soared since Hamas's unprecedented attack on Zionist entity nearly eight months ago triggered the devastating war in Gaza, according to the United Nations.

'Tear gas and stun grenades'

Recalling an attack on the school, one 15-year-old student said, "We were in class, and the settlers attacked us from the back of the school. They threw stones at the windows". "The (Zionist entity) soldiers were standing above, near the water tank, firing tear gas and stun grenades toward the school." Now the pupils fear an attack at any moment.

"At the slightest noise, at the slightest gunshot or at the slightest explosion near the town, we say to ourselves that the (Zionist entity) army or the settlers have attacked the school," said Qais.

Since October 7, 519 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank by Zionist soldiers or settlers, according to the health ministry in Ramallah. More checkpoints and other Zionist entity military installations have been erected since the start of the war, complicating the journey to school. "Sometimes the army harasses us, sends us tear gas bombs and sound bombs and prevents us from going to school," said a 12-year-old student. The school year, which ended on Wednesday, turned into "a nightmare" for Palestinian students, the United Nations children's agency

Turkey's plan to get stray dogs off streets touches raw nerve

ISTANBUL: Dogs rush over and greet Nilgul Sayar when she arrives by car to feed them in the countryside near Istanbul, one of many Turks with affection for Turkey's estimated four million stray dogs, whose fate now lies in the government's hands. Ankara has drafted legislation to get them off the streets, citing concerns about attacks, road accidents and rabies. It has touched a raw nerve among animal-loving Turks who fear it will lead to many dogs being euthanized.

The bill, set to be presented to parliament in the coming days, has also drawn objections from the main opposition party, which is firmly opposed to dogs being put down. Sayar and other activists say authorities are to blame for letting dog numbers surge due to insufficient neutering in the last 20 years, describing the plan as unworkable. "They say they will collect the dogs from the streets, but there is no capacity to take them all," she said at a shelter she set up for dogs - many lame, old or abandoned pets - unable to survive in the countryside where she also cares for strays.

with the Arab world. "Friendship between China and Chinese people and Arab countries and peoples originates from friendly exchanges along the ancient Silk Road," he said. State media has reported that 21 Arab nations have signed cooperation agreements with Beijing as part of the Belt and Road Initiative.

"China will further enhance strategic cooperation with the Arab side on oil and gas, and integrate supply security with market security," Xi said, according to a readout of his speech by the foreign ministry. "China is ready to work with the Arab side on new energy technology R&D and equipment production," he added.

Following the forum, Xi met at Beijing's monumental Great Hall of the People with the UAE's Sheikh Mohamed, who described China as "my second country". "The United Arab Emirates attaches great importance and priority to its partnership with China, and we are committed to strengthening it and expanding its horizons in the interest of both friendly countries and peoples for the next 100 years," he told Xi.

China has worked to position itself as a mediator in the region, last year brokering a detente between Saudi Arabia and its long-time foe Iran. Last month, it hosted rival Palestinian groups Hamas and Fatah last month for "in-depth and candid talks on promoting intra-Palestinian reconciliation".

Analysts say China is seeking to leverage the war in Gaza to boost its standing in the region, framing its efforts to end that conflict against perceived US inaction. "Beijing sees the ongoing conflict as a golden opportunity to criticize the West's double standards on the international scene and call for an alternative global order," Camille Lons, a policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, told AFP. "When speaking about the war in Gaza, it speaks... to a wider audience, and frames the conflict around the opposition between the West and the Global South," she added. —AFP

Xi calls for Middle East peace...

Continued from Page 1

United States, advocating for a two-state solution while also maintaining good ties with the Zionist entity. China has pointed to the Middle East as a key node in its Belt and Road infrastructure initiative, a central pillar of Xi's bid to expand his country's clout overseas. Addressing delegates, Xi on Thursday expressed support for a "broad-based" peace conference to resolve the Zionist-Hamas conflict. "The Middle East is a land bestowed with broad prospects for development, but the war is still raging on it," Xi said. "War should not continue indefinitely. Justice should not be absent forever," he added.

Speaking after Xi, Egypt's Sisi urged the international community to ensure Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are not displaced from their war-ravaged territory. Egypt shares a border with Gaza and signed a historic peace deal with the Zionist entity in 1978. "I... call on the international community to immediately provide for long term humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip and to end the Israeli siege," Sisi said. He also called for the international community to "stop any attempt at forcing Palestinians to forcibly flee their land".

Sisi's comments come after the Zionist entity army said on Wednesday it had gained "operational control" over the strategic Philadelphi corridor along the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. The corridor had served as a buffer zone between Gaza and Egypt, and Zionist troops patrolled it until 2005 when they were withdrawn as part of a broader disengagement from the Gaza Strip.

China has advocated for decades for a two-state solution to the Zionist-Palestinian conflict. On Thursday, Xi hailed his "deep sense of affinity"



URIF: Palestinian school children stand at the courtyard of a school in the West Bank village of Urif, south of the northern city of Nablus. — AFP

UNICEF has said. Some 27.5 percent of elementary school students do not feel safe at school, according to a study by UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees. Between October 7 and May 7, 60 children were killed in the West Bank, 345 injured and 68 schools targeted by acts of vandalism, according to the Palestinian education ministry. It said another 125 students have been detained by the Zionist entity military, who when asked by AFP about the arrests said they were part of their "counter-terrorism activities".

Last week, a 15-year-old boy was shot dead while evacuating from his school by bicycle during a Zionist military raid in the northern West Bank city of Jenin. Even before the war, violence between communities in the West Bank near the school reached a record high.

In response to repeated attacks by settlers, school administrators in Urif said they had spent the equivalent of 62,500 euros on a tarpaulin to catch thrown stones and they have also installed barbed wire. In the classrooms, thick purple curtains are drawn over

barred windows, and staff run regular evacuation drills. The violence and consequent fortifications have made students feel like they are trapped and "entering a prison", said Shehadeh. The school has had many of its "most hardworking and brilliant students" drop out, he added. Others have left to help their parents, who have been without an income since Zionist entity placed increased restrictions on Palestinians working in Zionist entity. Those pupils who remain only attend in-person classes three days a week and do the rest remotely due to the security concerns and the Palestinian Authority not paying teachers their full salaries.

However, not all students have the electronic devices or internet connections needed to learn remotely, said Refat Sabbah, founder of the Teacher Creativity Centre, a charity. "In such a context, when students feel at risk at every moment, how can they learn? The psychological impact is huge on the students and the teachers," he added. — AFP



Nilgul Sayar, an animal rights activist, pets a stray dog in a remote area of Istanbul, Turkey, May 29, 2024. — Reuters

daily treatment and will have more surgery in July. "We don't want stray dogs on the streets. The attackers, those with rabies and other diseases should be put to sleep," he said. "I'm against euthanizing normal, healthy dogs as long as our streets become safe," he said, saying they should be kept in shelters. The government also cited a growing risk of rabies and said collisions with animals caused 3,500 road accidents in the last five years. State media cited a government survey saying 83.6 percent of respondents saw stray dogs as a problem. — Reuters

UK parties face off on TikTok battleground

LONDON: On the face of it, the villain from "Shrek", British singer turned TV presenter Cilla Black, and national service have nothing in common.

But they all have been featured in recent days in the UK general election's newest battleground: TikTok. The ruling Conservatives and opposition Labour party both launched accounts on the video-sharing platform just days after Prime Minister Rishi Sunak called a general election for July 4. Data security concerns—which led to the Chinese ByteDance-owned app to be banned on government phones in 2023 -- have prevented political parties from hopping onto TikTok's virality, until now.

However, the surprise election announcement last Wednesday made it "kind of necessary to be on there, given its popularity", media consultant Tim Gatt told AFP. In less than a week, Labour's account has amassed more than 120,000 followers. The Tories trailed with around 36,000

Kuwait, Saudi approve study...

Continued from Page 1

committee with the approval of this agreement. She confirmed "the study extended for six months and the teams from both countries were able to overcome obstacles through intensified efforts and several workshops in various fields".

She said the meetings were held almost daily virtually between the project management teams from both countries, which increased intellectual and developmental communication for building the project. She affirmed Kuwait continues to welcome such initiatives, which contribute to driving economic development and expanding the horizons of integration

as of Wednesday, when the smaller opposition Liberal Democrats joined the fray. Clashing approaches - A smattering of videos on the Conservative page include Sunak talking to the camera about his pledge to bring back national service if they retain power.

The move—which would require 18-year-olds to join the military for 12 months or spend a weekend every month for a year volunteering in their community—has become a hot topic on TikTok and is opposed by many of its young users. Labour's campaign has taken a slightly different approach, which experts say highlights the contrasting strategies and stakes for Sunak and Keir Starmer, who is tipped to be the country's next leader after the election.

One Labour TikTok post uses a clip from the movie "Shrek" showing the diminutive villain Lord Farquaad saying "some of you may die, but it's a sacrifice I am willing to make". The caption on the video reads, "Rishi Sunak announcing national service", with the video garnering more than 2.5 million views in just a few days. Another in reaction to the announcement features the late Cilla Black singing the theme tune to her long-running light-entertainment program "Surprise, Surprise". Other posts use clips from Sunak's shaky start to his national campaign, including his announcement of the election during a torrential downpour. — AFP

among the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. She emphasized the importance of joint work, indicating that this project will open new horizons for transportation and logistics services, benefiting both the Kuwaiti and Saudi peoples.

Jasser expressed his deep satisfaction with the outcomes of the discussions at the high steering committee meeting, which aimed to enhance cooperation and integration between the two brotherly countries. Jasser said the meetings with Kuwaiti officials were "extremely fruitful" and characterized by a constructive spirit and a mutual desire for further cooperation in the field of transportation and logistics services.

He added this visit came in response to the directives of the higher leaderships of the two brotherly countries, aiming to enhance economic development, trade and communication between the two peoples, looking forward to more connectivity and infrastructure integration that serves the common interests. — KUNA

International

Experts warn of heat risks as India temperatures soar again

Record-breaking temperature in India could have been due to 'a sensor error'

NEW DELHI/GENEVA: Extreme temperatures across India are having their worst impact in the country's teeming megacities, experts said Thursday, warning that the heat is fast becoming a public health crisis. India is enduring a crushing heatwave with temperatures in several cities sizzling well over 45 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit).

Temperature readings in the capital New Delhi rose into the high 40s Celsius on Wednesday, with power usage in the city—where the population is estimated at more than 30 million—surging to a record high. Indian media reports said Thursday that a laborer in the city had died of heatstroke.

"Cities are more vulnerable to the compounding effects of urbanization and climate change," said Aarti Khosla, director at research institute Climate Trends. "Expect a greater number of hotter days, prolonged dry spells and less rainy days as weather patterns continue to change due to increased human emissions," she told AFP.

Khosla described heatwaves as "the single largest threat to India's well-being today", adding that recent temperatures in Delhi and the surrounding region were "proof that the issue is now about survivability". 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.

A study published by New Delhi's Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) this month said Indian cities were not cooling down at night as much as they had in the 2001-2010 decade. It found the maximum temperature decline was nearly 2 degrees Celsius smaller than previously.

"Hot nights are as dangerous as midday peak temperatures," it said.

"People get little chance to recover from daytime heat slaughter if temperatures remain high overnight, exerting prolonged stress on the body." The highest confirmed temperature ever recorded in India was 51C (123.8F), in Phalodi on the edge of Rajasthan's Thar Desert in 2016.

Researchers say human-induced climate change has driven the devastating heat impact in India and should be taken as a warning. "The suffering India is facing this week is worse because of climate change, caused by burning coal, oil and gas and deforestation," said Friederike Otto, a climatologist at the Imperial College London and director of World Weather Attribution.

"What we are seeing in India is exactly what scientists said would happen if we didn't stop heating the planet," she said. The world's most populous nation is the third-biggest emitter of greenhouse gases but has committed to achieve a net zero emissions economy by 2070 -- two decades after most of the industrialized West. For now, it is overwhelmingly reliant on coal for power generation. The government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is seeking a third term, says the fossil fuel remains central to meeting India's rising energy needs.

Meanwhile, the swift announcement that a potentially record-breaking temperature measured this week in India could have been due to a sensor error highlights the challenges in certifying extreme heat. The recording of 52.9 degrees Celsius (127.2 Fahrenheit) in a Delhi suburb on Wednesday—surpassing the national record—was an outlier compared to other stations, and the India Meteorological Department said it was reviewing the data and sensors. The incident underscored the critical importance of verifying temperature readings, notably for moni-



NEW DELHI: A woman shields her child from the sun during severe heatwave on a hot summer day in New Delhi on May 29, 2024. — AFP

toring and understanding how the climate is changing—and responding accordingly.

The United Nations' World Meteorological Organization is responsible for signing off on global, continental and hemispherical temperature records. The Geneva-based WMO maintains a global weather and climate extremes archive, which logs records for temperature, pressure, rainfall, hail, aridity, wind, lightning and weather-related mortality.

Its lengthy verification process involves

months and even years of careful scientific checking, and sometimes sees measuring flaws and equipment errors bring down claimed records. The WMO first contacts the national weather service of the country concerned, and the organization that captured the supposed record in order to get the raw data. That includes details on the exact location of the reading, the equipment used, its calibration, and the regional weather conditions at the time. An initial

assessment is carried out by the WMO Commission for Climatology and by Randall Cerveny, the organization's rapporteur of weather and climate extremes, who heads up the records archive.

An international panel of atmospheric scientists then reviews the raw data and provides Cerveny, a geographical sciences professor at Arizona State University, with recommendations for his final verdict. — AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Teachers sentenced to jail over Japan avalanche deaths

TOKYO: Three Japanese teachers were each sentenced to two years in jail on Thursday for negligence during a 2017 mountaineering trip in which seven students were killed in an avalanche. A spokesman at a court in the central Tochigi region told AFP the three former and current teachers were found guilty of professional negligence resulting in injury and death. The avalanche triggered by heavy snow killed seven high school students and a teacher during a three-day expedition to Tochigi's Mount Chausu in March 2017. The disaster also injured 40 others on the mountain 120 kilometers (75 miles) north of Tokyo. — AFP

Japan town to replace Mt Fuji barrier after holes found

TOKYO: A Japanese town will replace a barrier mounted to deter unruly tourists from taking photos of Mount Fuji after holes were poked in the mesh screen, local media reported Thursday. The barrier was put up last week in a popular viewing spot in the town of Fujikawaguchiko, where residents had complained about streams of mostly foreign visitors littering, trespassing and breaking traffic rules. But at least 10 small holes have already been spotted in the black netting, measuring 2.5 by 20 meters (eight by 65 feet), hung outside a convenience store behind which the mountain can be seen rising in the distance. — AFP

Niger arrests suspected gang leader wanted in Nigeria

NIAMEY, Niger: A Nigerian "bandit" leader wanted for the kidnapping and murder of civilians has been arrested along with 65 of his men in southern Niger, local authorities announced. The border between Nigeria and Niger has for more than a decade been a hideout for armed groups known locally as bandits who abduct civilians for ransom and rustle cattle. "After several days of tailing (him), the men of our anti-terrorist operation finally caught the infamous (Kachalla) Baleri and some of his men," regional governor Issoufou Mamane told public television late Wednesday. — AFP

Volcanic eruption in Iceland losing intensity: Expert

REYKJAVIK, Iceland: A volcano erupting on the Reykjanes peninsula in southwestern Iceland has decreased significantly in intensity during the first 24 hours, the country's weather office said Thursday. The eruption around midday on Wednesday prompted the evacuation of the nearby fishing town of Grindavik as well as the Blue Lagoon thermal spa tourist attraction and the Svartsengi power plant, which supplies electricity and water to around 30,000 people on the peninsula. "The beginning was very intense but it began slowing down after a few hours" and on Thursday lava was spewing "out of a few vents" in the 3.4-kilometre (2.1-mile) fissure, a natural hazards experts at the Icelandic Meteorological Office (IMO), Lovisa Gudmundsdottir, said. — AFP

Imran Khan says Pakistan election was 'biggest robbery'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan said on Thursday February's national election was stolen from his party, describing it as the "biggest robbery of a public mandate". Khan, speaking in the Supreme Court via video link from Adyala jail in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, said he was being held in solitary confinement.

His remarks were the first to be heard in open court since he was jailed in August. "My party is being victimized. There have been gross human rights violations," Khan said. "The February 8 election was the biggest robbery of a public mandate." The Election Commission has denied the election was rigged. Khan, a 71-year-old cricketer-turned-politician,

was jailed on corruption charges. He is also fighting dozens of other cases. He and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Party (PTI) say the charges were politically motivated to thwart his return to power.

Candidates backed by Khan won the most seats in February's election but fell short of a majority required to form a government. His opponent Shehbaz Sharif became prime minister in a coalition government with several other parties. Khan was allowed by the top court to appear and plead petitions he had filed against amendments in the country's anti-graft laws, which he claims was made to favor corrupt politicians. The court, however, turned down his request to live-stream the proceedings. It said it was not a public interest case, according to a Reuters reporter inside the court room. Khan has previously been speaking to a select group of reporters who are allowed to cover his closed-door trials conducted inside the jail.

His aides have been conveying his messages after visiting him and his social media accounts remain active, but it is unclear who is operating them. He has



Former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan speaks during an interview, in Lahore. — Reuters

faced numerous cases since his ouster in 2022 in a parliamentary vote of confidence, which he alleged was backed by the powerful military after he had fallen out with the army generals. The army denies the accusations. — Reuters

14 HK democracy campaigners found guilty of subversion

HONG KONG: A Hong Kong court found 14 people guilty of subversion on Thursday in the biggest case against pro-democracy campaigners since China imposed a national security law to crush dissent. The verdicts cap a long-running trial in which 47 people were charged for organizing an unofficial election in 2020, activities the court ruled were a threat to the government.

Fourteen people were found guilty on Thursday. They, along with 31 others who pleaded guilty, could face life in jail. Two were found not guilty. "In our view... that would create a constitutional crisis for Hong Kong," said a court statement summarizing the reasons for the verdict by three judges. Britain, Australia and the European Union quickly condemned the verdicts with language that echoed the frequent criticism from Western governments in recent years over China's crackdown on democracy in the former British colony.

China imposed a national security law on Hong Kong in 2020 after millions of people took to the streets in sometimes violent pro-democracy protests. The 47 were arrested in dawn raids in January 2021 and charged with subversion for organizing the election, which aimed to shortlist candidates for the city's parliament. The arrests were part of a campaign to eliminate dissent that in recent years has transformed Hong Kong, which Beijing had promised to allow freedoms when it took the ter-



HONG KONG: Former district councillor Shun Lee (center) is seen surrounded by policemen and media personnel as he leaves after being found not guilty at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Court in Hong Kong on May 30, 2024. — AFP

ritory back from Britain in 1997. Lawrence Lau, one of the defendants found not guilty, called for people to keep supporting the rest of the group. "I hope that everyone will continue to (have) concern for our other friends in the case," he told reporters outside court.

Hong Kong authorities announced later they would appeal the two not guilty verdicts. Ahead of the verdicts, a small group from the League of Social Democrats—one of the few remaining opposition voices in Hong Kong—attempted to stage a small protest. "Hong Kong should still be a place with freedom of expression and of assem-

bly," said chairperson Chan Po-ying, who is also the wife of defendant "Long Hair" Leung Kwok-hung. Chan and three others were later arrested, activist Figo Chan posted on Facebook. The police confirmed the campaigners' arrest for "actions that disrupted public order".

Well-known activist Alexandra Wong, known as Grandma Wong, also attempted to stage a protest before police moved her across the street to a fenced-off area. "Immediately release the 47!" she shouted, waving a British flag. "Support democracy, support the 47!" — AFP

South Korea targets Mars mission with new space centre

SEOUL: South Korea aims to make a Mars landing by 2045, President Yoon Suk Yeol said Thursday, outlining plans to spend about \$70 billion over the coming decades on space exploration. The newly created Korea Aerospace Administration (KASA) will lead the drive

to make the land of K-pop a new space powerhouse, following the United States, Russia and China. "I have always believed that there is an infinite dream and future in outer space," Yoon said on Thursday.

"KASA will strive to land a homegrown probe on the moon by 2032 and plant the Taegwuggi (South Korean flag) on Mars by 2045," he said. South Korea sent up its first lunar orbiter, Danuri, in 2022 on a SpaceX Falcon rocket. It also successfully launched its homegrown Nuri rocket and placed working satellites into orbit last year after two failed attempts. Seoul is now gearing up for its fourth launch of the Nuri rocket in the second half of 2025.

Modelled after the United States' NASA, KASA

says it will act as an "aerospace control tower", overseeing aerospace policy, satellite development and space missions, including moon exploration.

Key projects will include expanding South Korea's participation in Artemis 3, an American-led mission which aims to put astronauts back on the Moon by 2026. The research and development program at the agency will be led by John Lee, who spent 30 years with NASA and was last a senior adviser at the Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland. Yoon vowed to "expand the space development budget by 1.5 trillion won (\$1.1 billion) by 2027"—which would be double the current space budget. — AFP

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 2024

Zain and Huawei two-day forum focuses on innovative technologies

Mobile Tech Forum brings together multi-disciplinary teams from both companies



Mohammad Al-Murshed speaks at the Mobile Tech Forum.



The Zain-Huawei Forum showcased innovative technologies.

KUWAIT: Zain Group, in partnership with Huawei, successfully held a two-day Mobile Tech Forum on May 26 at the Four Seasons Hotel, Kuwait accompanied by an exhibition of innovative technologies at Zain's Innovation Campus (ZINC) on May 27. As a leading telecom operator in the Middle East and Africa, Zain continues to pioneer in deploying 5G technology and beyond, demonstrating its commitment to technological excellence.

The forum brought together multi-disciplinary teams from Zain Group, Zain Kuwait and Huawei, to explore cutting-edge technologies and strategic directions. The event provided a platform for Zain employees to engage with innovative technologies, fostering talent development and maintaining Zain's leadership in the 5G-Advanced era. Key topics covered include 5G-Advanced, digital transformation, transmission, and green network solutions. Innova-

- 5G-Advanced, digital transformation, green network, cloud gaming solutions showcased
- Offering Zain customers with a superior network experience and services

tive services showcased during the forum included glasses-free 3D, cloud gaming, RedCap CPE, etc.

In collaboration with Huawei, Zain released the Zain Group 5G-Advanced Blueprint during MWC 2024 and completed the first 10Gbps verification in Kuwait, and first new calling trial in Kuwait which is the first trial outside China. These achievements mark a significant milestone towards the commercial use of 5G-Advanced technology. Consequently, plans are underway for the commercial deployment of new calling services and applications in home and industrial scenarios.

Zain is also accelerating its digital transformation

initiatives, focusing on network performance, service quality, user experience, and new service monetization. Zain is working with Huawei to leverage latest technologies to enable internal digital transformation and support enterprise digital transformations. Future network will require a lossless and intelligent infrastructure and both companies are exploring intelligent use cases such as energy-saving features, user experience assurance features, operation efficiency improvement features, etc.

Mohammad Al-Murshed, Acting CTO of Zain Group, commented "We are committed to provide our customers with a superior network experience

and services. Our dedication to leading technologies will drive Zain's business success and deliver the best service experience to our customers. In the 5G-Advanced era, we aim to maintain our leading position in the region while building green networks in support of our corporate sustainability 2050 net-zero agenda."

Richard Liu, President of Huawei Global ICT Marketing & Solution Sales, said: "Our partnership with Zain exemplifies our joint commitment to innovation and sustainability. Huawei is committed to bring the most advanced technologies to continuously enable Zain's technological leadership and business success in Kuwait and beyond in the 5G-Advanced era. We look forward to continuing our collaboration to achieve these ambitious goals."

Zain remains at the forefront of the digital revolution, consistently offering its customers the latest innovative technologies and services.

China to restrict export of some aviation parts

BEIJING: China will control exports of some aviation and space components from July 1, its commerce ministry announced on Thursday, citing a need to protect the country's national security and interests.

Those wishing to export items including aerospace structural components as well as equipment and software used in engine manufacturing, among other things, will need to apply for an export licence, a statement countersigned by China's customs administration and central military commission said. "In order to safeguard national security and interests, and fulfill international obligations such as non-proliferation, with the approval of the State Council and Central Military Commission, it has been decided to implement export controls on the following items," the statement read.

The list also included gas turbine engines, molds for manufacturing spacesuit parts, as well as the equipment and software used to make them, and advanced polymers used in bulletproof clothing.

Exporters will need to apply to the ministry of commerce for an export license, the statement said, which will decide whether the item in question could find "dual-use" military application. Beijing brought in its Export Control Law in late 2020, amid an escalating trade war kicked off by Trump-era tariffs on \$300 billion of Chinese goods in 2018. Analysts at the time of the law's passing said it was predominantly a tidying up exercise to consolidate numerous bits of legislation into one single law.

The United States and European Union, for example, also control the export of various aerospace components over concerns such parts might find "dual-use" application by hostile states. "China has learned from international practices and implemented export controls on relevant items according to its own needs," an explanatory note from the commerce ministry said. "The relevant policy does not target any particular country or region. Exports will be licensed if they comply with the relevant regulations," it added. — Reuters

Oil storage rise supports case for keeping OPEC+ cuts

LONDON: Rising global oil inventories through April due to soft fuel demand may strengthen the case for OPEC+ producers to keep supply cuts in place when they meet on June 2, OPEC+ delegates and analysts say. OPEC+, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and allies led by Russia, - meets on Sunday to discuss supply policy and whether to extend voluntary cuts.

OPEC+ sources said earlier this month that producers could maintain the output reductions.

The amount of oil that major consuming countries hold in storage varies with supply and demand and is an industry gauge of market fundamentals, alongside other indicators such as the strength of physical crude markets. Oil stocks among the wealthy Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries stood at 2.79 billion barrels in March, up 20 million barrels on the month and 34 million barrels on the year, despite the OPEC+ cuts, according to preliminary data from OPEC in its May oil market report.

"This is a concern," said an OPEC+ delegate who declined to be identified. Meanwhile, the International Energy Agency said in its own May report that total global stocks grew in March by 34.6 million barrels from February, citing a sharp rise in the amount of oil on tankers in transit. Many tankers are making longer voyages in order to avoid the Red Sea, where Yemen's Houthi group have launched a series of attacks on shipping.

The IEA said there are signs inventories rose again in April as crude and fuel was unloaded from the tankers, and as exports from Russia and the Americas declined. "The physical market is well supplied while demand is slowing down," a second OPEC+ delegate said.

Inventories in non-OECD countries rose in March for the first time since November, the IEA said, although in contrast to OPEC, it reported OECD stocks at their lowest levels in 20 years.

The two forecasters produce their own estimates but tend to revise figures as more data becomes avail-



A view of oil production pipes at the Cenovus Foster Creek SAGD oil sands operations near Cold Lake, Alberta, July 9, 2012. — Reuters

able, bringing them more in line. Non-OECD crude stocks rose 2 million barrels in March and another 48.5 million barrels in April, the IEA said, citing data from energy data analytics consultancy Kayrros. Most of the build was in China, the IEA said. "I believe that OPEC+ will be unlikely to release barrels back to the market until there are palpable signs of stock draw," said Tamas Varga of oil broker PVM.

Stocks usually build in spring as refineries undergo maintenance ahead of summer demand but steeper-than-expected global inventory rises have weighed on crude prices, along with a relatively warm northern hemisphere winter and concerns about a longer period with higher interest rates. Global benchmark Brent crude futures traded around \$85 a barrel on Wednesday, having fallen from a six-month high of \$92.18 in April.

A 2 million barrel-per-day (bpd) build in observable oil inventories in April is at odds with expectations of a 200,000 bpd deficit for the month an-

icipated by JP Morgan analysts, they said in a May 19 note. "Even more concerning, observed global stocks have continued to build in the first two weeks of May, against our implied 0.9 million bpd deficit," the bank said, noting China had taken advantage of lower prices to restock.

While the two OPEC+ delegates said the group's data showing a rise in OECD stocks was a concern, one of them noted OPEC's supply and demand balances point to large inventory drawdowns in the second half of the year.

The OECD stocks are also still some 38 million barrels below the five-year average, according to OPEC. It expects demand for OPEC+ crude to average 43.65 million bpd in the second half, implying a drawdown of 2.63 million bpd if the group maintains output at April's rate of 41.02 million bpd. JPMorgan also expects fundamentals to improve as the peak gasoline demand US summer driving season gets underway. — Reuters

Legal hurdles loom over Tesla's bid to revive Musk's pay

WILMINGTON, Delaware: Tesla shareholders will vote on June 13 to ratify Elon Musk's \$56 billion pay package, which a Delaware judge voided in January because she found he improperly controlled the process. They will also be asked to approve moving the company's legal home to Texas from Delaware. Below is a look at the potential legal fight standing in the way of Musk's pay day.

If shareholders reject the move to Texas and Musk's pay, it will vindicate the court's ruling that described Musk's pay as "unfathomable," and would be a stinging defeat for a board that

critics say is dominated by Musk. If shareholders vote to pay Musk, it will likely set off another legal challenge. Where that challenge takes place might depend on the vote to move Tesla's legal home to Texas. Lawyers for Richard Tometta, the shareholder who sued in Delaware in 2018 over Musk's pay, have said in court filings they fear the shareholder vote is a bid to use a Texas court to undo the January ruling. For her part, the judge in Delaware, Chancellor Kathaleen McCormick, said on May 28 she was assured by Tesla's attorneys the company will not litigate any dispute over the shareholder vote outside Delaware.

The judge in Delaware still has to decide how much to award to Tometta's legal team as a fee payable by Tesla before Musk and Tesla can appeal. The shareholder legal team requested \$6 billion. A hearing is scheduled for July 8. Tesla's legal team has said a vote ratifying Musk's pay would materially affect the Delaware proceedings, although they did not explain how. If the pay

package is ratified at the shareholder meeting, it will almost certainly be challenged by shareholders opposed to it.

McCormick could include such a challenge in the ongoing Musk pay case or create a new lawsuit. If it were a new case, that would allow Tesla and Musk to appeal the January ruling to the Delaware Supreme Court while the Court of Chancery sorted out challenges to the shareholder vote, which could take months or even years.

Tesla's ratification vote is based on Delaware law that is meant to allow companies to clean up technical defects in corporate transactions, like sales of stock that were not properly authorized. The company described its approach as "novel" in its proxy filing. No one has filed a legal challenge, but Charles Elson, a former University of Delaware professor who specialized in corporate governance, said in a court filing that ratification cannot be used as Tesla is applying it - to correct a breach of fiduciary duty by a board. — Reuters



US businessman Elon Musk addresses participants via videoconference during the 8th edition of the Vivatech technology startups and innovation fair, at the Porte de Versailles exhibition centre in Paris. — AFP

India's onion farmers cry foul at government's price recipe

Export ban leads to price crash, market flooding

NASHIK, India: Almost every Indian meal requires an onion - one of the cooking essentials along with sugar and lentils that sweet-talking politicians use to curry favor with their voters by lowering costs. But their policies to cut prices by slapping export bans on some goods including onions and sugar, or by allowing duty-free imports of lentils, has made the key voting demographic of farmers furious.

"They say the politicians' decisions flood the markets, and that the savings shoppers make are at their expense," said Bharat Dighole, onion producers' association president for Maharashtra. "The most unwise interventions come around polls."



NASHIK: In this photo taken on May 21, 2024, farmers load onions in a truck in Nashik.



NASHIK: In this photo taken on May 21, 2024, farmers sort onions for auction at a godown in Nashik. - AFP photos

Gulave, 28, comes from India's onion-producing heartland of Nashik district in Maharashtra state, which produces some 40 percent of onions nationwide. He felt cheated when prices crashed after a sudden export ban in December. "We dread elections," said Bharat Dighole, onion producers' association president for Maharashtra. "The most unwise interventions come around polls."

After the ban, prices dropped to sometimes less than a third, Dighole said. That sparked dozens of small-scale protests in Maharashtra.

At the same time, production expenses have more than doubled since 2017, Dighole added. But the slump in wholesale prices meant that was not passed on to the consumer - or voter, from the politicians' viewpoint. They paid the same for their onions as they had done for years.

"All polls are fought in the name of farmers, but the

government policy clearly favors the consumers," said Dighole. India will vote on Saturday in the seventh and final phase of a general election, stretched over six weeks to ease the logistical burden of polls in the world's most populous country.

Two-thirds of India's 1.4 billion people draw their livelihood from agriculture, accounting for nearly a fifth of the country's gross domestic product. In India, onions can be a barometer of a government's popularity. Runaway prices have triggered mass protests and toppled governments in the past.

In 1998, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of Narendra Modi - at the time a local politician - lost control of the capital Delhi in state elections. The defeat was widely blamed on voter anger at high onion prices. While Prime Minister Modi is expected to sweep a third term in the ongoing national elections, the BJP has been out of power in the capital's state legislature ever since.

Days before voting began in the onion belt of Nashik, Modi's government lifted the export ban.

But analysts called that a political ploy. "The opening up of the onion market is nothing but rhetoric," said economist Ashok Gulati, from the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations. Gulati said restrictions remained - including a minimum export price and 40 percent duty - and made exports unviable, leaving farmers teary-eyed.

"Our best hope is to not sell for a loss," 30-year-old farmer Akshay Tarle told AFP at an onion auction, where lines of trailers piled high with the vegetable waited. "When I leave home in the morning I don't even know if I'll be able to sell my produce at the right price," added another farmer, Vikas Babaji Tushare. "My family ask me to buy things on my way back home, but there are days I don't even have the money," the 36-year-old added.

"I don't even know what to tell my children."

Gulati warned export bans and unchecked imports of other products such as lentils - a key staple and protein source for many - were distorting markets and hurting producers. India's import of pulses jumped to a six-year-high of around \$3.75 billion in 2023-24, according to commerce figures cited by Indian media. "Duty-free import of pulses... would dent the progress made in domestic production," Gulati said.

But some hope for change. "People at the top fear that if onion prices rise, governments will fall," said Jagannath Bhimaji Kute, 58, vice-president of a wholesale onion market in Nashik. "Whoever comes to power next will have to address our issues."

Kute urged Indians to "think about the farmers", questioning why people swallowed rising prices on fuel and cooking oil, but not food. "Why must what we produce remain cheap, when everything else is getting more expensive?" he said. - AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
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KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 30 MAY 2024

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No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance										Valuation Multiples *				
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	863	857	867	855	12	51,497,104	-6	-0.70%	0.65%	846	860	13.0	1.70	3.9%	1.03
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	259	254	261	251	10	42,436,039	-5	-1.93%	-5.09%	252	256	14.5	1.23	4.5%	1.28
104	Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait	Banking	275	274	276	267	9	4,595,690	2	0.74%	23.48%	260	273	13.4	1.12	3.2%	0.93
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	179	175	179	174	5	30,772,822	-4	-2.23%	20.17%	173	176	17.0	0.65	2.8%	1.07
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	186	187	189	185	4	15,674,098	1	0.54%	14.16%	185	191	18.3	0.67	3.1%	1.31
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	745	735	745	729	16	140,063,913	-9	-1.21%	10.35%	725	745	21.6	2.15	2.5%	1.15
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	582	579	585	579	6	11,737,996	-2	-0.34%	2.29%	579	593	31.2	2.46	1.3%	1.14
201	Kuwait Investment	Financial Services	181	183	184	180	4	2,209,035	0	0.00%	44.09%	178	187	8.4	0.84	5.5%	2.06
204	National Investments	Financial Services	255	248	261	239	22	11,032,839	-6	-2.36%	3.77%	244	248	27.4	1.01	6.1%	2.09
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	123	121	124	119	5	28,448,845	-3	-2.42%	15.24%	118	122	NM	0.69	0.0%	0.95
212	Arzan Financial Group	Financial Services	187	188	198	183	15	24,257,651	3	1.62%	-10.48%	186	192	22.4	1.21	1.0%	1.25
222	Aayan Leasing and Investment	Financial Services	167	160	167	159	8	10,560,889	-6	-3.61%	-8.05%	158	163	8.6	1.08	4.7%	1.64
252	Al Imtiaz Investment	Financial Services	61.8	60.1	63.9	59.1	4.8	21,050,860	-1.9	-3.06%	6.37%	60.1	62	NM	0.42	0.0%	1.34
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	222	217	222	216	6	4,940,361	-5	-2.25%	5.85%	214	220	17.2	1.27	1.3%	1.14
404	Salhia Real Estate	Real Estate	435	436	441	414	27	3,994,960	-4	-0.91%	6.71%	424	444	16.6	1.44	3.3%	0.55
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	838	840	849	827	22	15,275,053	8	0.96%	5.62%	825	838	17.9	1.90	1.6%	0.97
418	The Commercial Real Estate	Real Estate	137	140	144	137	7	22,900,036	2	1.45%	40.00%	137	141	17.3	0.85	2.8%	0.60
501	National Industries	Financial Services	240	226	246	222	24	40,292,171	-14	-5.83%	10.78%	226	232	13.9	1.02	2.1%	1.61
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	1,200	1,240	1,240	1,183	57	1,743,374	41	3.42%	-5.34%	1,202	1,245	13.2	0.95	5.4%	1.10
506	HEISCO	Industrials	810	870	875	804	71	2,631,908	60	7.41%	6.10%	870	886	19.2	2.02	3.5%	0.94
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	659	660	660	648	12	3,244,687	0	0.00%	12.82%	655	677	19.7	1.33	9.2%	0.91
603	Agility	Industrials	302	293	303	292	11	30,764,213	-9	-2.98%	-42.44%	280	298	8.7	0.80	6.7%	1.58
605	Zain	Telecommunications	459	449	460	447	13	30,408,832	-10	-2.18%	-11.44%	432	450	10.2	1.56	7.8%	0.58
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	2,753	2,584	2,753	2,575	178	1,789,819	-167	-6.07%	-20.18%	2,575	2,675	8.6	3.80	12.7%	0.66
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	211	209	211	209	2	1,063,444	-2	-0.95%	16.11%	206	210	NM	0.93	0.0%	1.26
654	JAZEERA	Consumer Discretionary	1,059	920	1,069	915	154	2,086,685	-139	-13.13%	-33.77%	915	990	188.7	9.29	2.9%	1.30
813	GFH Financial Group	Financial Services	90	89.2	92	86.0	5.5	61,651,039	-0.5	-0.56%	16.91%	86.3	90.0	9.2	1.11	5.9%	1.40
821	Warba Bank	Banking	185	183	186	182	4	17,115,627	-2	-1.08%	4.29%	181	188	23.5	1.01	1.5%	1.07
822	Kuwait Telecommunications	Telecommunications	544	575	575	536	39	3,302,714	30	5.50%	2.13%	565	577	17.3	2.64	6.5%	0.71
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	839	780	839	733	106	468,847	-52	-6.25%	35.65%	770	801	18.5	2.05	2.6%	0.41
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	507	494	535	494	41	2,955,976	-6	-1.20%	-3.14%	485	499	28.1	1.99	4.0%	0.77
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	2,120	2,100	2,139	2,025	114	1,013,506	-41	-1.91%	21.81%	2,094	2,125	25.6	7.65	3.6%	1.36
830	AL GHANIM	Consumer Discretionary	1,071	1,003	1,071	1,002	69	2,794,476	-55	-5.20%	-5.02%	995	1,010	9.6	3.64	6.9%	0.80

* As of end of week closing

Business

US economic growth revised lower for Q1; jobless claims up

GDP grew at 1.3%, down from 1.6%

WASHINGTON: The US economy grew more slowly in the first quarter than previously estimated after downward revisions to consumer spending, the Commerce Department reported on Thursday.

Gross domestic product - the broadest measure of economic activity - grew at a 1.3 percent annualized rate from January through March, down from the advance estimate of 1.6 percent and notably slower than the 3.4 percent pace in the final three months of 2023.

The downgrade of first-quarter growth followed recent softness in readings of retail sales and equipment spending. A measure of inflation during the first quarter was revised down to 3.3 percent from 3.4 percent, the stiffest quarterly price-pressure growth in a year. After easing through much of last year, measures of inflation came in higher than expected to start 2024, driving Federal Reserve policymakers to push back expectations for when they'll be able to pivot to interest rate cuts.

US Treasury yields ticked lower after the modest downward revision to inflation in the first quarter, and equity index futures pared losses ahead of the opening bell on Wall Street. The downward revision to GDP brings the first-quarter's growth rate to the

lowest since the second quarter of 2022, when the economy contracted, and leaves output below the 1.8 percent rate that officials at the Fed see as its longer-run, noninflationary potential. The soft start to the year is not expected to have persisted into the current second quarter, however, thanks in part to continued strength in the job market.

The number of Americans filing new claims for unemployment benefits ticked higher last week, the Labor Department said also on Thursday, but underlying strength in the labor market still shows signs of persisting and should continue to support the economy. Initial claims for state unemployment benefits rose 3,000 to a seasonally adjusted 219,000 for the week ended May 25. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast 218,000 claims.

The so-called continuing claims tracking those who collect benefits beyond the first week rose 4,000 to a seasonally adjusted 1.791 million during the week ending May 18, the claims report showed.

The labor market is steadily rebalancing in the wake of 525 basis points worth of interest rate hikes from the Federal Reserve since March 2022 to slow demand in the overall economy. — Reuters



Shoppers during Black Friday sales at the King of Prussia shopping mall in this file photo. — Reuters

Why has Russian wheat been entering the EU duty-free?

BRUSSELS: Since its invasion of Ukraine, Russia's grain exports have not only been spared by European Union sanctions, but even stayed free of tariffs - a seeming anomaly the bloc has now agreed to rectify.

There are many reasons for the current situation, including international trade rules, agricultural exemptions, and concerns over food security. Why no sanctions on Russian wheat?

When they slapped sanctions in 2022 on numerous sectors of the Russian economy such as energy and banking, Europeans were careful not to target agricultural products nor fertilizers.

They wanted to avoid the risk of destabilizing world trade and hurting African and Asian countries dependent on Russian grain imports. On Thursday, EU member states approved a March proposal by the European Commission to impose "prohibitive" tariffs on Russian agricultural products in order to deny Russia revenues that have allowed it to finance its war in Ukraine. They also targeted Belarus exports, which are much smaller.

Unlike imposing sanctions, these measures would still allow transit across Europe to other countries, storage in customs warehouses or transport on European ships. "The new tariffs are designed to be high enough to discourage current imports" intended for consumption in Europe, the European Commission said.

The tariffs would rise to \$95 euros (\$100) a ton for cereals, and to 50 percent of the value for other products such as oil and vegetables.

Russia has been treated as a "most favored nation" trading partner since joining the World Trade Organization in 2012. That status is a pillar of the principle of reciprocity and non-discrimination that underpins global free trade. WTO rules demand that any commercial advantage - such as a tariff reduction - accorded by one member be applied to all its trading partners.

There are exceptions. Countries can conclude free-trade pacts that apply only to goods exchanged between them. Or a country can object to imports that it feels are tainted by unfair trade practices.

Although Ukraine joined the WTO in 2008, its relations with the EU, its largest trading partner, are governed by an accord that since 2016 has given Ukrainian companies preferential access to the 27-nation bloc. Following Russia's invasion, the EU eliminated tariffs on Ukrainian products.

It recently decided to impose some limits on agricultural imports such as sugar, poultry, eggs, and corn - but not wheat or barley - after European farmers protested they were being undercut by an influx of imports.

The EU intends to activate a clause so that "Russia and Belarus will no longer have access to any of the EU's WTO quotas on grain that offer better tariff treatment for some products."

The EU and the United States have said since March 2022 that Russia should be stripped of its "most favored nation" status, but have not undertaken any steps in that direction.

To exclude Russia, the EU needs to invoke a "security exception" accepted by the WTO which the EU believes is justified by the current circumstances, said a commission official. Without waiting, Latvia last February banned all Russian and Belarus food imports. The three Baltic states, Poland and the Czech Republic have asked for a complete stop to imports to the EU.

According to its national statistics agency Rosstat, Russia last year harvested 142.6 million tons of grain, the second highest amount ever for the country after the 2022 record of 157.6 million tons.

Then Russian agriculture minister Dmitry Patrushev said at the end of last year the country's revenue from agricultural exports surpassed \$45 billion for the first time in 2023, up from just \$1.4 billion in 2000. According to EU statistics, Russia last year exported 4.2 million tons of grain, oils, and agricultural derivatives to the European Union, worth 1.3 billion euros. — AFP

British business lobby calls for improved EU links

LONDON: Britain's business community called Thursday for whatever government emerges from the looming UK general election to improve relations with the European Union and lighten post-Brexit trade burdens.

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) issued the plea in a five-point "election manifesto" before the July 4 vote, also urging the completion of key trade deals. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, whose governing Conservatives took Britain out of the European Union in 2021, are far behind the opposition Labour party in opinion polls amid a cost-of-living crisis that critics argue has been exacerbated by Brexit.

"The (next) government must negotiate improved UK trading terms with our largest trading partner, the European Union and complete the current pipeline of free trade negotiations including Switzerland, Gulf Co-operation Council, Turkey, and India," the BCC said in a statement. "A new focus on ensuring businesses large and small are getting the full benefits from trade deals current and new is needed from government," added the BCC, which represents thousands of companies across Britain.

The EU bloc accounts for about 42 percent of all British exports according to the BCC.

"The EU is the UK's biggest market... Leaving the EU has made it more expensive and bureaucratic to sell our goods and services across the Channel," added its director general Shevaun Haviland.

"But better trading terms are possible if the UK government and the EU reach agreement in areas of mutual benefit for business in both markets." The BCC is also

Africa growth not enough to tackle poverty: AfDB

NAIROBI: Africa's economy has shown resilience overall despite global conditions but growth needs to be in double digits to truly tackle poverty on the continent, the African Development Bank (AfDB) said on Thursday.

The pan-African economic institution also emphasized the need to create more jobs and further industrialize, during a presentation on Africa's economic

UK's creaking power grid leaves green energy revolution adrift

PORTSMOUTH, England: British ferry operator Wightlink wants to order a \$60 million, state-of-the-art electric ferry to make its crossings cleaner and greener. But it can't commission the vessel until it gets a power upgrade. The company carries 4 million islanders, holidaymakers and festival goers every year on a five nautical mile crossing between England's picturesque southern coast and the Isle of Wight. The strait, known as the Solent, is popular with yachts and leisure craft, while much of the coastline is protected. Wightlink has funding in place for a electric-powered car ferry that would reduce emissions both at sea and in port, following in the path of pioneer Norway, which introduced the world's first in 2015.

The government has said decarbonizing maritime transport is essential to achieving Britain's net zero target by 2050. Domestic maritime vessels represented around 5% of Britain's greenhouse gas emissions from transport in 2020, more than rail and buses combined, the government said in a 2022 report. And the long average lifespan of vessels means that greener ships must start being deployed by next year to achieve a green fleet by the 2050 deadline.

But interviews with 22 people - including investors, power company employees, government officials, Wightlink staff and countryside campaigners - revealed that long waits for grid connections combined with planning obstacles are putting millions of pounds of green transport investment at risk. "We want to go electric. We think it's the right thing," Wightlink Chief Executive Keith Greenfield told Reuters onboard a hybrid ferry, which uses diesel to charge electric batteries, saving around 20



HONITON, UK: Britain's Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Rishi Sunak sits in an armored vehicle at Supacat Ltd. in Honiton, south-west England on May 29, 2024, during a campaign event in the build-up to the UK general election on July 4. — AFP

urging Britain's incoming administration to boost green innovation, skills investment, reform business taxation, and appoint a government champion to oversee the cutting-edge artificial intelligence sector.

"The start of a new government, regardless of party or whatever coalition takes form, is a good moment for a reset," said Haviland. "It's an opportunity to look forward and action the plan the country voted on." "We have set out five priorities for immediate action to put in place the right policies and struc-

tures that will turn the flywheel of the economy, so that business can step up and make the best of these opportunities," she added.

Britain voted to leave the EU in a knife-edge 2016 referendum after Brexiteers, including former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, promised "sunlit uplands" of economic prosperity.

The UK economy however sank into recession in the second half of 2023, as elevated inflation sparked a cost-of-living crunch. — AFP

outlook at the bank's annual meetings in Nairobi. "African economies are operating like everybody else within a very, very challenging global context," AfDB president Akinwumi Adesina said. He noted high inflation and the war in Ukraine as well as the difficulties - and costs - faced by African nations seeking to raise money on global capital markets.

"Despite all of these headwinds... African economies have done pretty well," Adesina said.

The bank is forecasting overall African economic growth at 4.3 percent next year from an estimated 3.7 percent in 2024 and 3.1 percent last year. And it says 10 out of the 20 fastest growing economies in the world are in Africa. But Adesina warned: "We need to be very clear as well, that just having real GDP growth at that level is not enough to be able to

percent in emissions. "We're held back by a lack of shore power." Wightlink needs to order its next ship within 12-18 months to replace an ageing vessel, but cannot commit to go solely electric without a legally binding power contract, Greenfield said. Regional network operator Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) told Wightlink two years ago that a new connection at its Portsmouth terminal would require infrastructure upgrades, including at a nearby substation on the national high-voltage network, according to a document reviewed by Reuters and ferry company executives.

The substation improvements by National Grid were not scheduled to be completed until 2037. After Reuters interviewed Wightlink executives, SSEN said this month enough power may be available without the National Grid work, and it would hold new talks with the ferry company. If Wightlink accepts a new quote from SSEN, it will be able to guarantee the capacity and confirm its place in the connections queue. "We look forward to meeting them early next month to progress proposals," a SSEN spokesperson told Reuters, adding that there could be more network capacity available than previously forecast so the company had "potential to progress" with Wightlink's request.

Britain will hold a general election on July 4 with polls predicting a victory for the opposition Labour party after 14 years of Conservative rule. Wightlink's dilemma underscores the challenge Britain's next government will face in delivering the renewable energy and grid infrastructure needed to power a shift to electric ferries, cars and domestic heating in Europe's second-largest economy. Britain was the first major economy to create a legally binding 2050 net zero target. It's a leader in offshore wind and it has halved emissions since 1990 after closing coal power plants.

Central to the net zero target is a plan to decarbonize the electricity system by 2035. But the state adviser, the Climate Change Committee, said in a

progress report in June 2023 that the government lacked a full strategy to get there. How to achieve net zero, and at what cost, has become a battle-ground both nationally and locally.

Britain support the policy of net zero but they often balk at the costs and infrastructure that may be required to get there, surveys show. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak scrapped some targets last year, saying he needed to retain public support in the face of "unacceptable costs". Labour has pledged to decarbonize the electricity grid by 2030, five years ahead of the Conservatives' target of 2035. Reforming grid connections is one part of its ambitious plan.

To hit net zero, Britain needs to expand the high-voltage network in England and Wales carried overhead on large pylons, which then connect to regional distribution networks. The grid, owned and operated by London-listed National Grid Plc, was built to transmit power generated from coalfields in areas like Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire across the country. Today more electricity is coming from wind farms in Scotland and off Britain's east coast, and new infrastructure is needed to transmit it to London and the south. — AFP

get our hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. "We believe that African economies ought to be growing at double digits for probably the next decade or so to be able to have the kind of transformation that we need as a continent."

In 2023, more than 460 million of the 1.2 million people in sub-Saharan Africa were considered extremely poor by the World Bank. The AfDB estimates that between 10 and 20 million young Africans join the job market each year, while only three million new jobs are available. "We have to make sure that our growth is also delivering value for the youth and for the women," Adesina said.

"We don't eat GDP. Doesn't matter how (good) that GDP is. We have to make sure that it's creating jobs, quality jobs." — AFP



A row of electricity pylons is seen near the Frodsham on shore wind farm in Frodsham, Britain. — Reuters

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Weekender

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 2024

Language of friendship

By Ghadeer Ghloom



A Kuwaiti-Korean friendship between Asra'a and Suin has been created through shared interests in one another's languages, forging a cultural bridge between Kuwait and Korea. To look more into this language-based connection between a Kuwaiti and Korean, Kuwait Times interviewed Asra'a and Suin, who shared their challenges, motivations and cultural similarities they have discovered between both Kuwait and Korea.

Asra'a told Kuwait Times that her interest in Korean culture began with her love for K-dramas. Although these dramas initially sparked her curiosity about South Korea, it was her actual visits to the country that truly inspired

childhood. After studying English and Chinese in school, she faced a choice for a second language before entering high school. "I was attracted to Spanish at first, but my mother suggested learning Arabic for its uniqueness and her

Kuwaiti-Korean connection between Asra'a and Suin forged through linguistics and culture

her to learn the language. "The warmth and kindness of the Korean people left a lasting impression on me; this motivated me to learn their language to be able to interact better and get closer to the people. I have always had an interest in languages, but my deepening desire to revisit South Korea and in-

own interest in Arab culture. This suggestion led me to start learning Arabic, which I have come to love and continue to study," Suin explained.

Challenges in learning Korean
Asra'a shared the challenging part as a non-native Korean. "The most

challenge for me," she said. Another challenge is using Korean outside the classroom in Kuwait. "It is difficult to practice Korean outside of the classroom because the opportunities to use the language are mostly limited to interactions with my teachers, peers and my friend Suin," she added.

Challenges in learning Arabic
Suin finds the dialects of Arabic to be the most challenging aspect of learning the language. The Arabic she learned in class was quite different from the local dialects she encountered in Jordan and Kuwait. Each dialect presented its own set of words, pronunciations and expressions, which she had to adapt to and relearn. This variation has been a significant and ongoing challenge in her Arabic learning journey. Like Asra'a, Suin finds it difficult to practice her Arabic outside her classroom in Kuwait as many people speak English. However, she recalls a memorable experience in Hungary where speaking Arabic to an Egyptian worker earned her a warm welcome and a discount. She also uses Arabic when traveling to other Arab countries like Jordan, Bahrain and Qatar.

Suin's favorite Arabic words have evolved over time. Initially, she was fond of the word "الأردن" (Jordan) due to its unique pronunciation. Recently, she has grown to like the Kuwaiti expression "شلونج/شلونك" (How are you?) for its frequent use and distinctiveness in everyday conversations.

Cultural similarities
Asra'a and Suin have observed cultural similarities between Korea and Kuwait, as they told Kuwait Times that both cultures emphasize strong family ties and exhibit warmth, hospitality and care in personal relationships. These cultural commonalities have made Suin feel welcomed and less lonely during her stay in Kuwait, and made Asra'a feel the same way during her visit to Korea.



Asra'a and Suin attend a Korean festival in Kuwait.

teract more meaningfully with its people ultimately led me to learn Korean," Asra'a said.

On her part, Suin's interest in learning languages was sparked by her travels to various Asian countries during her

challenging aspect of learning Korean is the writing system. Korean pronunciation can be tricky as many words sound similar but have different meanings and spellings. This complexity in written Korean has been a real

Asra'a shared with Kuwait Times one of her favorite Korean phrases: "다 괜찮아질 거야," which means "Everything's going to be okay." Although she finds it challenging to pronounce, she enjoys hearing this reassuring sentence.



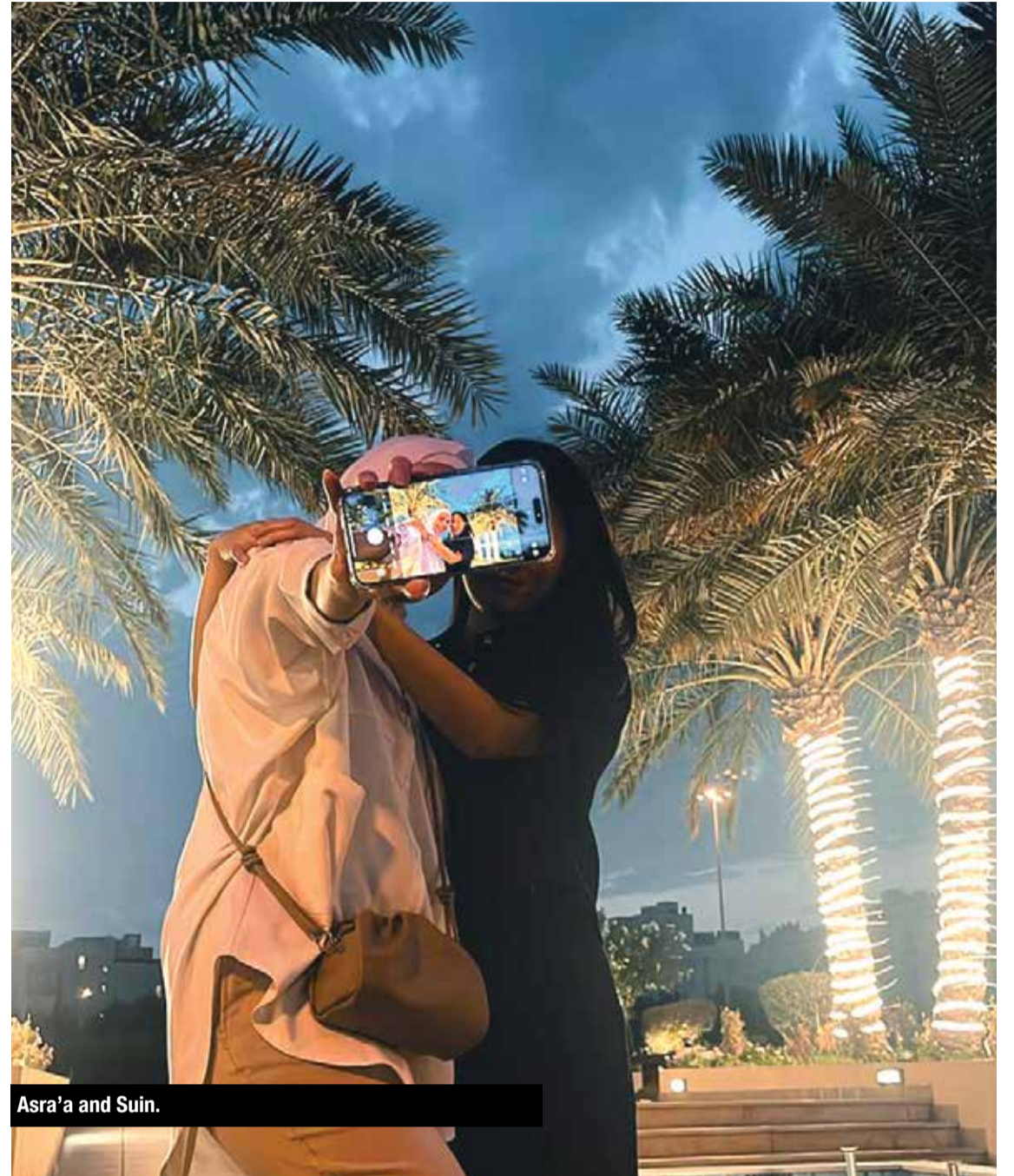
Asra'a walks in a garden in South Korea.



Suin displays Korean food at a booth in Kuwait to introduce Kuwaitis to Korean culture.



Suin, a Korean girl studying Arabic at Kuwait University, at the Kuwait Towers.



Asra'a and Suin.



Souq Mubarakkiya

A classic gem

By Aaron Philip

As you step into Souq Al Mubarakkiya, the soaring Kuwaiti flag, traditional wooden pillars, aroma of spices and coffee, children playing and beautiful lights enhancing the traditional atmosphere capture your attention. "It feels really good to roam around the souq and feel the breeze during weekends," said Stanley, an Indian expat. He added that the aesthetic of the place is well-maintained. The souq attracts visitors from around the world due to its traditional appearance.



Souq Mubarakkiya is one of the oldest markets in Kuwait and was a major trade hub before the discovery of oil. Named after then Amir Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, the souq has a history of around 120 years. Local papers recall that people could directly speak with their leader at Sheikh Mubarak Al-Kabeer's Kiosk, a small pavilion in the center of the souq, to express their desires and worries.

The market was damaged during the 1990 invasion but was restored to its traditional beauty. Despite a massive fire in 2022 causing significant damage, the souq continues to thrive. "My kids love to come here and play on the slides and swings," said Julie, a Filipino expat. She mentioned that many visitors help her children socialize and make friends.

A Kuwaiti citizen reminisced about visiting the souq with his parents during his childhood, noting that not much has changed. He expressed gratitude to the authorities for maintaining the souq's beauty.

Decades of history

The souq hosts many shops selling a wide range of products, including Persian silk carpets, gold jewelry, antiques, perfumes including musk and oud and traditional costumes. Shops also sell oils, honey, spices, fish, meat, fruits and vegetables and other items. One can find shops with decades of history at the souq. "I have been selling Iranian carpets



for the last 18 years," said Hameed, a shopkeeper. While bargaining is common, vendors are not afraid to turn away overly aggressive hagglers.

Souq Mubarakkiya is known for its authentic Arabic delicacies, offering a variety of coffees, teas, kebabs and more. Abdullatif, an Egyptian expat, frequently visits for shawarmas. "I come here often after work to have one," he said.

During weekends, the souq is lively until midnight, and even on regular days, it comes alive at night as people visit after work to relax. People of differ-

ent nationalities can be seen shopping and sightseeing. "I like to come with my friends and hang around here; it gives me inner peace," said Thomson, an expat. He praised the excellent quality and reasonable prices of the products.

Despite Kuwait's spectacular malls, Souq Mubarakkiya holds a special place in the hearts of the people. It stands as a classic establishment amidst the skyscrapers, preserving Kuwait's cultural heritage and maintaining its glory.



— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat & Aaron Philip





Magic powder

Quick breakfast meals with a PROTEIN KICK

PROTEIN CEREAL

Ingredients:

- Wholegrain cereal
- Regular milk or soy milk
- 1 banana
- 1 scoop of protein powder (flavor of choice)

Preparation

Add a scoop of protein powder after adding milk to your cereal, then slice the banana on top. A tablespoon of peanut butter can be added to the mix for an extra protein kick and a flavor boost.

By Ahmad Jabr



Preparing a quick breakfast rich in protein is a daily struggle for gym goers and people looking to start the day with a complete meal while in a rush (who has the time to cook chicken in the morning!) But a scoop of protein powder added to a simple breakfast bowl does wonders, helping you save time on food preparation without sacrificing the nutritional value.

PROTEIN OATS

Add a protein kick to your go-to, high-fiber quick breakfast.

Ingredients

- Old-fashioned rolled oats
- Water or milk (regular or plant-based)
- 1 banana
- 1 scoop of protein powder (preferably vanilla flavor, or your flavor of choice)
- Cinnamon

Preparation

In a pot, combine oats, sliced banana, cinnamon, and water or milk. Cook over medium-high heat for 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Once the oats are thick and the banana has melted in, remove from the heat then stir in your protein powder. Serve the oatmeal in a bowl, adding more water or milk if needed for the right consistency. Add toppings of choice and enjoy!



PROTEIN PANCAKES

Who says pancakes alone can't be a protein-rich breakfast meal?

Ingredients

- 1 cup of oats.
- 1 scoop of protein powder (flavor of your choice)
- 1 banana.
- Milk (regular or plant-based)
- 2 eggs.
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon baking powder

Preparation

In a blender or food processor, add the oats and blend until they become a fine powder. Then in a large bowl, add the powdered oats, protein powder, banana, eggs, milk, baking powder, and vanilla extract. Keep blending until the batter becomes smooth

and well combined. Heat a non-stick pan or griddle over medium heat and lightly grease it with cooking spray or a small amount of oil.

Pour about 1/4 cup of the batter onto the pan for each pancake. Cook until bubbles start to form on the surface, then flip the pancake and cook for another minute or until golden brown. Repeat the process with the remaining batter, adding more oil or cooking spray as needed. Serve the protein pancakes hot with your favorite toppings such as fresh fruits, nut butter, yogurt, or maple syrup!

PROTEIN SMOOTHIE BOWL

The creamy goodness of the fruity smoothie bowl, now overpowered.

Ingredients

- 1 frozen banana.
- 1 cup of mixed berries.
- 1 scoop of your favorite protein powder
- ½ cup of Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon of almond butter
- 1/4 cup of milk (regular or plant-based)

Preparation

In a blender, combine the frozen banana, mixed berries, protein powder, Greek yogurt, almond butter, and milk. Blend the ingredients until you achieve a smooth and creamy consistency. Pour the smoothie into a bowl and garnish with your favorite toppings, such as sliced almonds, some chia seeds, granola, or a few fresh berries.



Event: Italian Public Day Celebration Night
Location: TOC Cultural Center
Date: May 31, 2024

Event: Summer Tok Expo (Hana Society)
Location: 360 Mall
Date: May 31- June 1

Event: Restoring Our Past, Preserving Our Future exhibition
Location: Yarmouk Cultural Center - Dar Al Athar Al Islamiyyah
Date: Until 8 June

Event: Chess gathering
Location: Art Lab
Date: May 31

Event: Belonging & Boundaries - Storytelling with Ascia
Location: Promenade Cultural Center
Date: June 1

Sports

Evenly matched Red Sox, Tigers look for bounce-back wins

Dominic Smith's second-inning RBI gave Boston a lead

BALTIMORE: The Boston Red Sox will start a six-game homestand and a four-game weekend series when they meet the Detroit Tigers. Both teams are coming off losses on Wednesday, with the Red Sox falling 6-1 to the Baltimore Orioles while the Tigers dropped a 10-2 decision to the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Dominic Smith's second-inning RBI gave Boston a lead on Wednesday, but it was short-lived. A Gunnar Henderson grand slam in the bottom of the inning marked the big blow against Kutter Crawford. "That inning just got away from us, and they did what they do," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "(The Orioles are) a complete team. They do a lot of good stuff, and they keep getting better."

Connor Wong scored the only run for the Red Sox. He was 2-for-4 on the day. Next up is a Detroit club that has a nearly identical record to Boston: both teams have 28 losses. The Red Sox enter Thursday at .500, with the Tigers having played one less game and are 27-28.

Boston right-hander Nick Pivetta (2-3, 4.20 ERA) will look to bounce back from a 6-3 loss Saturday to the Milwaukee Brewers. He allowed seven hits and five runs and three strikeouts—including the 1,000th of his MLB career—across 3 1/3 innings. Pivetta has pitched at least five innings and allowed two or fewer runs in four of his six starts this season but was disappointed by this most recent outing, which included three walks.

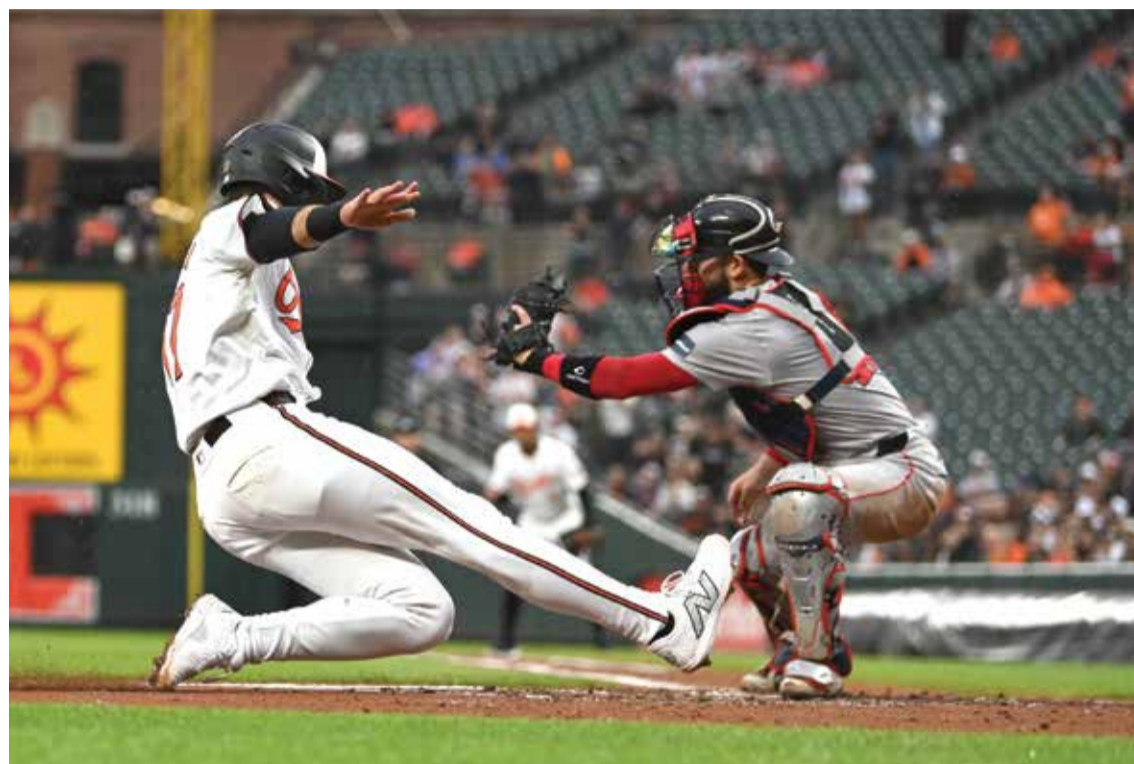
"I'm only going to pitch well if I don't walk guys. I got behind guys and walked guys," he said. "I paid

for it, regardless of the contact, getting into those counts, and walking guys led to damage. I wasn't able to get the job done." Pivetta has two career appearances (one start) against the Tigers and is 1-0 with a 3.12 ERA and 13 strikeouts over 8 1/3 innings. The Tigers had a busy Wednesday, splitting a doubleheader against Pittsburgh. In Game 1, Detroit ace Tarik Skubal threw seven shutout innings, allowing just three singles in an 8-0 win.

However, a four-game winning streak was snapped in the nightcap, a 10-2 loss. Matt Vierling was a bright spot against Pirates rookie sensation Paul Skenes in Game 2, hitting his fourth homer in a three-game span. He has seven homers this season after hitting just 10 in 2023. "I'm seeing a lot of awesomeness," Tigers manager A.J. Hinch said of Vierling. "Is that a word? He's taken a lot of work that he's been doing behind the scenes into the game. The pull-side in the air, we've talked about it enough, now we're watching it. He's been incredible."

Detroit's Jack Flaherty (1-4, 3.84) will aim to continue a current run of five straight starts of at least six innings, though three of his losses have come in that stretch. The right-hander struck out nine in back-to-back outings. He took the loss in his most recent start May 23 against the Toronto Blue Jays, giving up three runs over 6 1/3 innings in a 9-1 loss.

Flaherty will make his second career start against Boston. The first came in a no-decision on Sept 9, 2023, when he pitched 3 1/3 innings and allowed four earned runs. — Reuters



BALTIMORE: Baltimore Orioles outfielder Colton Cowser (17) slides to score before Boston Red Sox catcher Connor Wong (12) can apply a tag during the second inning at Oriole Park at Camden Yards. — Reuters



Kuwait national handball team.

Kuwait in Group C of Handball World Championship

KUWAIT: Kuwait national handball team has been placed in Group C alongside Qatar, France and Austria in the Handball World Championship, to be held next year in Croatia, Norway and Denmark. The draw, which took place last night (Wednesday) in the Croatian capital Zagreb, also

placed Germany, the Czech Republic, Poland and Switzerland in Group A. Denmark, Italy, Algeria and Tunisia were placed in Group B, and Group D included Hungary, the Netherlands, North Macedonia and Guinea.

Moreover, Group E included Norway, Brazil, Portugal and the US, while Group F had Sweden, Spain, Japan and Chile, and Group G featured Slovenia, Cuba, Iceland and Cape Verde. Group H includes Egypt, Croatia, Argentina and Bahrain. Kuwait qualified for the 29th IHF Men's World Championship, slated for January 14 to February 2, 2025, after coming in fourth place in the 21st Asian championship, held in Bahrain last January. — KUNA

he told Reuters. "We want to leave a legacy... we want to leave something the world can see."

The T20 showpiece had previously grown from 12 to 16 teams since its 2007 inception and the format's unpredictable nature has seen many strong outfits humbled. In the 2022 edition, South Africa, Sri Lanka and West Indies fell to Netherlands, Namibia and Scotland respectively, three blossoming sides capable of ruffling more feathers this time around despite operating with a fraction of the budget distributed by the ICC to test-playing nations. Despite beating eventual champions England during the group stage of the last World Cup, Ireland face an uphill Group A battle placed alongside India and Pakistan.

Afghanistan, whose talismanic captain Rashid Khan and predecessor Mohammad Nabi return from Indian Premier League duty, pose a constant white-ball threat and will fancy their chances of a top-two finish in Group C ahead of two-time victors West Indies. Bangladesh are no longer pushovers but the T20 World Cup has not been a happy hunting ground and a 24 percent winning record suggests it will be difficult to advance past South Africa and Sri Lanka in Group D. To have any hope of reaching the 'Super 8s', Oman would need to stun Australia or England in Group B. — Reuters

successful hosting of the first GCC youth games, noting that the games constituted a milestone in fostering the skills of a new generation of sportspeople in the region. On his part, Al-Budaiwi said the meeting coincided with the 43rd anniversary of the GCC which is a source of pride for all peoples of the GCC countries.

The GCC made headway in bringing the GCC peoples closer to each other and realizing their common aspirations in all areas, including the sports one, he said in a speech to the gathering. Under the instructions of the GCC leaders related to care for the youth, the GCC Secretariat will be celebrating the GCC Youth Day this year to show support to the youth and honor those who made outstanding achievements in sports, Al-Budaiwi disclosed.

He congratulated the State of Kuwait on the successful bid for hosting the 26th GCC Football Cup and congratulated QOC on its 45th anniversary. Led by Sheikh Fahad Nasser Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Kuwait delegation to the meeting includes secretary of KOC Hassan Al-Mesallam, assistant secretary Ali Al-Marri and director of KOC President's Office Hamad Al-Rashidi. — KUNA

Supersized WCup sets stage for T20 giant-slayers

DALLAS: A record 20 teams have converged upon the United States and West Indies ahead of the Twenty20 World Cup, offering plenty of chances for cricket's lesser lights to shine in the month-long spectacle which begins on Saturday.

Split across four groups, the sport's usual trophy contenders are joined by a dozen more hopefuls eager to make their presence felt, starting with Canada and co-hosts United States who both make their tournament debut in the opening match in Dallas.

Uganda will also feature for the first time and for veteran spinner Frank Nsubuga, 43, it marks the apex of a personal journey which began in 1997, a year before his country was granted membership to the International Cricket Council (ICC).

"I've been playing for 27 years for the national team, to see this dream is making me so, so happy,"

GCC Olympic committees meet in Qatar

DOHA: Heads of GCC Olympic committees convened their 36th meeting in Doha on Wednesday in the presence of GCC Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi and President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Nasser Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Opening the meeting, President of Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al-Thani said his country looks forward to reaching decisions through the meeting to meet the aspirations of the leaders and peoples of the GCC member states.

He appreciated the great efforts made by the GCC Olympic committees to advance the Olympic movement and promote sports in their respective countries.

Sheikh Joaan congratulated the UAE on the

French surfer Fierro rides the waves to victory in Tahiti

TEAHUPO'O: Vahine Fierro became the first French surfer to win the women's Tahiti Pro on the waves of Teahupo'o on Wednesday, two months before the Olympics surfing events are held at the French Pacific island.

Fierro, 24, was born on the neighbouring island of Huahine and with this success marked herself down as one of the favourites for Olympic gold.

"It's crazy. There was so much power in the waves, I'm speechless," she said after using her local knowledge to help beat Costa Rica's Brisa Hennessy in the final. Nearly 16,000 kilometres (9,950 miles) from the French capital, the French Pacific island of Tahiti was chosen to host the surfing events.

This week's event is officially a World Surf League event but it is really a chance to whet the appetite at

one of the world's top surfing venues. Teahupo'o is a small village in the southwest of the Tahiti peninsula, with a backdrop of misty mountains, where every year a few hundred residents welcome the elite surfers and their teams in their wooden bungalows.

Surfers from all over the world were won over by Teahupo'o in the early 2000s after the publication of a photo of American surfer Laird Hamilton spinning on his board inside what appeared to be a watery translucent tube. The Paris Olympics organisers were won over by the picture-postcard landscape in 2021 when Teahupo'o was designated an Olympic site, generating both enthusiasm and concern among the local population.

One source of friction was the installation of a new aluminium tower for judges in the lagoon, which is being used for the first time this week. Environmentalists were furious after a barge used by construction workers damaged coral that forms parts of the sea bed at the site, but the local organisers say the situation has calmed down. Women were banned from participating at Teahupo'o for 16 years until 2022 for safety reasons because of the razor-sharp coral in some parts of the seabed. — AFP



TEAHUPO'O: French surfer Vahine Fierro competes in the women's quarterfinal round of the Shiseido Tahiti Pro surfing competition against Australian surfer Molly Picklum (not pictured), in Teahupo'o, on the French Polynesian Island of Tahiti. — AFP

Jacobs to repeat emotional Olympic boost for Italy

OSLO: Marcell Jacobs insists that there is a glimmer of back-to-back Olympic 100m golds in what he dubbed an "open" season during which he has uprooted his family to base himself in the United States. But the Italian, a shock victor of the blue ribbon event at the COVID-delayed Tokyo Olympics in 2021, acknowledges that he has work to do under new coach Rana Reider.

Jacobs finished third in the 100m in Ostrava on Tuesday in 10.19 seconds, far from his European record of 9.80sec when winning Olympic gold, with the next step Oslo's Diamond League on Thursday. A debut run at Oslo's famed Bislett Stadium "is a really important test for me. I competed (in Ostrava) and it was my worst race ever", said Jacobs, with one ini-

tial eye on the June 7-12 European championships in Rome before the July 26-August 11 Paris Olympics.

"I need to compete tomorrow to put all the pieces together and arrive at the European champs in my city—I live in Rome—in my country, and I'm the European champion, in the best shape," he said. "Tomorrow is important to understand how the work has been." While many pundits have their money on American Noah Lyles, who won treble sprint gold at last year's world championships in Budapest, for victory over 100m in Paris, Jacobs insisted the field was wide open.

"This year is really open, so I have my opportunity to arrive there in my best shape and try to win again," he said. The victory in Tokyo, Jacobs added, had been a life-changing moment not only for himself, but also the wider Italian population. It was something he wants to try to repeat. "It was incredible because for Italy no one made a final in the 100m. Then I arrived in the final and I won the race. For Italy it was an incredible moment and for me too, of course," he said. "And then after six days we won the relay too, so for the Italian people it was incredible." — AFP



OSTRAVA: Italy's Lamont Marcell Jacobs (C), Canada's Andre De Grasse (L) and Jamaica's Rylem Forde compete in the Men's 100m event at the IAAF 2024 Golden Spike Athletics Meeting in Ostrava, Czech Republic. — AFP

Olympiakos beat Fiorentina in extra time to win Europa Conference League

El Kaabi strikes late to give Olympiakos league glory

ATHENS: Olympiakos became the first Greek club ever to win a European title after a 1-0 extra time defeat of Fiorentina in the Europa Conference League final on Wednesday. Moroccan striker Ayoub El Kaabi scored the winning goal in the 116th minute that allowed Jose Luis Mendilibar's side to make history in the home of local rivals AEK Athens.

Prior to Olympiakos' success, Panathinaikos were the only club from Greece to make a European final when they lost to a Johan Cruyff-inspired Ajax in the 1971 European Cup decider. "I'm really happy. The team has made history. Mendilibar has made us a strong team. He told us we have to play as a family," said midfielder Santiago Hezze.

Mendilibar, 63, became the Greek side's third manager of the season when he took over the reins in February and he now has back-to-back European trophies after winning the Europa League with Sevilla last year. Both sides started with great intensity as Daniel Podence forced a fine save from Fiorentina goalkeeper Pietro Terracciano, before Andrea Belotti missed his kick when presented with a good opportunity at the other end.

Fiorentina briefly thought they had taken the lead after nine minutes but Nikola Mladenovic was immediately flagged for offside when he turned home a cross past Olympiakos' Konstantinos Tzolakis. Greek goalie Tzolakis made a fine save at the feet of Giacomo Bonaventura soon after and Nicolas Gonzalez later completely mistimed his volley when well positioned as Fiorentina had the better of the first-half chances.

Sights on goal dried up in the second half, though Tzolakis did come to Olympiakos' rescue again on 69 minutes when he adjusted well to leap backwards and palm away Christian Kouame's scuffed, bouncing effort. Olympiakos veteran Vicente Iborra nearly broke the deadlock with a header from a free-kick that flew just wide of the Fiorentina



ATHENS: Olympiakos' Greek midfielder #07 Konstantinos Fortounis (C) and players celebrate with the trophy after winning the UEFA Europa Conference League final football match between Olympiakos and Fiorentina at the AEK Arena in Athens. — AFP

goal in the last 10 minutes. But this was the last big chance of regulation time as the match ebbed its way inevitably to extra time.

Party in Athens

Olympiakos appealed vainly for a penalty four minutes into extra time, but the defender's arm was adjudged to be in a natural position when Stevan Jovetic's cross struck it just inside the box. Ex-Fiorentina icon Jovetic, introduced from the Olympiakos bench, forced a good save from Terracciano with a

curling 20-yard strike one minute later as the match seemed to spark back to life. However, the game then tightened up again as neither team appeared to want to take a risk that might cost them the tie.

Penalties seemed certain until the 116th minute when El Kaabi stooped to head home Hezze's cross for his 16th goal in European competition this season. The roar that greeted the validation of El Kaabi's goal, following a lengthy VAR check, in the 120th minute from the majority Greek fans in Athens showed what the occasion meant to the club.

"Amazing. For Olympiakos and me. Really proud of my guys. We did great all year and deserved it," Jovetic said to TNT Sports. The Montenegrin attacker added that the party tonight in Olympiakos' hometown of Athens "will be amazing".

For Fiorentina, it meant defeat in consecutive Europa Conference League finals following a 2-1 loss to West Ham in 2023 after Jarrod Bowen's 90-minute winner. "I have to compliment Fiorentina, two years in a row. A shame for them," added Jovetic, who played for the Tuscan side from 2008-2013. — AFP



The winners, Al Ahmadi team.



Group photo

Choose league sets high standard for future seasons

KUWAIT: The Choose Kuwait Female League (CKFL) marked a significant milestone in the history of Kuwaiti sports, with its season which commenced on May 3. The league featured six competitive female teams, each managed by a dedicated manager and coach, exemplifying the spirit of sportsmanship and teamwork.

Over the course of one month, the league captivated fans with its high level of competition. The teams battled fiercely in a points-based system, where only the top four teams could advance to the semi-finals. The semi-finals were played in a thrilling home-and-away format, ensuring that the best of the



Rising Star Kenzy Ayman

best would emerge to compete for the championship. The semi-finals culminated in a dramatic showdown, with team Al-Ahmadi and Al-Assima emerging victorious and earning their spots in the final. Al-Ahmadi was able to win over Al-Assima with a



Best Captain of the season Seham Behbehani

decisive 2-0 victory, securing the Season 1 trophy as the league's first champions. Team Haido was able to clinch third place, while Team Oud secured a respectable fourth place finish.

The success of the league has not only provided a



Best Player of the season Sherifa Alghanim

platform for showcasing the talents of Kuwaiti female athletes but has also inspired a new generation of girls to pursue their dreams in sports. An awards ceremony that was hosted by Kuwait Technical College on May 29 crowned the season's achievements, recognizing individual excellence alongside team success. Sara Gago of Al-Ahmadi was honored as the Best Manager, while Amer Alsuwait from Al-Assima earned the Best Coach award. The Best Goalkeeper accolade went to Hadeel Koteich from Al-Ahmadi, reflecting her crucial role in their victory. The Rising Star award was presented to Kenzy Ayman from Al-Assima, highlighting her exceptional potential and impact on the field. The Best Captain was awarded to Seham Behbehani from Team Oud celebrating her exemplary leadership.

Sherifa Alghanim from Al-Assima was named the Best Player of the season, a testament to her outstanding performance leadership and sportsmanship on and off the field. The "Choose Kuwait Female League" has set a high standard for future seasons, promising even more excitement and opportunities for female athletes in Kuwait. As we celebrate the achievements of this season, we look forward to the continued growth and development of women's sports in our country.



The Golden Boot award winner Aina Baddar



Best Goalkeeper Hadeel Koteich