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2024 could be hottest year ever

June breaks heat record • Kuwait weekend heat to exceed 50C • Ocean temps hit new highs

Amir receives Iraqi Interior Minister



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives on Monday at Bayan Palace Iraqi Interior Minister Lt Gen Abdulamir Al-Shammari and an accompanying delegation on his official visit to the country. — KUNA

KUWAIT/BRUSSELS: Last month was the hottest June on record, the EU's climate change monitoring service said on Monday, continuing a streak of exceptional temperatures that some scientists said puts 2024 on track to be the world's hottest recorded year. Every month since June 2023 – 13 months in a row – has ranked as the planet's hottest since records began, compared with the corresponding month in previous years, the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said in a monthly bulletin.

The latest data suggest 2024 could outrank 2023 as the hottest year since records began after human-caused climate change and the El Nino natural weather phenomenon both pushed temperatures to record highs in the year so far, some scientists said. "I now estimate that there is an approximately 95 percent chance that 2024 beats 2023 to be the warmest year since global surface temperature records began in the mid-1800s," said Zeke Hausfather, a research scientist at US non-profit Berkeley Earth.

Kuwait will be affected by a heatwave during the weekend, as temperatures are expected to exceed 50 degrees Celsius in some areas, the meteorological department said on Monday. Kuwait Meteorological

Center Director General Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi said in a statement to KUNA that the weather will be hot on Thursday, while on Friday, the country will be affected by heat amid unsteady northwesterly winds accompanied by dust that would affect vision in open areas.

The changed climate has already unleashed disastrous consequences around the world in 2024. More than 1,000 people died in fierce heat during the hajj pilgrimage last month. Heat deaths were recorded in New Delhi, which endured an unprecedentedly long heatwave, and amongst tourists in Greece.

Friederike Otto, a climate scientist at Imperial College London's Grantham Institute, said there was a "high chance" 2024 would rank as the hottest year on record. "El Nino is a naturally occurring phenomenon that will always come and go. We can't stop El Nino, but we can stop burning oil, gas, and coal," she said.

The natural El Nino phenomenon, which warms the surface waters in the eastern Pacific Ocean, tends to raise global average temperatures. That effect subsided in recent months, with the world now in neutral conditions before cooler La Nina conditions are expected to form later this year. C3S' dataset goes back to 1940, which the scientists

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NEWS IN BRIEF

MoH protects patient privacy

KUWAIT: The health ministry affirmed that any type of photography or video recording not within the boundaries of the law is a violation of patient privacy. In a press statement Monday, the ministry said everyone should respect patients' privacy, stressing that protecting medical data is one of its most important priorities. Referring to article 21 of law 70/2020, the ministry indicated it is prohibited for third parties to photograph or video patients or practitioners while they are in a health facility unless they obtain prior written approval from the concerned parties or the facility's management. The same article allows professionals to perform any type of recording for the purpose of education, documentation, research and more after obtaining written consent from the patient, without revealing the patient's personal information and identity. The ministry urged citizens, residents and media professionals to cooperate and adhere to these legislations. — KUNA

Former lawmaker freed on bail

KUWAIT: The court of appeals freed former MP Hamad Al-Alyan on a KD 2,000 bail until the date of the verdict. The lower court had sentenced Alyan to two years in jail for challenging the powers of HH the Amir. But the appeals court refused to release former candidate Musaed Al-Qraifa, who is serving a four-year jail term for challenging the powers of HH the Amir. Meanwhile, the criminal court ordered the detention of former MP Anwar Al-Fiker in a second lawsuit against him brought by the government for challenging the rights of HH the Amir. Fiker was detained briefly for a week in May in the first case. The criminal court last week sentenced former MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei to four years in jail for also challenging the powers of HH the Amir and interfering in the state's affairs. A fifth ex-MP, Abdullah Fahhad, was last month sentenced to six months in jail for undermining the judiciary during a television interview.

Palestinians flee as Zionist forces storm Gaza City

GAZA: Palestinians on Monday fled heavy battles in Gaza City as the Zionist military expanded an evacuation order nine months into its war with Hamas fighters. While fighting raged, Hamas and the Zionist entity staked their claims for truce talks as mediators Egypt and Qatar were due to host new meetings this week, according to officials. Zionist troops and tanks pushed into parts of Gaza City, in the besieged territory's north, and battled Palestinian militants.

Thousands were on the move again, according to the civil defense agency in the territory. Witnesses said messages on loudspeakers urged civilians to leave Gaza City's Daraj and Tuffah neighborhoods. The Zionist military called on Palestinians to leave Tel Al-Hawa, Sabra and Rimal in Gaza City's west, the army's Arabic-language spokesman Avichay Adraee said on social media, expanding its evacuation zone in the territory's biggest city with the third order in less than two weeks.

Hamas said the new Zionist offensive in Gaza City will not succeed in breaking them. "The arrogant enemy, which is practicing the ugliest forms of aggression and violations against unarmed civilians, with absolute

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GAZA: Children walk with a dog past destroyed buildings along a street in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on July 8, 2024. — AFP

Russia strikes kill 36 in Ukraine, gut children's hospital

KYIV: Russia rained missiles down on cities across Ukraine in broad daylight on Monday morning, killing at least 36 civilians and badly damaging Kyiv's main children's hospital in the deadliest air strike in months, officials said. Parents holding babies walked in the street outside the hospital, dazed and sobbing after the rare daylight aerial attack. Windows had been smashed and

panels ripped off and hundreds of Kyiv residents were helping to clear debris.

"It was scary. I couldn't breathe, I was trying to cover (my baby). I was trying to cover him with this cloth so that he could breathe," Svitlana Kravchenko, 33, told Reuters. Air defenses shot down 30 of 38 incoming missiles, the air force said. Fifty civilian buildings, including residential buildings, a business center and two medical facilities were damaged in Kyiv, the central cities of Kryvyi Rih and Dnipro and two eastern cities, the interior minister said.

An online video obtained by Reuters, the location of which was verified

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KYIV: Emergency and rescue personnel along with medics and others clear the rubble of the destroyed building of Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital following a Russian missile attack on July 8, 2024. — AFP

France in limbo after Macron poll gamble backfires

PARIS: France was faced with an unsettling political vacuum Monday after snap elections called by President Emmanuel Macron to reshape the political landscape failed to clear a path to a new government. The left-wing New Popular Front (NFP) won most seats in Sunday's second-round parliamentary vote, beating both Macron's centrists and Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally (RN).

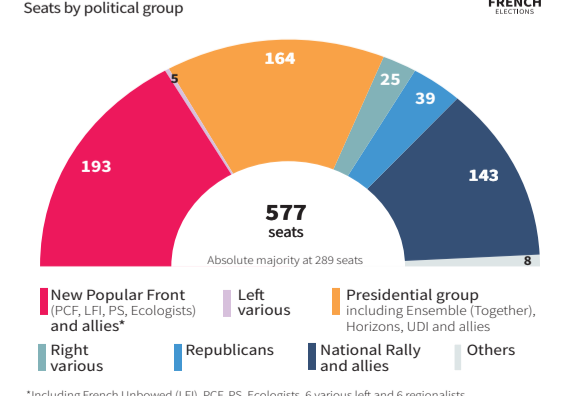
But no group wields an outright majority and no

obvious candidate for prime minister has emerged. Many in France were overjoyed by the outcome, and cheering crowds gathered in eastern Paris to celebrate Le Pen's defeat, but potentially divisive talks on forming a new government were just beginning, three weeks before Paris hosts the Olympics.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal visited the Elysee Palace to submit his resignation to Macron, but was asked to remain in power in a caretaker capacity to see out the Games — and reassure the international community and the markets that France still has a government. Macron's office said, after the meeting, that the president had thanked Attal for leading the centrist alliance in the European and legislative elections and asked him to stay "for the time being in order to ensure the stability of the country".

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The new French National Assembly



Local

Kuwait, EU explore opportunities, discuss visa, trade, ties and Gaza

EU synchronizes visa validity for GCC countries to 5 years

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: In an exclusive interview with Kuwait Times, the EU Special Representative for the Gulf region Luigi Di Maio revealed during his visit to Kuwait that he met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Al-Yahya, and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Sabah, to discuss enhancing the partnership between the EU and the GCC, particularly with Kuwait.

He added, "The visit aimed to strengthen collaboration between the EU and the GCC as a regional organization, while also exploring opportunities with individual GCC countries. Kuwait is recognized as a reliable and solid partner, one on whom we can depend on and with whom we are actively engaged at bilateral and multilateral levels."

Di Maio affirmed that Kuwait and the EU are addressing several critical issues, revealing "At the regional security level, a new structure for security dialogue with the GCC, including participation from Kuwaiti officials, has been established, where our senior officials are collaborating on various topics such as maritime security, cybersecurity, and counterterrorism, which are vital concerns we share".

He recalled the importance of the participation by the Kuwait Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs to the first-ever EU-GCC High-Level Forum on Regional Security and Cooperation, organized in Luxembourg on April 22nd, an informal meeting between EU and GCC foreign ministers, where they discussed important matters. Regarding the business relations, he indicated that both EU and Kuwait's business communities deserve more, stating "We hope the negotiation of the regional EU-GCC free trade agreement will conclude soon."

"However, it is crucial to explore and negotiate alternative formulas in complementarity, which we discussed extensively here in Kuwait, including not just the minister but other officials as well. Additionally, we recently decided to synchronize visa validity for all GCC countries to five years, a move in which Kuwait was a pioneer. Moving forward regarding visa liberalization, it will be up to the new European Commission and European Parliament to decide how to continue this process. I believe the people of Kuwait and the entire GCC deserve this achievement".

He pointed out that his meeting with Rabah Al-Rabah, Director General of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and with Sheikh Dr Mashaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority showed significant potential to connect further, noting that there are potential investments in construction, food security, and healthcare sectors. In addition to a strong opportunity to enhance business relations through a structured process aimed at removing obstacles along the trade path, noting "For the European Union, Kuwait is one of the most important trade partners in the region, and we aim to maintain and grow this relationship".

Di Maio contributed, "There is an interest from European companies and investors to collaborate with Kuwait, as Kuwait's extensive investment in projects across various sectors, including aviation, shipping, ports, and railways along the Arabian Peninsula, positions it as a crucial link between the West and the East. We view these projects as excellent opportunities for partnership, facilitating the transportation of goods. For instance, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor project, signed on the margins of the G20 in New Delhi, represents an



EU Special Representative for the Gulf region Luigi Di Maio speaks to Kuwait Times. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



EU Special Representative for the Gulf region Luigi Di Maio

alternative route for goods, energy, and data, contributing to a true diversification of trade routes".

Concerning the war in Gaza, the EU Special Representative for the Gulf Region stated that "I think that the number of casualties is unacceptable, we share the commitment to a two-state solution, as a structural solution for the crisis. We are very committed to the implementation of the latest resolution approved by the Security Council of the United Nations about a sustainable ceasefire and the protection of civilians. We both want to de-escalate the tensions at the border with Lebanon and in the region".

As for new collaboration between the EU and Kuwait, Di Maio said that he discussed during his visit a new project of collaboration with the Kuwait Diplomatic Institute to promote the training of young European and Kuwaiti diplomats, adding "This initiative is a partnership between the Diplomatic Institute of Kuwait and the College of Europe in Bruges, one of Europe's oldest institutions specializing in diplomacy, led by Rector Federica Mogherini. It builds on the first-ever project of common training for young diplomats from the GCC and the EU that took place in Bruges in May. It was the first step of what we were going to do, even bilaterally with Kuwait".



Kuwaiti writer Abdullah Al-Husseini

Kuwaiti writer wins Ghassan Kanafani award, 3rd edition

RAMALLAH: The Palestinian Ministry of Culture announced on Monday that Kuwaiti writer Abdullah Al-Husseini's book (baqi Al-Washim) "Tattoo Remains," published by Takween Publishing House, won the Ghassan Kanafani Prize for Arabic Fiction in its third edition. The award represents Palestine's appreciation for novels by Palestinian as well as Arab novelists, and it has been given despite the brutal ongoing genocide committed by (the Zionist) aggression against Palestinians, said Minister of Culture Imad Hamdan during a press conference held at the Forum Hall of the Yasser Arafat Museum in Ramallah.

He further explained that the Ministry established the award to honor creators who grasp the words that define the truth, reject forgery, and seek freedom and salvation. The judging committee for the prize was chaired by Moroccan critic and novelist Ahmad Al-Madani, with members including Jordanian novelist Samiha Khrais, Egyptian critic and academic Mohamed Elshahat, Palestinian writer Ziad Abu Laban, and critic Reyad Kamal.

The Ministry recently announced the novels that made it to the long list, including 14 novels by authors from 10 Arab countries. It then announced the novels that made it to the shortlist, selecting five novels from the initial 14, which are: '2067' by novelist Saad El-Qorshi from Egypt, 'A Necessary Pain' by novelist Abdullah Taih from Palestine, 'The Tattoo Remains' by novelist Abdullah Al-Husseini from Kuwait, 'Imam's Spring' by novelist Mohammed Saif Al-Rahbi from Oman, and 'Berltras' by novelist Nasr Sami from Tunisia.

The Ghassan Kanafani Award for Arabic Novel this year marks the 50th anniversary of the writer Ghassan Kanafani's martyrdom. This award is considered one of the highest honors granted by Palestine, symbolizing Ghassan Kanafani's significance in both Arab and Palestinian consciousness and recognizing his contributions to the Palestinian national movement and cultural resistance in support of Arab and Palestinian identity. — KUNA

SACGC, IE University embrace innovators

KUWAIT: The Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC), in collaboration with IE University from Spain, held a program on Sunday to embrace innovators in the medical field. Director General of SACGC, Nada Al-Daihani, said in a press statement that the program hosted more than 40 doctors, specialists, and activists in the medical field. The program, which concluded last Thursday and lasted for five days, is a comprehensive initiative designed to enable innovators, entrepreneurs, doctors, and healthcare workers to transition smoothly to the global industrial market. Al-Daihani added,

Al-Daihani expressed his pride in the cooperation between the center and the Spanish university, highlighting its pioneering and long-established reputation in the field of innovation and excellence. He pointed out that the university's specialized evaluation committee selected three participants, and they will be sent to the annual Innovators Day (IE Venture Day) in the Spanish capital, Madrid, on July 11, wishing them success in presenting their projects to special-

Textile art strengthens cultural ties between Kuwait and Peru

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: The Peruvian Embassy in Kuwait, in collaboration with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) and Al Sadu House, launched the Peruvian Textile Exhibition and Workshop on Sunday. Running until July 11, this event marks the first initiative following the bilateral cultural agreement signed between Kuwait and Peru in Nov 2023. In his opening speech, Ambassador of Peru to Kuwait, Carlos Velasco, expressed gratitude to everyone involved in bringing this project to light. He highlighted the event's importance in uniting weavers from Kuwait and Peru, encouraging shared creative discussions and enriching experiences.

The Peruvian master weavers, who traveled all the way from Cosco, will share their ancestral knowledge, experiences and techniques with their Kuwaiti counterparts in alpaca handweaving, spinning telar and vegetable dyeing. Similarly, he stressed the need for the expertise of Kuwaiti weavers to gain international recognition. We look forward to seeing the experience of Kuwaiti weavers reciprocated and reproduced in Peru in the near future, he remarked. We hope this intercultural activity will be the steppingstone for future cooperation in the years to come.

Speaking to Kuwait Times, the ambassador unveiled plans for future cultural cooperation with Kuwait, including a folk music event and a contemporary art exhibition scheduled for Nov 2024. Mohammad Al-Jassar, Secretary General of the NCCAL, told Kuwait Times this event is part of the NCCAL's summer festival. The most interesting aspect is that cultural awareness is not brought solely through lectures, but also through hands-on experiences, learning about the daily activities of another culture's textile craftsmanship, he said. Regarding the similarities between Sadu and Peruvian textiles, Jassar noted that while the patterns differ, both share the same concept and spirit. In both traditions, the elements of textile art are derived from the natural environments they interact with daily.



Ambassador of Peru to Kuwait Carlos Velasco



Ambassador of Peru Carlos Velasco along with secretary general of NCCAL Mohammad Al-Jassar tour the exhibition. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Key chain handcrafts



Handcrafts created from wool that's extracted from Lama animals.



One of the Peruvian weavers.



Weaving equipment for Peruvian textile.



Innovators program in the medical field. — KUNA photos



ists and investment entities specialized in this forum.

The selected participants are Engineer Sarah Abu Rjaib for her invention (Scans X), a portable medical device that uses deep learning and infrared technologies to provide a quick and accurate diagnosis of brain injuries and internal bleeding. The second selected participant is Engineer Mohammed Al Shamari, the inventor of smart glasses for deaf students.

These glasses convert the teacher's voice into an instant translation displayed on the lenses using augmented reality technology, supporting 120 languages.

The third selected participant is Dr Nahla Al-Mai'a, about her project (Spray), which is a portable device for the immediate detection of radioactive contamination. The Dean of the School of Science and Technology at IE University, Ikhlak Sidhu, ex-

pressed his great admiration for the level of ideas and innovations of the participating youth and doctors. Sidhu added that the participants will be able to identify problems, propose real and practical solutions, build profitable business plans around their solutions, design products and prototypes, conduct testing, communicate effectively, and present their solutions to potential investors. — KUNA

Local

Crown Prince, PM receive Kuwait and Iraq ministers



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on Monday received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince also received First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah and Iraqi Minister of Interior Lieutenant General Abdulmir Kamel Al-Shammari and his accom-

panying delegation on his official visit to the country. Senior state officials attended the meeting.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received Interior Minister of Iraq Lieutenant General Abdulmir Kamel Al-Shammari and the accompanying delegation. First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, Minister of Defense Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah, head of



the Prime Minister's Diwan Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel, and Interior Undersecretary Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah attended the reception.

Also, Kuwait's Interior and Defense Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah held talks on Monday with his Iraqi counterpart Abdulmir Al-Shammari focusing on the expansion of security cooperation between the two neighbors. Ahead of an international gathering

later this year in the Iraqi capital focusing on the fight against narcotics, the Kuwaiti interior minister said that his Iraqi counterpart had extended an invitation to him to participate in the event, said an interior ministry statement. Greater security cooperation mainly entails the fight against human smuggling and efforts to prevent encroachment on the two countries' respective lands, added the statement. — KUNA

Zain fosters disability inclusion

Company held 'Tech for All' workshop on smartphone accessibility tools



Group photo of the participants.

KUWAIT: Zain organized a workshop titled Tech for All at its headquarters in Shuwaikh to introduce people with disabilities to smartphone accessibility features and tools. This initiative aligns with the company's efforts to promote disability inclusion in the community. The initiative came under the umbrella of WE ABLE - Zain's disability inclusion program that aims to present highly impactful Diversity and Inclusion initiatives, increase the employment of people with disabilities in its workforce, and identify and implement assistive technologies that enable employees with disabilities to independently complete their tasks.

Zain coordinated with the Public Authority for

Disability Affairs, Al Kharafi Special Needs Activity Center, and Al Tomooh Sports Club to invite members of the disability community to the workshop. Participants were welcomed at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC), where the workshop was supervised by the Customer Care Division's training team. During the workshop, participants were introduced to various accessibility features and tools available on iOS and Android devices, focusing on those designed for people with visual, hearing, and motor impairments. Each feature was explained in detail, followed by a hands-on session to customize and activate the tools on each participant's smartphone based on their unique needs.



Initiative aimed at fostering disability inclusion.

At the end of the session, Zain listened to feedback and suggestions from participants to further enhance the service experience for customers with special needs. This effort reflects the company's commitment to including people with disabilities in the community, helping them achieve their aspirations, and providing them with the best tailored services. As a leading digital service provider, Zain believes it has a significant role in sharing technology experiences and knowledge with everyone, especially people with disabilities. The company seeks to add value by enhancing the customer experience for people with disabilities, helping them make the most of their smart devices.



Workshop covered smartphone accessibility features.

Kuwait condemns Zionist attack on UNRWA school

KUWAIT: Kuwait has condemned Zionist attack on the UN's Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) School in Nuseirat camp, central Gaza Strip, which resulted in the deaths of many Palestinians. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirmed that the ongoing attacks on UN-affiliated buildings are violations of UN and Security Council resolutions. The Ministry called on the International Community and Security Council to pressure the Zionist occupation to end the attacks on Palestine, stressing the need to hold them accountable for their crimes and protect Palestinians.

Also, the Arab Parliament strongly condemned the shelling of UNRWA-affiliated Al-Jaouni School, which houses thousands of displaced people in Al-Nuseirat camp in central Gaza, killing and wounding dozens. In a statement, the parliament denounced the occupation's continued targeting of schools and centers for displaced people, considering this targeting a continuation of the genocide

and ethnic cleansing against the Palestinians and a blatant challenge to all international resolutions and laws, especially international humanitarian law.

It called on the international community, the UN Security Council, and influential countries to pressure the Zionist occupation to stop the genocide and brutal massacres it is committing against Palestinian civilians. The parliament called for holding Zionist officials accountable for these massacres as war criminals, stressing at the same time the importance of quickly implementing the entry of humanitarian and medical aid to the Gaza Strip to reduce famine and the tragic conditions there.

Meanwhile, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) condemned the continuous genocidal occupation attacks in Gaza. In a statement, the organization denounced Zionist attacks on the UNRWA-affiliated school. These continuous attacks, the Organization stated, are violations of international humanitarian law, the Geneva Conventions, and the orders issued by the International Court of Justice. The Zionist occupation must be investigated, held accountable, and prosecuted for their war crimes in occupied Palestine, targeting United Nations-affiliated organizations, institutions, and employees in the medical and humanitarian sectors, added the organization.

Not only does the occupation target UN institutions and affiliates, the organization explained, but it also deliberately targets displaced Palestinian civil-



GAZA: A father mourns by the body of his son who was killed in the aftermath of overnight Zionist bombardment west of Gaza City. — AFP

ians, hospitals, schools, and places of worship - areas that house thousands of people. The Organization called for humanitarian and relief aid to enter Gaza while calling international institutions and organizations to hold Zionists accountable for their aggression towards Palestinians. Zionists targeted the UNRWA-affiliated Al-Jaouni School, which sheltered displaced people in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, resulting in the deaths of 16 Palestinians and the injuries of 50 others. — KUNA

Kuwait mourns Sheikh Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah

KUWAIT: The Amiri Diwan on Sunday mourned the demise of Sheikh Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah who passed away at the age of 78. He was governor of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate and the son of late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and brother of late Amir Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. He was laid to rest after maghreb prayers on Monday. — KUNA



AYCCC selects Kuwaiti as a council member

KUWAIT: The Arab Youth Council for Climate Change (AYCCC) has selected Maryam Al-Saad, Director General of the Kuwaiti Climate Organization, as a member of the council in recognition of Kuwait's efforts in this field and its quest to preserve the climate and the environment. Al-Saad said in a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Monday that her selection to represent Kuwaiti youth is a great honor.

She stated that the Climate Organization is a Kuwaiti non-profit organization established in 2021 and aims to spread awareness about climate change and sustainability in Kuwait through education and research. She pointed to the organization's efforts to develop environmental education in the country and promote the concepts of environmental sustainability in various fields. The Arab Youth Council for Climate Change is a youth-led non-profit initiative operating under the umbrella of the Arab Youth Center under the patronage of Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan in the United Arab Emirates. It was established in 2021. — KUNA



Maryam Al-Saad

UAE sends tons of aid to Gaza

ABU DHABI: The UAE announced on Monday the sailing of the fourth Emirati aid ship carrying 5,340 tons of humanitarian supplies destined for Al-Arish in Egypt as part of the Al-Fares Al-Shahm 3 operation to support Palestinians. The Emirates News Agency (WAM) said the ship, which departed from the port of Fujairah, carries 4,750 tons of food supplies and 590 tons of shelter materials. The statement added that the Red Crescent Society of the UAE, Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation, and Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan Foundation con-

tributed to securing the ship's cargo of humanitarian aid.

The UAE has contributed to several initiatives under the Al-Fares Al-Shahm 3 operation, including the establishment of two field hospitals - the first inside Gaza and the second a floating hospital in Al-Arish - as well as the establishment of five automated bakeries. Additionally, flour has been provided to 8 existing bakeries in Gaza, and 6 desalination stations producing 1.2 million gallons daily have been set up, benefiting over 600,000 residents who receive the water pumped into Gaza. Moreover, the Emirati operation "Tayoor Al-Khair" was launched by the UAE to drop humanitarian aid to isolated areas in Gaza, with a total of 3,382 tons of relief and humanitarian aid dropped. — KUNA



In my view

Aversive racism:
European and
US experience

Dr Khalid A Al-Saleh

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Aversive racism is a term that indicates a hidden form of racism and discrimination. This type of racism appears subconsciously in people who pretend to be tolerant. This term appeared first in 1986, following a field survey by two American researchers. Later, this term was published in US, and the focus on this type of subconscious intolerance increased when an article about it was published in the widely circulated New York Times by Nicholas Kristof on October 4th, 2008.

Americans became interested in this term because it truly reflects their wish to get rid of all types of racism whose hidden roots still exist, and it is a type of racism that did not politically affect the description of racial tolerance US became known for. The main evidence is when Barack Obama (a US citizen of African origin) won the 44th President of US for two consecutive terms (from 2009 to 2017). He received 52.9 percent of the votes in the first term and 50.6 percent in the second term.

Meanwhile, open racism is on the rise in Europe, led by Britain, as its people became irritated when a British, not an immigrant, of Asian origin (Rishi Sunak) took over as Prime Minister on October 25, 2022, replacing Liz Truss as head of the Conservative Party. Although Sunak ruled for two years and called for early elections, it did not serve him well with the British voters, who are clouded with extremism and racism. Most of these voters are not happy with a leader of Asian descent or other minorities.

The collective punishment against the Conservative Party was because the party allowed "an Asian" to become the Prime Minister. The Conservative Party suffered a historic loss (131 seats out of 650), while Labor secured 409 seats. The UK election reflects the racism that is latent in Northern Europe, which contributes much to their isolation in terms of leadership in the global arena. The biggest success the United States has made globally is its commitment to equality and the rule of law.

By Esraa Alharran

KUWAIT: Kuwait is eager to step into the world of sustainable living. After the burning of oil wells and the wave of pollution caused by the use of chemicals affecting the environment, the world is suffering from the aftereffects of this environmental disaster. "The Environment Public Authority has issued several laws related to environmental sustainability in cooperation with concerned government agencies to achieve a clean environment free of pollution," former Head of the Projects and Construction Department in the Environment Public Authority, Engineer Nasima Al-Kandari, told the Kuwait Times.

Al-Kandari noted that "environmental sustainability is achieved through practices such as rainwater harvesting, organic waste recycling, solar energy, community gardens, recycling programs, and waste reduction using recyclable containers, as well as reducing emissions and engine exhaust, limiting or eliminating plastic use, using sustainable transportation, reusing paper, and protecting plants and animals from air pollution."

"Environmental sustainability is a critical concept to ensure the continuity of a healthy and sustainable life on Earth. Achieving this requires collective cooperation and action to conserve natural resources and reduce harmful environmental impacts by adopting sustainable con-

sumption behaviors and raising public awareness about the importance of environmental protection. We can build a better future for ourselves and future generations," she added.

Dr. Manal Al-Kandari, Research Scientist at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, mentioned that "the coral islands in Kuwait, like Qaruh, Kubbar, and Umm Al-Maradim, are a healthy habitat for sea animals and corals. The newly discovered species that were found and the marine biodiversity in a region are an indication of the region's healthy environment," Dr. Al-Kandari said. She also explained that "by keeping a healthy and clean marine life, we are keeping a healthy lifecycle, as sea creatures are important food sources for different birds and other sea animals."

As for education, Dalal Al-Masoud, the private education officer from the Ministry of Education, said that "the Ministry is putting policies in place to support green education. The Ministry is raising awareness in schools by including sustainability in the curriculum and doing workshops for both students and teachers."

According to The Business Year, Kuwait has improved significantly in water treatment. The Umm Al-Hayman Plant is a water treatment facility, while the Sulabiya Wastewater Treatment Facility is another major project. It supplies non-potable water for industrial and agricultural use as well as recharging



Dalal Al-Masoud



Dr Manal Al-Kandari

aquifers. With these initiatives, Kuwait is emphasizing its desire to stop wasting water resources so that they can be fully utilized.

In the energy sector, the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research website stated that Kuwait built and is working on the Shagaya Concentrated Solar Power Project, which makes up the ambitious master plan to use solar power, wind farms, and photovoltaic plants for generating electricity. Lastly, one of the environmental projects in Kuwait is Sabah Al-Ahmad Sea City. The planting of Grey Mangrove, the Coral Garden, and the Sea-grass Meadows are some of the projects directly related to marine life in Kuwait.



Participants at Green Development Forum of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) pose for a group photo. — KUNA photos

Kuwait showcases
Al-Shagaya project

KUWAIT: Kuwait Ambassador to China Jassem Al-Najem said on Monday that his country was extremely keen on protecting the environment as it developed the Al-Shagaya station project for photovoltaic energy that has less negative effect on the ecosystem in comparison to traditional stations. This came in a statement to KUNA on the sidelines of the Green Development Forum of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) coun-

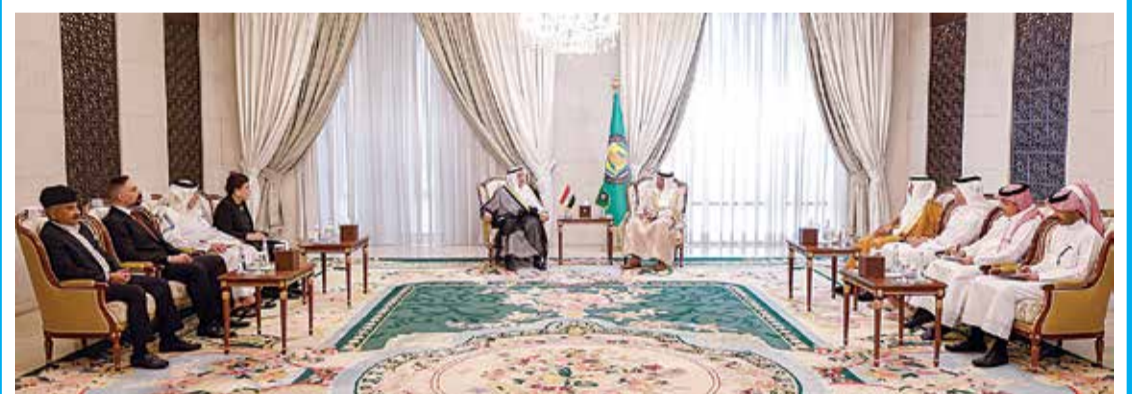
tries held in the city of Qingdao, east of China's Shandong Province.

Ambassador Al-Najem said that the forum aimed to exchange experiences and enhance cooperation among member states to confront the challenges of climate change and enhance sustainable development. During their participation in the forum, Kuwait Environment Public Authority engineers Fadhila Al-Marzouq and Hajeer Al-Aiban showcased the Al-Shagaya station project. The Green Development Forum aims to boost the sustainable economic and social development of all countries and promote harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. — KUNA



Kuwait Ambassador to China Jassem Al-Najem, Environment Public Authority engineers Fadhila Al-Marzouq and Hajeer Al-Aiban take a group photo.

GCC values Iraq stability



GCC secretary general Jassem Al-Budaiwi receives a delegation from Iraq's parliament. — KUNA photos

RIYADH: The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) views the stability of Iraq as crucial and intertwined with that of member states, the bloc's chief, Jassem Al-Budaiwi, said on Sunday, citing the matter as a perennial concern. Holding talks with a visiting delegation of Iraqi lawmakers, the GCC secretary general spoke of the camaraderie between

Gulf Arab states and Baghdad, underscoring that the six-member bloc backs all measures taken to keep Iraq's stability and security intact, according to a bloc statement. Current happenings around the region and beyond were also among the matters discussed between the two sides, according to the statement. — KUNA

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'Gaza is not alone':
Moroccans chant

Philippines, Japan sign key defense pact

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WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden waves from the Truman Balcony of the White House as he arrives to watch the Independence Day fireworks display in Washington, DC, on July 4, 2024. — AFP

Biden throws down gauntlet to Democrats

US president tells Hill Democrats he's not backing down on re-election bid

WASHINGTON: Joe Biden urged Democratic lawmakers Monday to either back his reelection campaign or challenge him at the party convention next month as the US president's reelection bid entered a critical week.

The 81-year-old doubled down on his defiance of calls to step aside, after a disastrous debate against Republican rival Donald Trump last month turbocharged fears that he is too old to serve a second term. Biden will be under extra scrutiny this week as he hosts a summit of NATO leaders in Washington, with many allies seeking reassurance amid polls forecasting that the isolationist Trump will win in November.

Biden called in to MSNBC's "Morning Joe" television program to say that he was "confident" the "average voter out there still wanted Joe Biden." Sounding angry in the telephone interview, Biden said he was "getting so frustrated by the elites ... in the party." "Any of these guys that don't think I should run - run against me, announce for president, challenge me at the convention," he added.

In a blitz of action to start the week, Biden also penned a lengthy letter to

Democratic Party lawmakers that saying "I decline" to stand down. "I am firmly committed to staying in the race," Biden wrote. "The question of how to move forward has been well-aired for over a week now. And it's time for it to end."

NATO summit

Biden must overcome concerns sparked by the debate, during which repeatedly lost his train of thought, mangled his syntax and spoke with a raspy voice. He has blamed jetlag and a cold. But on Sunday four senior congressmen said on a call with party lawmakers that it was time for Biden to bow out, according to US media.

Democrats this week return from a brief recess to Capitol Hill under pressure to either fall in line behind the president or urge him to step aside. Tuesday, when the NATO summit begins, could prove a turning point: party lawmakers are expected to hold their regular caucus meeting, which could coalesce any bid to force him out.

Biden's performance at the summit marking the 75th anniversary of the NATO alliance will also be closely watched. He is due to attend several

meetings and give his first press conference since the debate debacle. Many European countries are fearful of a return of Trump, as the 78-year-old has long criticized the defense alliance, voiced admiration for Russian strongman Vladimir Putin, and insisted he could bring about a quick end to the war in Ukraine.

Busy schedule

After a barnstorming day of campaign events in swing state Pennsylvania on Sunday, Biden has no public events scheduled for Monday, which he is expected to spend preparing for the summit. First Lady Jill Biden, a fierce defender of the president, is scheduled to campaign for him instead in Georgia, Florida and North Carolina.

On Friday, the president picks up the campaign trail once more, heading for the battleground state of Michigan, before going to his beachside home in Rehoboth, Delaware. With election day just four months away and the party convention in mid-August, the clock is ticking on any move to replace Biden as the nominee.

Biden and his team appear deter-

mined to dig in for the siege, with the campaign unveiling an intense schedule for later in July, including an avalanche of TV spots and trips to key states.

The age factor

A Reuters/Ipsos poll last week found that one in three registered Democratic voters believed that Biden should quit the race, with 59 percent of respondents in the president's party saying he is too old to work in government. However, that poll also found that none of his possible replacements fared better in a matchup against Trump. The poll found Biden and Trump tied at 40 percent each.

Biden's troubles appear to be increasing the number of races Democrats need to worry about in November. Internal party polling shows that New Mexico and Virginia became more competitive following the debate, Reuters quoted a source familiar with the findings, and the nonpartisan Center for Politics at the University of Virginia last week shifted its ratings on the states of Michigan and Minnesota to make each slightly more favorable for Republicans. Together, those states will host a half-dozen of the most competitive House races. — Agencies

Syrians in Turkey fear for future after plans for Erdogan-Assad talks

ISTANBUL: President Tayyip Erdogan's sudden plan to invite his estranged Syrian counterpart Bashar Al-Assad for talks has raised fears among Syrians in Turkey of being sent back, a week after a spate of anti-migrant violence already left them shaken. Ankara severed ties with Damascus in 2011 after Syria's civil war began and Turkish forces backed anti-Assad forces in the north. But in the last two weeks Erdogan has stressed the need for reconciliation with Turkey's neighbor.

On Sunday he was quoted as saying he would invite Assad "any time" to work on returning to past relations with Syria, which has been severed by the war that drew in the US, Russia, Turkey and several armed groups. "There are fears that Erdogan will make a deal with Assad and send the Syrians back" to Damascus-held parts of the country, said Samir Alabdullah, of the non-profit Harmoon Centre for Contemporary Studies in Istanbul. "There are also those who fear they will be stripped of their Turkish citizenship," he said of some of Turkey's more than three million Syrian war migrants.

Turkey hosts more Syrian refugees than any other nation. The number of Syrian arrivals has worried Turks, who wonder if they will ever return home, prompting Erdogan to promise talks and an eventual "honorable" voluntary return for most.

Ahmad, 19, a Syrian student in Istanbul's Eyupsultan district, said his family is considering selling their properties in Turkey due to the anti-immigrant unrest. "They are scared even though they have Turkish citizenship," he said, declining to give a surname for security reasons.

In Istanbul's densely populated Sultanbeyli district, which houses many Syrian refugees, residents said attackers broke the windows of a Syrian-owned barber shop and chanted anti-immigrant slogans. A Syrian mother said her son, 8, now "wants to stay indoors because he believes people might do us harm". Erdogan said public order is a red line for the country.

Syria has after any normalization in ties can only come after Turkey agrees to pull out thousands of troops from the rebel-held areas - a precondition Ankara has called unacceptable, citing security concerns over Syrian Kurdish militants. The Syrian Network for Human Rights, a UK-based advocacy group, said on Friday Syria is not safe for the return of millions of refugees from Turkey.

Last week, Erdogan - who had somewhat hardened his stance on migrants ahead of presidential elections last year - has said that 670,000 people have returned to settlements in northern Syria and another one million people are expected to return. — Reuters

Monsoon storms kill 12 in India, disrupt transport

MUMBAI: Intense monsoon storms battered India on Monday, flooding parts of the financial capital Mumbai, while lightning in the eastern state of Bihar killed at least 10 people, government officials said.

Mumbai's city council ordered schools and colleges shut Monday as a precautionary measure, reporting that the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had warned of "heavy to very heavy rainfall".

Just ahead of the morning rush hour, more than 300 mm (11.8 inches) of rain lashed the city of 12 million in the six hours through 7:00 am (1:30 am GMT), civic officials said in a statement. More heavy showers were forecast, accompanying a high tide of 4.40 meters (14 ft) in the coastal city. "There is heavy traffic on the roads and rail lines too have been affected," Eknath Shinde, chief minister of Maharashtra, the western state whose capital is Mumbai, said on X, urging people to stay indoors.

Mumbai commuters waded through knee-deep water that partially submerged vehicles in many areas, while traffic clogged the city's Eastern and Western Express highways. Water on the tracks forced railway authorities to cancel some long-distance trains. Television images showed some suburban passenger trains halted on inundated lines and some commuters walking on tracks to reach their destination. "Mumbai and rain-induced flooding is an annual occurrence. My BMW car is stuck in the floodwater," Anil Bore told ANI news agency, in which Reuters has a minority stake.

Widespread flooding

In Bihar state in the east, separate cases of lightning strikes killed 12 people, taking the toll from such inci-



MUMBAI: People enjoy rain showers near the sea front in Mumbai on July 8, 2024. — AFP

dents to 20 since the start of July, a state government official said. More than 2 million people have also been affected by rivers flooding in northeastern Assam, where the Kaziranga National Park, home to the rare one-horned rhinoceros, was inundated. Six of the animals drowned, authorities said on Sunday. Assam authorities said 66 people have died in floods and rain-related incidents since May. Flooding has also affected 31 villages in Uttar Pradesh state on the Nepal border, the state government said.

Monsoon rains across South Asia from June to September offer respite from the summer heat and are crucial to replenishing water supplies, but also bring widespread death and destruction. The number of fatal floods and landslides has increased in recent years, however, and experts say climate change is exacerbating the problem.

Torrential rains have triggered floods and landslides in Nepal, where at least 11 people were killed. In Ban-

gladesh, more than two million people were affected by the third wave of flooding since May, with 300,000 stranded in the north, officials from the disaster management ministry said.

With heavy rain forecast in coming days, the situation could deteriorate, officials added. "We're definitely seeing more rain this year. It's making it tough for people, especially in low-lying areas, to secure their belongings and reach shelters in time," said Liakath Ali, head of climate change program at development agency BRAC. Just 10 days after record-breaking showers in New Delhi caused the fatal collapse of an airport roof, Monday's Mumbai rains also disrupted air travel. Airport authorities had to suspend runway operations for more than an hour from 2:22 am, airport sources said. More than 430 flights were delayed and 49 cancelled. Flightradar24, a website that tracks flight data, showed. Airlines IndiGo, SpiceJet and Air India were among those reporting disruptions. — Agencies

International

Philippines, Japan sign key defense pact

Accord to facilitate exchange of defense personnel for training, operations

MANILA: The Philippines and Japan signed a key defense pact on Monday that will allow the deployment of troops on each other's territory, as they boost ties in the face of China's growing assertiveness. The Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) was finalized in Manila, where Japanese Defense Minister Minoru Kihara and Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa held talks with their Philippine counterparts Gilberto Teodoro and Enrique Manalo.

The accord, which Tokyo and Manila began negotiating in November, provides the legal framework for Japan and the Philippines to send defense personnel to each other's territory for training and other operations.

Teodoro and Kamikawa signed the agreement at the presidential palace. It will take effect once ratified by lawmakers in both countries. The signing was "another milestone in our shared endeavor to ensure a rules-based international order, to ensure peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific and particularly in our region", Teodoro said.

The Philippines and Japan are long-time allies of the United States, which has been strengthening its alliances from Canberra to Tokyo to counter China's growing military might and influence in the region. Chinese officials have accused the United States of trying to create an Asia-Pacific version of NATO.

The signing of the RAA comes as China's saber-rattling towards Taiwan and over the South China Sea fuels fears of a potential conflict that could drag in the United States. There have been escalating confrontations at sea between Chinese and Philippine ships as Beijing steps up efforts to push its claims to nearly all of the strategic

South China Sea.

The most serious happened on June 17 when Chinese coast guard personnel wielding knives, sticks and an axe surrounded and boarded three Philippine navy boats during a resupply mission to Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands. A Filipino sailor lost his thumb in the incident.

Tokyo and Beijing are also at loggerheads over disputed islands, controlled by Japan, in the East China Sea. Kihara said Japan was "gravely concerned" about the "escalation of regional tensions". Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian said the Asia-Pacific region did not need "military groups, let alone small circles that encourage a new Cold War and provoke confrontation". Japan invaded and occupied the Philippines during World War II but the two countries have since grown closer due to trade and investment and, more recently, to counter a resurgent China.

Japan is a key supplier of security equipment and technology to the Philippines, including patrol vessels and surveillance systems. Tokyo's Ambassador to Manila, Kazuya Endo, flagged in a speech on Thursday "significant developments" in Japan's defense equipment supplies to the Philippines.

'Linchpin'

Tokyo has signed similar reciprocal access agreements with Britain and Australia in recent years. Manila has equivalent pacts with the United States and Australia and plans to pursue one with France.

The Philippines has been a key focus of US efforts to build an arc of alliances, owing to its position in the



MANILA: (From left) Japan's Defense Minister Minoru Kihara, Japan's Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa, Philippines' Secretary of Foreign Affairs Enrique Manalo, and Philippines' Secretary of Defense Gilberto Teodoro join hands during a joint press conference after their meeting at a hotel in Manila on July 8, 2024. — AFP

South China Sea and its proximity to Taiwan, which China claims as its own. Philippine support would be crucial for the United States in the event of any conflict.

Leaders from Japan, the Philippines and the United States had their first trilateral summit in April aimed at boosting defense ties in Washington. It was held on the heels of four-way military drills

that included Australia in the South China Sea, riling Beijing. "Beyond our bilateral relations, Japan is also keen to deepen trilateral and quadrilateral ties, such as Japan, the Philippines, United States or Japan, the Philippines, United States and Australia," Japan's Kihara said.

Japan, wary about possible future US policy changes in the region, was seeking

to play a larger role in security, analysts said. "The Japanese would like to impress upon the Americans that Japan is the linchpin of US security presence, military presence here in the region, and of course, the most reliable ally of the United States," said Renato Cruz De Castro, professor for international studies at De La Salle University in Manila. — AFP

Modi lands in Russia for first visit since Ukraine offensive

MOSCOW: Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Russia on Monday, as the Indian leader treaded a fine line between maintaining a long-standing relationship with Moscow and courting closer Western security ties. The visit is Modi's first since Russia launched its campaign in Ukraine and since he was returned to power last month as leader of the world's most populous country.

"I look forward to reviewing all aspects of bilateral cooperation with my friend President Vladimir Putin and sharing perspectives on various regional and global issues," said Modi in a statement. "We seek to play a supportive role for a peaceful and

stable region." Moscow remains a key supplier of cut-price oil and weapons to India, but the Kremlin's isolation from the West and blooming friendship with Beijing have impacted its time-honored partnership with New Delhi. Western powers have in recent years also cultivated ties with India as a bulwark against China and its growing influence in the Asia-Pacific, while pressuring it to distance itself from Russia.

Modi last visited Russia in 2019 and hosted Putin in New Delhi two years later, weeks before Russia began its offensive against Ukraine. "Indian Prime Minister Modi arrived in Russia on an official visit," state media agencies confirmed on Monday afternoon.

India has shied away from explicit condemnation of Russia ever since and has abstained on United Nations resolutions censuring Moscow. But Russia's fight with Ukraine has also had a human cost for India.

New Delhi said in February it was pushing the

Kremlin to send back some of its citizens who had signed up for "support jobs" with the Russian military, following reports some were killed after being forced to fight in Ukraine.

Moscow's deepening ties with China have also been a cause for concern. Washington and the European Union accuse China of selling components and equipment that have strengthened Russia's military industry — allegations Beijing strenuously denies. China and India are intense rivals competing for strategic influence across South Asia. India is part of the Quad grouping with the US, Japan and Australia that positions itself against China's growing assertiveness in the Asia-Pacific region.

Oil and arms

New Delhi and the Kremlin have maintained a close relationship since the Cold War, and Russia was for a long time India's largest arms supplier. But Ukraine has stretched Russia's arms supplies thin, forcing India to eye other sources for weap-

ons — including growing its own defense industry. Russia's share of Indian imports of arms has shrunk considerably in recent years, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. At the same time, India has become a major buyer of Russian oil, providing a much-needed export market for Moscow after it was cut off from traditional buyers in Europe.

That has dramatically reshaped energy ties, with India saving itself billions of dollars while bolstering Moscow's war coffers. India's month-on-month imports of Russian crude "increased by eight percent in May, to the highest levels since July 2023", according to commodity tracking data compiled by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

But this has also resulted in India's trade deficit with Russia rising to a little over \$57 billion in the past financial year. From Russia, Modi will travel to Vienna for the first visit to the Austrian capital by an Indian leader since Indira Gandhi in 1983. — AFP

2024 could be hottest year ever...

Continued from Page 1

cross-checked with other data to confirm that last month was the hottest June since the 1850-1900 pre-industrial period.

Greenhouse gas emissions from burning fossil fuels are the main cause of climate change. Despite promises to curb global warming, countries have so far failed collectively to reduce these emissions, pushing temperatures steadily higher for decades. In the 12 months ending in June, the world's average temperature was the highest on record for any such period, at 1.64 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial average, C3S said.

Ocean temperatures have also been hitting new highs. Record sea surface temperatures in the Atlantic, the Northern Pacific and Indian Ocean also contributed to the soaring heat across the globe. Sea surface temperatures hit a separate milestone in June — 15 straight months of new highs. The oceans cover 70 percent of the Earth's surface and absorb 90 percent of the extra heat associated with rising climate-warming emissions.

Scorching heat has blanketed swathes of the world from India to Saudi Arabia, the United States and Mexico in the first half of this year. Relentless rain, a phenomenon scientists have also linked to a warmer planet, caused extensive flooding in Kenya, China, Brazil, Afghanistan, Russia and France. Wildfires have torched land in Greece and Canada and last week, Hurricane Beryl became the earliest category five Atlantic hurricane on record as it barreled across several Caribbean islands. — Agencies

Palestinians flee as Zionist forces...

Continued from Page 1

backing from the US administration will not succeed in breaking our steadfast people regardless of how much it escalates its crimes," the group said in a statement. AFP photographers saw Palestinians leave on foot, bikes and on donkey carts, carrying their belongings through rubble-strewn streets. Muhammad Bisan said he had been through "an indescribable night" in Gaza City. "Planes and artillery are bombing and drones are firing from all directions, and we do not know where to run, right or left," he told AFP.

One tank thrust pushed people towards the western road near the Mediterranean, residents said. "The enemy is behind us and the sea is in front of us, where we will we go?" said Abdel-Ghani, a Gaza City resident. "Tank shells and missiles from the planes are falling on the roads and houses like hell from a volcano. People are running in all directions and no one knows where to go," Abdel-Ghani told Reuters via a chat app.

Elsewhere in Gaza, AFP TV images showed Palestine Red Crescent members removing a body from the rubble after a strike in Jabalia, another Gaza City district. The Zionist military offensive has killed at least 38,193 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to data from the territory's health ministry. The toll includes at least 40 deaths over the previous 24 hours, it said.

Diplomatic efforts to halt the fighting aim for an initial six-week ceasefire that would see some captives in Gaza freed in exchange for Palestinian prisoners in Zionist jails, but talks would continue for a com-

prehensive deal to end the war. Hamas has signaled it would drop its insistence on a "complete" ceasefire, a demand the Zionist entity has repeatedly rejected.

A top Hamas official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP that mediators had offered assurances "that as long as the... negotiations continued, the ceasefire would continue". Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office reiterated in a statement that "any deal will allow (the Zionist entity) to return and fight until all the goals of the war are achieved".

The military said Zionist forces were carrying out an operation against Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters in the area of the Gaza City headquarters of the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, UN-RWA. There was no immediate comment from UN-RWA, whose facilities across Gaza have come under attack before. Witnesses reported gunfire from Zionist vehicles east of Khan Yunis.

Gaza's civil defense reported "dozens of martyrs and wounded" across the coastal territory, saying rescuers were unable to reach some areas due to the intense fighting. A Hamas senior official on Monday accused the Zionist premier of stepping up bombardment in order to derail the latest truce effort. "Whenever a round of negotiations begins and a breakthrough is within reach, he... escalates the aggression," the Hamas official charged, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Two separate strikes, on Saturday in the central Nuseirat refugee camp and on Sunday in Gaza City, killed people in schools turned into displacement shelters. The United Nations estimates 90 percent of Gazans have fled their homes. The Zionist entity has also exchanged near daily cross-border fire with Hamas' Lebanese ally Hezbollah, raising fears of all-out war as such exchanges escalate. On Monday, the Zionists said an air strike had killed a Hezbollah operative in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah announced the fighter's death without elaborating. — Agencies

Russia strikes kill 36 in Ukraine, gut...

Continued from Page 1

using buildings in the footage, showed a missile falling from the sky towards the Okhmatdyt pediatric hospital followed by a large explosion. The Security Service of Ukraine identified the missile as a Kh-101 cruise missile and claimed that it contained components produced in NATO member countries. Russia however claimed the extensive missile damage in Kyiv was in fact caused by a Ukrainian air defense missile.

Twenty-one people were killed in Kyiv and 65 more wounded in the main missile volley and another strike that came two hours later, emergency services said. Debris from the latter missile hit a different Kyiv hospital, killing seven people, they said. Eleven were confirmed dead in Kryvyi Rih and 47 wounded, the emergency services said. Three people had been killed in the eastern town of Pokrovsk where missiles hit an industrial facility, the regional governor said. One person was also killed in the city of Dnipro, officials said.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Ukraine would retaliate and called on Kyiv's western allies to give a firm response to the attack. "We will retaliate against these people, we will deliver a powerful re-

sponse from our side to Russia, for sure. The question to our partners is: can they respond?" Zelenskyy who is visiting Poland said during a joint press conference with Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

Kyiv was initiating an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council in connection with the attack, he said. The Russian Defense Ministry said its forces had carried out strikes on defense industry targets and aviation bases in Ukraine. Moscow has repeatedly denied targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, although its attacks have killed thousands of civilians since it launched its invasion in Feb 2022.

The attack came a day before leaders of NATO countries were due to begin a three-day summit of the military alliance that Zelenskyy is expected to attend with the war in Ukraine one of the focuses. "This callous aggression - a total disregard for human life, jeopardizing European & Transatlantic security - is why leaders will make significant security commitments to Ukraine this week," the US ambassador to Kyiv, Bridget Brink, posted on X.

Defense Minister Rustem Umerov said Ukraine still lacked enough air defenses and urged Kyiv's allies to supply more systems promptly to help protect its cities and infrastructure from regular Russian aerial attacks. The power grid has already sustained so much damage from targeted Russian air strikes that began in March that electricity cuts have become widespread and the whirring sound of backup power generators in the streets has become ubiquitous. — Agencies

France in limbo after Macron poll...

Continued from Page 1

The Paris stock exchange opened 0.49 percent down, but soon jumped back into positive territory as France digested the situation, unprecedented in recent history. International reaction was muted and mixed. France's EU partners are relieved that Le Pen's eurosceptic outfit will not come to power, where they could endanger future European integration and western support for Ukraine.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's administration was "somewhat relieved over what didn't happen", spokesman Steffen Hebestreit told reporters in Berlin. Moscow, meanwhile, tried to mask its disappointment. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia would have preferred a win by "political forces ready to make the efforts to restore our bilateral relationships" but now harbored neither "hope nor particular illusion on this matter".

In Paris, Socialist Party leader Olivier Faure said the NFP's allied parties would choose a candidate to replace Attal, "either by consensus or a vote", this week. But the debate on the left about cabinet names will be fierce. The biggest NFP component is the hard-left France Unbowed (LFI) of firebrand Jean-Luc Melen-

chon, a divisive figure who is anathema to the right and center and has alienated many fellow leftists. The unprecedented situation is taking shape just as Macron is due to be out of the country for most of the week, taking part in the NATO summit in Washington.

After they won the June 30 first round of the elections by a clear margin, Sunday's results were a major disappointment for Le Pen's RN, despite boasting its biggest ever contingent in parliament. Macron's centrist alliance will have dozens fewer members of parliament, but held up better than expected and could even end up in second when seat numbers are confirmed. The left-wing NFP — formed last month after Macron called snap elections — brought the previously deeply divided Socialists, Greens, Communists and the hard-left LFI together. Projections and provisional results show the NFP will be the largest bloc in the new National Assembly with around 190 seats, Macron's alliance on around 160 seats and the RN on about 140. No group is close to the 289 seats needed for an absolute majority.

Only one week ago, some polls had indicated the RN could win just such an absolute majority, with Le Pen's 28-year-old lieutenant Jordan Bardella becoming prime minister. Instead he will remain an MEP. The RN's leader in the French parliament, Le Pen, who plans to launch a fourth bid for the presidency in 2027, declared: "The tide is rising. It did not rise high enough this time, but it continues to rise and, consequently, our victory has only been delayed." — Agencies

International



TANGIER: A man waves a Palestinian national flag during a march in solidarity with the people of Gaza in the city of Tangier on July 7, 2024. — AFP photos



People wave Palestinian national flags during the march.

'Gaza is not alone': Moroccans chant

Thousands of protesters call on Rabat to end ties with the Zionist entity

TANGIERS: Thousands of Moroccans demonstrated Sunday in the northern city of Tangier in support of the Palestinian people and against Morocco's ties with the Zionist entity, an AFP journalist saw. "Gaza is not alone," chanted the protesters during the event which saw the grouping of leftist parties and Islamist movements.

The protesters took to the streets of the coastal city after reports last month of a Zionist ship's docking in Tangier port. Coming from the United States, the ship made a pit stop in Tangier on June 19, according to Zionist media. Moroccan authorities have yet to confirm the reports.

On June 24, the kingdom announced the sending of

40 tons of medical aid to the population of Gaza, ravaged by Zionist bombardment for nine months.

Sunday's protests also called on the kingdom to end its ties with the Zionist entity. Morocco established diplomatic ties with the entity in late 2020 under the US-brokered Abraham Accords which saw similar moves by the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

Under the deal, the United States recognized Morocco's claim to sovereignty over the disputed territory of Western Sahara. Several demonstrations have taken place in the North African country since the Zionist war on Gaza broke out in October.

On Saturday, Former Moroccan Prime Minister and

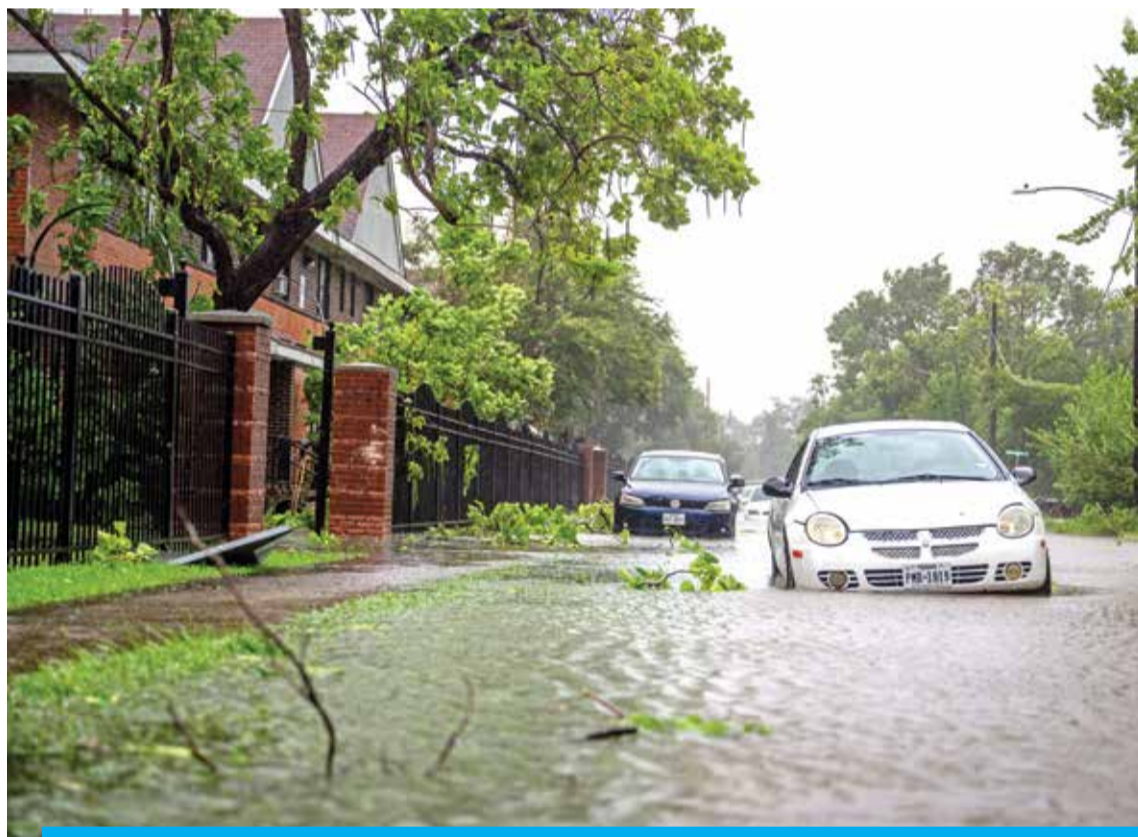
Secretary-General of the Justice and Development Party, Abdelilah Benkirane, described the Zionist entity as "aggressive and brutal", Anadolu Agency reported.

Benkirane made the remarks during a speech at the party's General Secretariat meeting in Rabat. "(The Zionist entity) is an aggressive and brutal state, unacceptable, with which no communication or cooperation is appropriate," the former prime minister said. "What (the Zionist entity) has done, he added, in recent stages has led to the Al-Aqsa Flood, and what it is doing against the Palestinians may lead to its retreat and demise," he added.

Benkirane expressed admiration for the resistance

factions and the Palestinian people. He said that they achieved remarkable feats, which will be remembered for a long time. Benkirane praised what he called the "legendary and remarkable steadfastness of the Palestinians and the resistance in Gaza," adding: "I am sad by the suffering in Gaza." He urged Arab governments to "stop belting on (the Zionist entity) as a powerful state and to correct their stance."

Rabat has officially denounced what it said were "flagrant violations of the provisions of international law" by the entity in its war against Hamas. But it has not given any indication that normalization with entity would be undone. — Agencies



HOUSTON: Vehicles sit in floodwater during Hurricane Beryl on July 8, 2024 in Houston, Texas. — AFP

Storm Beryl knocks out power as it churns across Texas

TEXAS: Tropical Storm Beryl lashed Texas with strong winds and torrential rain on Monday as it churned inland, forcing the closure of oil ports, cancelling hundreds of flights and leaving more than 2 million homes and businesses without power. Beryl, the season's earliest Category 5 hurricane on record, weakened from a hurricane after pounding the coastal Texas town of Matagorda with dangerous storm surges and heavy rain before moving across Houston, the US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said.

The storm, which was expected to rapidly weaken as it moved inland, swept a destructive path through Jamaica, Grenada, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines last week, killing at least 11 people and toppling buildings and power lines. In Texas, Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez said on social media platform X on Monday that preliminary information indicated one person died after a tree fell on a house. The state's energy industry, the nation's biggest producer of US oil and natural gas, braced for Beryl's impact as the powerful storm slowed refining activity and prompted the evacuation of some production sites.

"Life-threatening storm surge and heavy rainfall is ongoing across portions of Texas. Damaging winds ongoing along the coast, with strong winds moving inland," the NHC said even as Beryl began to lose strength. Following warnings that it could be a deadly storm for communities in its path, residents had rushed to board up windows and stock up on fuel and other essential supplies.

Before daybreak, strong gusts and torrential rain lashed cities and towns such as Galveston, Sargent, Lake Jackson and Freeport, television footage showed. By late morning, many fallen trees blocked roads in Houston as the worst of the storm passed, with persisting winds and some road flooding.

The storm had strengthened into a Category 1 hurricane as it crossed the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico before making landfall. But the NHC said it was now expected to weaken rapidly as it moves across land, as hurricanes typically do, before becoming a tropical depression on Tuesday. Located about 20 miles (30 km) west of Houston, Beryl was

moving at 12 miles per hour (19 km per hour) with sustained winds of 75 mph (120 kph). It was expected to barrel over eastern parts of the state through the day before moving into the Lower Mississippi Valley and the Ohio Valley on Tuesday and Wednesday, the NHC said. "People in the path of Beryl's track should not let their guard down this week," Accuweather said in a statement, warning of possible tornadoes as far away as Ohio and possible flash flooding as far north as Detroit.

President Joe Biden is being regularly updated about the storm while administration officials remain in close contact with state and local counterparts, a White House official said. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the US Coast Guard had prepositioned staff to assist with search and rescue efforts, with FEMA also readied with water, meals and generators to boost local response efforts, according to the Biden administration.

Acting Texas Governor Dan Patrick on Sunday declared 120 counties to be disaster areas ahead of the storm and warned Beryl would be deadly for people directly in its path.

Schools said they would close as the storm approached. Airlines canceled more than 1,300 flights, and officials ordered a smattering of evacuations in beach towns.

More than 2 million homes and businesses in Texas have lost power, according to local utilities and PowerOutage.us data. Several counties in southeastern Texas — including Houston, where many US energy companies are headquartered — are under a flash-flood warning as thunderstorms unleashed up to nearly 12 inches (30 cm) of rain in some areas.

Resident Gary Short said he was most concerned about possible flooding, which the NHC warned was expected across parts of Texas into Monday night. "I'm more worried about the rain than anything," he said as he filled up cans with gasoline at a service station on Sunday. "Other than that, not too concerned. Just getting ready."

Closures of major oil-shipping ports around Corpus Christi, Galveston and Houston ahead of the storm could disrupt crude oil exports, along with shipments of crude to refineries and motor fuel from the plants. Some oil producers, including Shell and Chevron, evacuated personnel from their Gulf of Mexico offshore production platforms ahead of the storm.

Marathon Petroleum Corp's refinery in Texas City, Texas was hit by a power interruption on Monday amid the storm, the company said in a statement. — Reuters

For Palestinian prisoner, return to Gaza brings anguish, broken dreams

DEIR AL-BALAH: During more than two decades in a Zionist prison, Palestinian Youssef Mikdad dreamed about one day returning to a prosperous Gaza Strip where he could make up for lost time with his children. But when Mikdad finally tasted freedom and set foot in Gaza last week, he found his house destroyed and his homeland reduced to rubble, dust and twisted metal by Zionist bombardments. Walking through neighborhoods laid waste by air and artillery strikes, he came to Gaza's Mediterranean shoreline, where Palestinians displaced many times over by the Zionist offensive were living in tents on the beach.

Like every Gazan parent, he has to find a way to feed his family in a territory suffering shortages of food, fuel, power and medicine. Schools which would have provided an education to his grandchildren have been destroyed and few hospitals are functioning. Mikdad's daughter Haya — his favorite child, he says — was just four years old when he was imprisoned. She perished in a Zionist airstrike on Gaza City in March, one of more than 38,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza since the start of the war. "I have five children, three sons and two daughters, this girl was the youngest and the best," he said.

He received the devastating news during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan — which he observed behind

bars for years — that Haya had been killed along with her husband and four children. "I didn't see her as a bride when she was married, but I longed to see her with her children. Every time I see a woman with young children, I think to myself this must be her," he said.

Mikdad, 63, was seized by Zionist forces from his house in a Gaza City suburb during a raid in 2002. He was sentenced after he was convicted of being a member of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the armed wing of the Fatah Palestinian faction. He served time in several Zionist prisons. He recalls how at one point Palestinian prisoners were allowed to run their own affairs in jail, as each side learned to respect the other.

But the atmosphere changed radically after fighters led by the Palestinian group Hamas attacked communities in the south of the Zionist entity on Oct 7 last year, killing 1,200 people and taking about 250 hostages back to Gaza. "Even animals have rights, but we humans for them didn't (have any rights). We have seen all forms of torture, even hunger," said Mikdad.

"There was no food, water, papers or any ways of communication, there was nothing. Prisoners were humiliated and crushed for 24 hours (a day)." The Zionist military did not immediately respond to a request for comment about prison conditions.

Widespread reports of mistreatment of detainees in Zionist prisons have added to international pressure on the entity for its conduct of the Gaza war, now in its tenth month. In May, the US State Department said it was looking into allegations of Zionist abuse of Palestinian detainees. Hamas, like other Palestinian factions, has long called for the release of the roughly 6,000 Palestinians in Zionist jails, an issue that has been part of talks aimed at ending the war. — Reuters

Mother shields her baby amid chaos at bombed Kyiv hospital

KYIV: Moments after a Russian missile smashed into a Kyiv hospital where her infant son was being treated, Svitlana Kravchenko rushed to cover the two-month-old with a cloth in order to protect him from the debris and dust in the air. Her voice quivering, the 33-year-old spoke as she emerged from a bomb shelter after one of the worst Russian missile strikes on Kyiv in months. Monday's rare daytime attack all but destroyed sections of Ukraine's largest children's hospital. "It was scary. I couldn't breathe," Kravchenko told Reuters, as rescue workers and soldiers searched for survivors in the huge pile of rubble and ruined buildings. "I was trying to cover him. I was trying to cover him with this cloth so that he could breathe."

The Okhmatdyt hospital is renowned across Ukraine and beyond for its childcare facilities, and carries out some 10,000 surgical procedures each year. Around 600 children are treated at the institution at any one time. Ukraine's SBU security service said two people had been confirmed killed and 16 wounded at the site, and that a war crime investigation had been launched.

However, rescuers feared that more people could be missing as they continued to pick through the rubble nearly eight hours after the strike. Across the country, at least 29 people died in a wave of missile strikes, making it one of the deadliest days of the war this year. Russia says it does not target civilians but thousands have been killed since the full-scale invasion began in February 2022. A missile struck the hospital not far from central Kyiv at around 10 am (7 am GMT). A large part of the two-story center housing the toxicology ward was flattened, while windows were blown out in the main 11-floor building nearby. An elderly female doctor, her head bandaged and white coat stained in blood, wandered through the hospital's grounds in a daze. Glass crunched under her feet. Trembling mothers clutched infants tight, while older children, some of them unaccompanied, sat where they could, reeling from the shock of the explosion and ensuing carnage. Dozens of rescuers, soldiers and ordinary people formed human chains to clear the rubble brick by brick.



KYIV: Medical personnel clear the rubble inside a heavily damaged building of Ohmatdyt Children's Hospital following a Russian missile attack in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv on July 8, 2024. — AFP

Volunteers flock to scene

Holding her baby son, Kravchenko stood outside with her husband Volodymyr, staring at the destruction. Their car had been parked next to the destroyed building and was now buried under debris, but the young family considered themselves lucky: they had survived with only scrapes and cuts. "If we had been in the car, our family would not exist any more," Volodymyr said, stroking his wife's cheek to comfort her as she wiped tears from her face. Footage verified by Reuters showed a missile flying in a steep trajectory towards the hospital grounds at high speed, in what appeared to be a direct hit.

Ukraine said the ordnance used in the attack was a Kh-101, a cruise missile which typically carries a 450 kg explosive warhead. Moscow's defense ministry said it had carried out strikes on defense industry targets and aviation bases. At the hospital, hundreds of locals flocked to the scene after the attack and offered water and assistance. One woman stood crying outside the main gates, worried about a relative who had been inside. Hours after the strike, two more air raid alarms sounded, forcing hundreds of dazed patients, rescuers and onlookers to cram into a highway underpass which was sweltering in the summer heat. It proved to be false alarm on this occasion. — Reuters

TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024

Kuwait ranks 4th in Arab region for investment climate: Dhaman

Average Arab ranking falls to 104th globally for 2023

KUWAIT: The Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) announced a decline in the average Arab ranking in Dhaman's Composite Index for Investment Components in the Arab Countries for 2023 by two positions to 104th globally, 25 positions behind the global average.

The Director-General of Dhaman, Ahmed Al-Haroun said in his message in the 39th annual report for 2024, which was launched by the corporation at its headquarters in Kuwait on Monday that the slight drop in the index, which covers 158 countries, including 21 Arab ones, and is based on 190 composite and sub-indicators issued by 33 international agencies, was due to a change in the Arab position in the four main groups related to the investment climate, as follows:

- Economic Performance Indicators, which consist of 14 main indicators and sub-indicators, the average Arab ranking dropped by three positions to 92nd globally due to the decline in four internal performance assessment indicators and three external performance indicators. Still, the ranking advanced in six indicators and stabilized in the government debt indicator.
- Political and Security Performance Indicators, which consist of 37 main and sub-indicators, the average Arab ranking fell by one place to 108th globally since it declined in sovereign rating and risk assessment indices by two to five places. But, it

stabilized in the PRS Country Risk Index and Sovereign Rating Indices, issued by Standard & Poor's, Moody's, Fitch and Capital Intelligence.

- Legislative and Regulatory Environment Indicators, which consist of 55 main and sub-indicators, the average Arab ranking advanced by three places to 99th but remained below the global average. This is due to an improvement in economic freedom, prosperity, corruption perceptions, bribe risks, competitiveness and investment treaties, ranging between one and eight places. Still, the ranking stood in the governance index, while it fell by one place in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index (GSEI).

- Indicators of Production Factors, which consist of 84 main and sub-indicators, the Arab ranking dropped by four places to 105th globally as a result of its decline in digital competitiveness, energy and government AI indices. But, it stood in sustainable development, knowledge and innovation indices, and advanced in logistic services and global talent competitiveness.

Regarding the Arab ranking in the composite index for 2023, the GCC countries, with the UAE ranked first in the Arab ranking and 18th globally though it lost one place compared with the 2022 index. Qatar came second in the Arab ranking and 34th globally in spite of a one-place fall, while Saudi Arabia came third in the Arab ranking and 36th globally in spite of its two-place

drop. Kuwait was ranked fourth in the Arab ranking and 41st globally by advancing by two places. Oman was ranked fifth in the Arab ranking and 51st globally by advance by one position. Bahrain came sixth among Arab countries and 59th globally by improving by five positions during 2023.

Morocco, Jordan, Algeria and Egypt were ranked in the middle of the Arab ranking and between 82nd and 103rd globally respectively, to be better than the Arab average in spite of their decline globally, except for Morocco that advanced by three positions. Other countries, including Tunisia, Iraq, Libya, Djibouti, Mauritania, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Palestine, Sudan and Somalia, they ranged between 114th and 158th globally respectively, to be below the Arab average and almost at the tail end of the global 158 level. The report showed that the final outcome of the changes in the Arab position in international indicators reflected negatively on the Capex of foreign direct projects into the region, which dipped by 11 percent to \$181 billion in 2023, despite the hike in the number of projects by 20 percent to 2,001 projects. These projects were mainly concentrated in the UAE with a share of 60 percent of the total, and in Egypt with a share of 22 percent of the Capex. Their cumulative value in the region during the past 21 years hit \$1.7 trillion through more than 18.2 thousand projects that created 2.45 million jobs.

The report expected the decline in the region to

continue during 2024, especially following the drop in the number of foreign projects in the region according to the FDI Markets database, by 24 percent and the Capex by 61.5 percent to reach \$27.4 billion in the first quarter of 2024, compared with the same period in 2023, especially if the regional political and economic tensions continue, particularly in occupied Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Yemen, Sudan, and to a lesser extent Syria, Libya and Iraq.

As for foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into Arab countries, according to UNCTAD estimates, they declined by 12.4 percent to \$67.7 billion in 2023, and the UAE got \$30.7 billion, making up 45.4 percent of the Arab total, Saudi Arabia \$12.3 billion or 18.2 percent, and Egypt \$9.8 billion or 14.5 percent, coinciding with a fall in the region's share to reach 5.1 percent of the global total and 7.8 percent of the total of developing countries. On the other hand, Al-Haroun noted the continued growth in intra-Arab investment during 2023, particularly as the number of inter-Arab investment projects rose by 20 percent to 305 projects, and the Capex by 37 percent to \$66.3 billion during the same year. Saudi Arabia was the key destination with 110 projects making up more than 36 percent of the total, while Mauritania was in the lead in the Capex with a value of \$34 billion constituting 53 percent of the total cost of inter-Arab projects through one project in the renewable energy sector.

UK's Rachel Reeves starts to tackle growth barriers

LONDON: Britain's Finance Minister Rachel Reeves said on Monday she had begun the task of unblocking infrastructure projects and private investment as part of a new "national mission" to drive economic growth after her Labour Party's landslide election victory.

As the centre-left party takes power for the first time in 14 years, Reeves and Prime Minister Keir Starmer met over the weekend to agree on first steps to show they were moving quickly to tackle deep-seated problems and reignite growth. Britain's first female finance minister said "there is no time to waste" as she pledged to tackle the shortage of new homes and speed up planning approval for infrastructure projects, including more wind farms. She also made a pitch to investors who have shunned the UK since the 2016 Brexit vote triggered political turmoil. "After 14 years, Britain has a stable government - a government that respects business, wants to partner with business and is open for business," the former Bank of England economist told an audience at her Treasury department. "In an uncertain world, Britain is a place to do business."

Reeves and Starmer face one of the toughest to-do lists of any incoming government, needing to drive growth to help finance increased spending on public services without breaking a pledge not to raise the main taxes paid by working people. They have little room to maneuver: Living standards have stagnated since 2010, public debt is at almost 100 percent of national economic output and tax as a share of GDP is on track to rise to the highest level since just after World War Two.



LONDON: Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves prepares to give a speech at the Treasury in London on July 8, 2024 — AFP.

Reeves said the government would reintroduce house-building targets for local councils after the previous Conservative administration scrapped them and help beef up local planning teams to get projects under way to address long-standing failures to build enough homes. "We will not succumb to a status quo which responds to the existence of trade-offs by always saying no, and relegates the national interest below other priorities," she said. She also said the government would end an effective ban on onshore wind farms, encourage pension funds to drive investment in British businesses and prioritize unresolved planning decisions.

Reeves said she had ordered an assessment of the state of the country's "spending inheritance" and would present the results before parliament's summer break, before holding a full tax-and-spend budget later in the year. Britain needs to win back the confidence of international investors after many were put off by the political instability that took hold after the 2016 vote to leave the European Union and the five prime ministers in eight years that followed. Inward foreign direct investment has fallen in four out of the last five quarters, according to the latest official data. "Investors in New York or Hong Kong would have read the headlines and found it easy to say 'why bother?'" said Toby Gibb, head of investment solutions at fund manager Artemis. — Reuters



ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (center), Wang Chuanfu (left), chairman and CEO of Chinese conglomerate manufacturing company BYD and Turkish Minister of Industry and Technology Mehmet Fatih Kacir (right) taking part in a signing ceremony in Istanbul. — AFP

China's BYD signs deal to open electric car plant in Turkey

ISTANBUL: China's electric vehicle giant BYD on Monday signed a one-billion-dollar agreement with Turkey to open a plant in the country in a move that would help it dodge new EU tariffs. The signing ceremony in Istanbul between BYD's CEO Wang Chuanfu and Turkey's industry and technology minister Fatih Kacir was overseen by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

According to the Turkish industry and technology ministry, BYD will open a production facility with an annual capacity of 150,000 vehicles as well as a research and development centre.

The plant will provide direct employment for 5,000 people. The news comes days after the European Union slapped additional provisional tariffs of up to 38 percent on Chinese EVs following an investigation that concluded state subsidies meant they were unfairly undermining European rivals.

Turkish-made cars enjoy beneficial access to the EU under a customs union that dates to 1995 and the Marmara region around Istanbul has become one of the leading centres of the world's automobile industry. Major carmakers including Fiat and Renault opened plants there at the beginning of the 1970s, with others like Ford, Toyota and Hyundai following,

India's tea prices soar as extreme heat slashes output

MUMBAI: India's tea prices have been soaring and are expected to stay high as heatwaves and floods during the peak harvesting season slash output in key producing regions. The price rise could support the beleaguered Indian tea industry, which has been struggling with rising production costs amid a negligible rise in tea prices in the past decade.

"Extreme weather events are hurting tea production. Excessive heat in May, followed by ongo-

ing flooding in Assam, are reducing output," said Prabhat Bezboruah, a senior tea planter and former chairman of India's Tea Board. Production was also affected by the government's decision to ban 20 pesticides, Bezboruah said.

India's tea production in May plunged more than 30 percent from a year earlier to 90.92 million kg, its lowest for that month in more than a decade, hurt by excessive heat and scant rainfall.

In the north-eastern state of Assam, which accounts for more than half the country's output, more than 2 million people have been affected by severe river flooding in July. The upside in tea prices started after a heatwave reduced production from April onwards amid good demand, said Kalyan Sundaram, secretary of the Calcutta Tea Traders' Association.

In the last week of June, average tea prices surged to 217.53 rupees (\$2.61) per kg, marking a near 20 percent increase from a year before, according to data compiled by the Tea Board. Tea production improved in June after good rainfall gave respite from the heatwave, but again flooding in July has limited plucking in many districts of Assam, said a Jorhat-based tea planter. "July is typically a peak production month, but this year we anticipate a shortfall of 15 to 20 million kg," the planter said.

India produced a record 1.394 billion kg of tea in 2023, but in 2024 production could fall by around 100 million kg, said Bezboruah. The production shortfall should drive prices significantly higher, but financially weak and indebted producers are struggling to bargain with powerful buyers in peak production months, said a Kolkata-based trader. — Reuters

India produced a record 1.394 billion kg of tea in 2023, but in 2024 production could fall by around 100 million kg, said Bezboruah. The production shortfall should drive prices significantly higher, but financially weak and indebted producers are struggling to bargain with powerful buyers in peak production months, said a Kolkata-based trader. — Reuters

Dubai's property sales undented by drop in listings

DUBAI: The number of homes worth \$10 million or more that were sold in Dubai held steady in the first half of the year despite a drop in listings, an industry report showed on Monday, as demand from the international ultra-rich stayed strong.

A total of 190 homes worth an overall \$3.2 billion were sold in the six months to end June compared with 189 properties for \$3.3 billion in the same period of 2023, according to provisional data from property consultancy Knight Frank. The total number of deals held up despite a 65.5 percent year-on-year drop in the number of such luxury homes available on the market in the second quarter, the report showed. "This is a strong sign of the 'buy-to-hold' buyer profile that has taken root in the market," Faisal Durrani, Knight Frank's head of research for Middle East and North Africa (MENA), was quoted as saying in the report. The trend suggests international high-net worth individuals "are largely focused on purchasing homes in the city for personal use, rather than to 'flip', which was a defining feature of the previous two market cycles," he added.

Home to the world's tallest tower, the United Arab Emirates' Dubai is the Middle East's biggest tourism and trade hub, attracting a record 17.15 million international overnight visitors last year.

The city-state was quick to reopen after the pandemic. That, together with massive infrastructure spending, generous income tax policies and relaxed social and visa rules, lured thousands of foreigners, including Russians amid war in Ukraine. Under a 10-year plan known as D33, Dubai is seeking to grow its economy by investing in tourism, turning its local financial centre into one of the top four globally and by attracting foreign capital, including into real estate, with property purchase and rental prices showing no signs of fizzling out.

It is also becoming a preferred wealth hub for many entrepreneurs and rich families in Asia, launching a "family wealth centre" last year to help wealthy individuals and businesses deal with cultural issues and governance. The Knight Frank report showed palm tree-shaped artificial island Palm Jumeirah was the most sought-after area, recording 21 sales of homes worth \$10 million or more in the second quarter, accounting for 26 percent of sales in the period. It was followed by Emirates Hills with 10 percent and the District One area with 7.8 percent of such deals. Sales of properties worth \$25 million or more jumped 25 percent in the second quarter compared with the first three months of the year to a total of 15 homes. Last year Dubai ranked first globally for the number of home sales above \$10 million, selling nearly 80 percent more such properties than second-placed London. — Reuters

Record US heat, hurricanes could roil fuel prices as oil refiners sweat

Risk of extremely volatile fuel prices grows in peak travel season

NEW YORK: A double whammy of record heat and hurricanes should test US refiners' resilience in coming weeks, raising the risk of extremely volatile fuel prices in the middle of the peak travel season, analysts said.

The Atlantic hurricane season from June through November is an annual threat for US refineries. Half of the country's over 18-million-barrel-per-day refining capacity is located along the Gulf Coast, highly susceptible to tropical storms. The US is the largest fuel market in the world.

Refiners this year may have to brace for more storms than usual. Government forecasters expect up to seven major hurricanes in coming months, double the annual average of three major Atlantic hurricanes with wind speeds over 111 miles per hour. Citgo Petroleum Corp was cutting output at its 165,000 barrel-per-day Corpus Christi refinery on Saturday and plans to run the facility at minimum during Tropical Storm Beryl's passage over the Texas Coast, sources said.

The largest ports in Texas also closed operations and vessel traffic in preparation for Beryl, which is expected to strengthen back to a hurricane before hitting the area early on Monday. The intensity and timing of Beryl, which at one point became the earliest Category 5 hurricane on record, signals an active and disruptive season ahead, said Neil Crosby, crude market analyst at Sparta Commodities.

"Hurricanes remain the biggest wild card for gasoline prices," said GasBuddy analyst Patrick De Haan. "No better reminder of that than Beryl," he said. Evacuation orders ahead of storms can lift stockpiling and boost fuel demand, causing prices for gasoline, diesel and other refined products to



A sign reads "Stop Extreme Heat Danger" at Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes in Death Valley National Park near Furnace Creek during a heatwave impacting Southern California on July 7, 2024.—AFP

move higher, De Haan said.

If a major storm hits the Gulf Coast's refining system, it could remove as much as a million barrels a day of fuel supply and lead to extended outages or even permanent closures, according to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA). Hurricanes heading for the Gulf Coast could also knock out a similar amount of crude supply, with the offshore Gulf of Mexico region housing around 14 percent of US crude output.

In 2021, US oil and gas companies suspended

more than 1.7 million barrels oil output in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida. Outages of around 1.5 million bpd of crude production and refining capacity can cause gasoline prices to jump by 25 cents to 30 cents, according to EIA.

In addition to hurricanes, refineries this year must contend with more problems related to scorching heat. The latest US monthly temperature outlook foresees above average temperatures in large parts of the US in July, typically the hottest month. Excessive temperatures have supersized effects on com-

modity supply chains, including oil and fuel, JPMorgan analysts wrote last month.

Most refineries are designed to operate between 32 and 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Triple-digit temperatures could lead to equipment malfunctions and reduction in refining capacity. Extreme heat last year led to a 500,000 bpd reduction in Gulf Coast refined products output, the JPM analysts wrote. Similar effects are being felt this year. Unit upsets reported by Phillips 66 PSX.N at its Wood River refinery in Illinois last month were likely due to heatwaves, according to Kloza and other industry experts.

A robust maintenance season earlier this year allowed US refineries to undertake major upgrades and perform detailed upkeep which had been repeatedly postponed due to surging post-pandemic demand and supply disruptions. That should, in theory, make refineries better prepared for the hurricane season, said Alex Hodes, oil analyst at brokerage StoneX. Slow demand in recent months has also helped refineries build fuel stockpiles, which should act as a buffer in case of outages.

US gasoline inventories have risen by about 4 million barrels since the beginning of April to near 231.7 million barrels by June 28, in line with the seasonal average of the past five years excluding 2020. Inventories of distillates including diesel and heating oil have grown by 3.7 million barrels from the start of April and were at 119.7 million barrels by June 28, slightly below the historical average excluding 2020, when inventories were sharply elevated by COVID-related demand destruction. "There's not much margin for error," said Tom Kloza, head of energy analysis at Oil Price Information Service. "I'm waiting to see what happens." — Reuters

Boeing, DoJ reach deal over MAX crashes case

NEW YORK: Boeing said Monday it had reached a deal with the US Department of Justice over two fatal 737 MAX crashes, which court papers show would see the aviation giant plead guilty to fraud. The agreement comes after prosecutors concluded Boeing flouted an earlier settlement addressing the

disasters, in which 346 people were killed in Ethiopia and Indonesia more than five years ago.

"We have reached an agreement in principle on terms of a resolution with the Justice Department," Boeing told AFP in a statement. Families of crash victims immediately filed an objection to the deal, arguing that it "unfairly makes concessions to Boeing that other criminal defendants would never receive."

Court papers filed in Texas on Sunday said the company had agreed to plead guilty to "conspiracy to defraud the United States" during the certification of MAX airplanes. The plea deal sees Boeing avoid a criminal trial, instead agreeing to a series of terms in-

cluding a \$243.6 million fine on top of the same sum already paid. The company will also be required to make a minimum investment of \$455 million in "compliance and safety programs".

Such changes at the firm will be overseen by an independent monitor appointed by the government for a three-year term. The company's board of directors will also be required to meet the families of crash victims. The high-profile agreement follows the DoJ finding in May that Boeing failed to improve its compliance and ethics program, in breach of a 2021 deferred prosecution agreement (DPA) in the wake of the MAX crashes.

The families of victims will ask the court to reject

the plea deal at an upcoming hearing. "The generous plea agreement rests on deceptive and offensive premises," said the objection filed by their legal team Sunday. The original DPA was announced in January 2021, over charges that Boeing knowingly defrauded the Federal Aviation Administration.

That agreement required Boeing to pay \$2.5 billion in fines and restitution in exchange for immunity from criminal prosecution. A three-year probationary period was set to expire this year. But in January, Boeing was plunged back into crisis mode when a 737 MAX flown by Alaska Airlines was forced to make an emergency landing after a fuselage panel blew out mid-flight.—AFP

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Investors chart possible moves as pressure mounts on Biden

US market hopes for a 'more pro-business president' after election

NEW YORK: With doubts growing about whether President Joe Biden will remain a candidate for re-election in 2024, some investors are preparing to game out potential economic scenarios and trades if a stronger Democratic candidate emerges.

Bond yields rose following Biden's stumbling performance against Republican rival Donald Trump in the first presidential TV debate last month. Growing speculation that Trump would regain the White House on Nov 5 pushed investors to anticipate higher fiscal deficits and inflationary policies.

Which party holds the White House could determine key issues on trade, regulations and fiscal policies. US stocks rose over the past week partly as prospects for a Republican victory led some investors to expect lower taxes and less regulation. Biden was emphatic about seeking re-election in an interview with ABC News on Friday. However, some Democrats are increasing calls for Biden to halt his campaign and a meeting of senators was being planned by one senator for Monday to discuss Biden's candidacy. The uncertainty could complicate economic forecasts and spur fluctuations in markets.

"For the stock market or bond market, if there's a candidate change it's going to add uncertainty to the market," said Michael Schulman, partner and chief investment officer at Running Point Capital Advisors. "Investors have to prepare a strategy for what to do if Biden is no longer the candidate."

Vice President Kamala Harris is the leading contender to take Biden's place in the Nov 5 election if he were to drop out, sources have said. "Markets are going to have to figure out in real time what a new potential candidate stands for," including on issues such as tariffs and the potential expiration of tax cuts, said Michael Reynolds, vice president of investment strategy at Glenmede. Some in the market expect Harris would not materially alter the Biden-Harris economic policy platform. "I wouldn't see an appreciable policy differential," said Alex McGrath, Chief Investment Officer for NorthEnd Private Wealth.

Research firm Capital Economics said in a note

on Friday that alternative candidates such as Harris or California Governor Gavin Newsom "would avoid making any major proposals and run on platforms that were very similar to Biden's."

If Biden were to pull out, stocks could sell off over the short-term because of the uncertainty following such a decision, especially given equities broadly are at high valuations, said John Lynch, chief investment officer for Comerica Wealth Management. The S&P 500 was last trading at 21.4 times forward 12-month earnings estimates, versus its long-term average of 15.7, according to LSEG Datastream.

"Nerves can be frayed in an expensive market," Lynch said. Stronger chances for the Democrats arising from the appointment of a new nominee could lead to a reversal of the Treasuries sell-off that followed the debate, which hit long-term bonds in particular, some bond investors said.

"If a new candidate comes in... maybe the election tightens up a little bit, which could lead to a divided government," said Jack McIntyre, a fixed-income portfolio manager at Brandywine. Congress is currently divided, with the House of Representatives narrowly controlled by Republicans and the Senate by Democrats. A divided government is often seen by investors as positive for markets as it reduces the chances of dramatic policy changes. Government bond prices could benefit as this would reduce the chances of excessive fiscal stimulus in case of a Republican sweep, said McIntyre. Price gains could be capped, however, as an economic slowdown could play well for the Republican campaign over the next few months. "It's a little too early to be making structural changes around the election, but we're in that window where it certainly gets more important in the investment decision-making and asset allocation decision," said McIntyre.

The S&P 500 had gained over 1 percent since the June 27 debate between Trump and Biden. A greater chance of a Trump win in the wake of that debate could be a "contributing factor" to the



HARRISBURG, US: US President Joe Biden, First Lady Jill Biden (center) and Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro (right) visit a coffee shop in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on July 7, 2024. — AFP

rise in the benchmark stock index, said Peter Tuz, president of Chase Investment Counsel in Charlottesville, Virginia.

"I'm sure among some investors and prospective investors seeing a higher likelihood of a pro-business president or at least a more pro-business president ... has factored into decisions about putting money in the market," Tuz said. Still, since 1945, the S&P 500 has posted an average annual return of 11.1 percent when a Democrat has been president versus a 7.1 percent return when a Republican has held the office, according to Sam Stovall, chief investment strategist at CFRA. A second Trump presidency could mean lower corporate taxes,

which could give a boost to US equity markets, and tougher trade relations and could be a boon for domestic manufacturers, investors have said, although a weight on multinationals at risk if there are higher tariffs on Chinese goods.

Among specific areas of the market, expectations that Trump would seek to reduce regulations are seen as benefiting financials and small cap companies. Solar and other clean energy companies are expected to benefit more from a Democratic administration. "It's very nuanced and uncertain," said Schulman. "Even if you predict the elections right, how stocks react could go either way," he said. — Reuters

News in Brief

China copper imports rules

BEIJING: China has issued draft rules to allow more imports of recycled copper and aluminum to improve supply and industry competitiveness, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) said on Monday. The world's top metals producer and consumer has been looking to raise the usage of recycled metals as part of an effort to lower carbon emission by the energy-intensive industry while avoiding becoming a dumping ground for waste materials from other countries. Recycled copper, copper alloy raw materials, recycled aluminum and aluminum alloy raw materials are no longer categorized as solid waste, and can be imported without restrictions, MEE said in a notice asking for market opinions. — Reuters

Pakistan stock trading resumes

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) resumed trading on Monday after a two-hour suspension due to a fire in the bourse's Karachi headquarters. In a notice on its website, the exchange said trading was suspended at 10:25 a.m. (05:25 GMT) and would resume at 12:25 pm (07:25 GMT). The situation was under control, it said, and brokerage firms' staff had started returning to the premises. The KSE 100, the PSX's main index, has in recent months risen to a historic high, surpassing 80,000 points on the back of an International Monetary Fund bailout last summer that averted a default and more recently, amid continuing reforms under the lender's umbrella. — Reuters

German exports down sharply

FRANKFURT: German exports fell more sharply than expected in May, official data showed Monday, highlighting the challenges that Europe's biggest economy faces to emerge from the doldrums. Exports dropped 3.6 percent from the previous month and stood at 131.6 billion euros (\$142.6 billion), federal statistics agency Destatis said in a statement. It followed two months of slight increases, and was worse than forecast by analysts surveyed by financial data firm FactSet, who had been expecting a decrease of 2.5 percent. Exports to the European Union fell 2.5 percent while beyond the bloc they were down 4.9 percent. — AFP

S Africa to push renewables

PRETORIA: South Africa's new energy minister vowed on Monday to accelerate the shift to renewable energy from coal, breaking with a predecessor who opposed swift decarbonization and pledged to keeping burning coal for a long time. Kgosi-ntsho Ramokgopa, who now runs the newly-created Energy and Electricity Ministry, was addressing journalists as Africa's most industrial nation celebrated more than 100 days with no power cuts - a record over years of crippling blackouts. Owing to its reliance on coal-fired power stations run by state provider Eskom, South Africa is among the world's top 15 greenhouse gas emitters - pushing out more than Britain, Turkey or France - and has the highest carbon intensity among the Group of 20 largest economies, according to watchdog Climate Transparency. — Reuters

Investors put UK winner Labour on credibility watch

LONDON: Big investors are warming to Britain after a landslide election win for its new Labour government but remain wary of placing long term bets until Prime Minister Keir Starmer can convince them his economic growth plans are credible. Sterling, the strongest major currency against the dollar this year, nudged higher on Friday when the scale of Labour's victory became clear. The UK-focused FTSE 250 share index, which has outpaced the more global FTSE 100 year-to-date, rose to its highest since April 2022.

But investors said Labour still needed to revive long-term confidence in UK markets that have struggled since 2016's Brexit vote and the chaos wreaked by Conservative former Prime Minister Liz Truss' 2022 mini-Budget. Left-leaning Labour has pledged to upgrade Britain's creaking infrastructure and solve a housing shortage while keeping spending tight as the UK's tax burden approaches an all-time high. But credit rating agencies and Britain's lenders in international bond markets are twitchy about public debt that is expected to exceed 100 percent of gross domestic product.

"They have to walk a tightrope between economic growth and government debt. We have to see if debt issuance is going to rise, and if the economy can expand at a rate where extra borrowing is deemed acceptable," said Sheldon MacDonald, chief investment officer at UK asset manager Marlborough. MacDonald said he had a neutral outlook on UK stocks but was slightly positive on gilts because of expected Bank of England rate cuts.

After years of relentless outflows, the combined market value of companies in the broad FTSE-All stock index at 2.4 trillion pounds (\$3.07 trillion), is below that of individual US tech stocks like Apple and chipmaker Nvidia.

After Rishi Sunak conceded defeat to Labour on



LONDON: Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves (unseen) delivers a speech at the Treasury to an audience of leading business figures and senior stakeholders on Monday. — AFP

Friday and resigned as party leader, the Conservatives were set to choose their sixth leader since 2016 following years of infighting over Britain's post-Brexit future. Investors hope Starmer and his finance minister, former Bank of England economist Rachel Reeves, will provide more stable leadership as well as predictable tax and trade policies. "Investors in New York or Hong Kong would have read the headlines and found it easy to say why bother, it's a basket case," said Toby Gibb, head of investment solutions at fund manager Artemis.

"What (the election) does is relieve that uncertainty it allows overseas investors to invest with more security." In one positive sign, sterling on a trade-weighted basis is back at levels last seen before the Brexit vote. Gibb said he expected the

market to stay strong and was bullish on UK stocks. Other investors were staying cautious. "We know that a general incremental improvement can come from political stability but we don't know what changes are going to happen," said Janus Henderson European equities portfolio manager Tom O'Hara, whose UK exposure is below Britain's share of MSCI's broad European index.

"You need something more tangible," he explained, "such as which companies are going to benefit from which policies." Britain has not grown faster than 2 percent a year on a regular basis since before the 2008 global financial crisis. Ben Mackie, fund manager at UK-based Hawksmoor Investment Management, said he was also not buying into a UK growth theme. — Reuters

Samsung workers begin three-day strike over pay

HWASEONG, South Korea: Workers at South Korean tech giant Samsung began a three-day general strike over pay and benefits on Monday, the head of a union representing tens of thousands of employees told AFP, warning the action could impact memory chip production. Samsung Electronics is the world's largest memory chip maker and accounts for a significant chunk of global output of the high-end chips.

Wearing rain jackets and ribbons saying "fight with solidarity", thousands of workers gathered outside the company's foundry and semiconductor factory in Hwaseong, Gyeonggi, an hour south of Seoul. Samsung management has been locked in negotiations with the union since January, with the two sides failing to narrow differences on benefits and a rejected 5.1 percent pay raise offer from the firm. "The strike has started from today," Son Woo-mok, head of the National Samsung Electronics Union, told AFP.

"Today's general strike is just the beginning," he added. "Recalling why we are here, please do not come to work until July 10th and do not receive any business calls," he told the crowd of workers.

The union said about 5,200 people from factory facility manufacturing and development had joined the protest. "Do they still not think this will affect their production line?" said Lee Hyun-kuk, vice

president of the union. The union, which has more than 30,000 members, or more than a fifth of the company's total workforce, announced the three-day general strike last week, saying it was a last resort after talks broke down.

The move follows a one-day walkout in June, the first such collective action at the company, which went decades without unionization. "We are now at critical crossroads," the union said in an appeal sent out to members last week, urging them to support the strike.

"This strike is the last card we can use," it said, saying that workers at the company needed to "act as one". "I'm really excited," one union member and protester told AFP. "We're making history."

Workers rejected the offer of a 5.1 percent pay hike in March, with the union having previously outlined demands including improvements to annual leave and transparent performance-based bonuses. Samsung declined a request for comment.

"While the ongoing strike is only scheduled for three days, the participating members include those working in chip assembly lines," business professor Kim Dae-jong at Sejong University told AFP. "Given that the union could carry out additional strikes in case the gridlock continues, it could pose a great risk to Samsung management amid its race for dominance in the competitive chips market."

Samsung Electronics avoided its employees unionizing for almost 50 years - sometimes adopting ferocious tactics, according to critics - while rising to become the world's largest smartphone and semiconductor manufacturer. Company founder Lee Byung-chul, who died in 1987, was adamantly opposed to unions, saying he would never allow them "until I have dirt over my eyes".



HWASEONG, South Korea: Members of the National Samsung Electronics Union stage a rally as they begin a three-day general strike outside the company's foundry and semiconductor factory in Hwaseong on July 8, 2024. — AFP

The first labor union at Samsung Electronics was formed in the late 2010s. The firm is the flagship subsidiary of South Korean giant Samsung Group, by far the largest of the family-controlled conglomerates that dominate business in Asia's fourth-largest economy. It recently predicted a 15-fold increase in its on-year second quarter operating profits, thanks to growing demand for generative AI.

Semiconductors are the lifeblood of the global economy, used in everything from kitchen appliances and mobile phones to cars and weapons. And demand for the advanced chips that power artificial intelligence systems has skyrocketed thanks to the success of ChatGPT and other generative AI products. Semiconductors are South Korea's leading export and hit \$11.7 billion in March, their highest level in almost two years, accounting for a fifth of South Korea's total exports, according to figures released by the trade ministry. — AFP

TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024



Beachgoers and tourists on a beach of a spa in Priozersk.

'Rust' shooting looms over historic Western movie ranch's legacy

Decades before Alec Baldwin and the "Rust" shooting, the dusty acres of Bonanza Creek Ranch helped put New Mexico on the map as a stunning, homespun location to film Westerns.

The ranch was the backdrop to classics like "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," a place where jaded Hollywood stars would be greeted by long-standing manager Imogene Hughes with a cool glass of homemade lemonade and banana bread.



Alec Baldwin

Now, with Baldwin set to go on trial this week for manslaughter over an on-set death at Bonanza Creek that has drawn global headlines, Hughes' daughter is glad her late mother never had to witness the ranch's new notoriety. "I think that would have really upset her," said Denise Spaccamonti. Nestled in the foothills outside Santa Fe, the ranch was mainly known for its cattle operations until Hollywood came knocking in the 1950s. Location scouts chose it for "The Man from Laramie," a 1955 Western starring James Stewart, and more movies sporadically followed.

Film operations sharply accelerated when Hughes took over the day-to-day operations after the death of her husband Glenn, often working with local politicians to lure movie producers from California with financial incentives. Crews for "Silverado," a 1985 Western starring Kevin Kline and Kevin Costner, erected a white-painted homestead building, which remained in place after the film wrapped.

More buildings were added in a piecemeal fashion for films like "Young Guns" and "Lucky Luke," and soon entire Western town streets were in place. "Lucky Luke" comes to mind. It wasn't a great movie. It was terrible actually!" said Spaccamonti. "But it's kind of nice, how each movie had a part in building that... It wasn't one person. It was a bunch of puzzle pieces put together."

'Insensitive'

But today, that legacy has taken a cruel twist. One of those hodgepodge buildings was a chapel in which, on October 21, 2021, a gun held by Baldwin discharged during a rehearsal, killing "Rust" cinematographer Halya Hutchins. Movie productions were temporarily shuttered at Bonanza Creek in the immediate aftermath as police investigators combed the site. They have since quietly resumed, though the identities of recent and current films are under wraps.

"Nobody wants to say they are shooting a movie at the same location where she was killed," said David Manzanara, field manager for nearby Ghost Ranch, where "Oppenheimer" was made.

Although there is no suggestion the ranch is in any way to blame, "people say, 'if it gets out, we'll be seen as insensitive, how could you film there?'" added Manzanara, a longtime friend and collaborator of Hughes. Recognizable buildings like the chapel could be "skinned" to disguise their infamous connotations in future films, he suggested.

Contacted by AFP, Bonanza Creek's owners declined an interview. Asked if the shooting had caused Bonanza Creek challenges going forward, Shannon Hughes, who runs the movie operation, said that was "an assumption." She said Imogene Hughes' legacy "should not be involved in the 'Rust' accident... she's deceased, she doesn't get to speak for herself." Yet the legacy of Hughes -- who died just weeks before the "Rust" shooting -- was warmly described by other relatives and prominent New Mexican filmmakers. —AFP

KAZAKHSTAN'S SECRET CITY sets sights on becoming seaside resort



A semi-abandoned base in the steppe around Priozersk.



A monument of the Soviet State founder Vladimir Lenin in Priozersk.



A view of Priozersk, the former secret city on the shores of Lake Balkhash in central Kazakhstan.

From the roof of his abandoned hotel, Alexei Vereshchagin remained certain that tourists would one day sip cocktails up there as they enjoyed the lakeside view of Priozersk - a former secret city in central Kazakhstan. Due to a lack of investment, Vereshchagin has been renovating the hotel alone - including putting in new windows in each of the 150 rooms, one by one. This mammoth task is likely to take years. The hotel's former Cyrillic-lettered sign saying "Hotel Russia" has been removed and is now gathering dust on the roof alongside a rusty portrait of Vladimir Lenin.

"I want there to be a beautiful hotel in the center of the city, like in the Soviet era. So I am restoring it, little by little," recounted Vereshchagin, a Soviet Army veteran. Once the hotel is renovated, ordinary tourists will be able to stay near Lake Balkhash's shores with its "magnificent views", Vereshchagin said. The development of a thriving tourism sector in Priozersk would mark a dramatic change of fortune for the once-closed city, long unmarked on maps because of secretive military sites. The Sary-Shagan missile range was built in 1956 to test anti-ballistic weapons systems, and a portion of the range is still leased by the Russian government, Priozersk's mayor Mansur Akhmetov told AFP.

Walking around the town of 15,000, reminders of its Cold War heyday are everywhere. Replicas of the S-75 surface-to-air missiles tested in Priozersk have been placed in the city center and at its entrance, along with fading posters praising the "glory of the anti-missile shield of the Fatherland".

Beaches and bases

Several sites dotted across the sprawling testing range on an arid steppe have been abandoned, and are now guarded by the likes of resident Ivan Sabitov. Sabitov, a Kazakh civilian, now whiles away the time watching over empty missile silos, dismantled radars and rocket fairings with his dog. "These Soviet installations are destroyed, but other bases are still active," said the 61-year-old with a weathered face.

Russian troops from the Strategic Missile Forces - which helps manage the Kremlin's nuclear arsenal - are still stationed in the area and sometimes swim in Lake Balkhash in the evening with their families. Russia claims to have "infrastructure developed around Priozersk to test strategic defense equipment", including intercontinental ballistic missiles. Despite the presence of Russian bases, Priozersk's mayor is trying to transform the city into a seaside resort.



A view of Priozersk, the former secret city on the shores of Lake Balkhash in central Kazakhstan, which serves as the administrative centre of the Sary-Shagan missile range - built in 1956 to test anti-ballistic weapons systems and still leased by the Russian government. — AFP photos

This project is in line with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's desire to develop the country's tourism sector, which represents just 3.2 percent of its GDP. "We are going to redevelop the entire coastline, so that pedestrians can walk along it. We also plan to build hotels and organize efforts to clean the beaches," said Akhmetov of his ambitious plans.

Mayor Akhmetov hopes to one day demolish. But on the only road leading to the end of the peninsula, stands a new hotel: "The Golden Sands". This four-star spa was built in 2016 and has become a welcome source of jobs, with its 120 employees. "In Priozersk, jobs are scarce, and mainly linked to the army. My mother is a soldier, I was a police officer," said the spa's reception-



A semi-abandoned base in the steppe around Priozersk.

Budding tourism

Priozersk is already home to a smattering of small hotels that mostly host fishermen and a trickle of tourists during the first days of summer. "Even if the town seems partly abandoned, Lake Balkhash is magnificent. I enjoy the warm water and the sand on the beach," said Olga Ryapolova, a Russian tourist from Siberia who "hopes to come back" to Priozersk soon. Upon closer inspection, the picturesque lake contrasts with the desolation elsewhere.

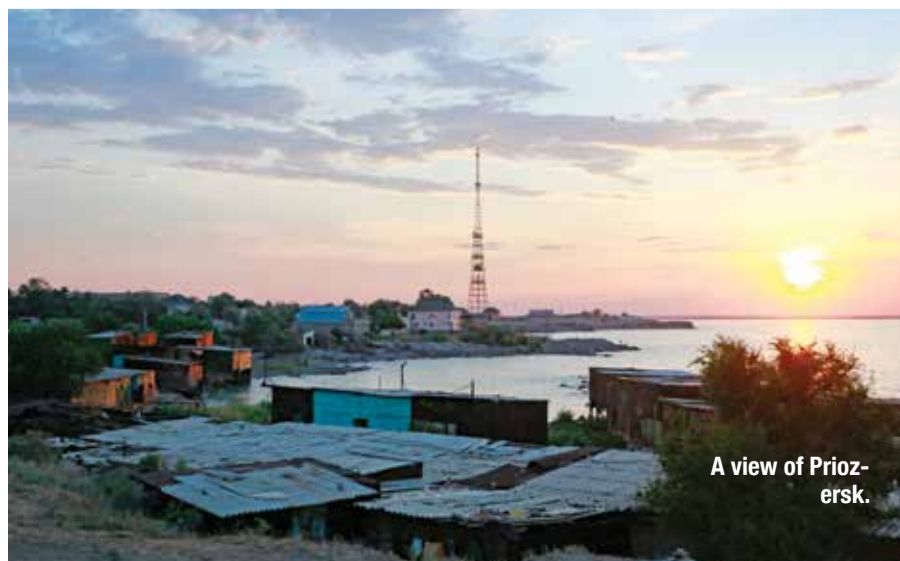
A disused cement factory still stands near the lake's shores, which

ist Aizhan Musina.

"But my salary (around 250 euros) was too small, so I came to work here," Musina said, adding that she now makes roughly 370 euros (\$400) a month. Musina was born in Priozersk when the city was still sealed off from the public. She has long been waiting for her hometown to open up to tourists. "I hope that our city will gain fame, and that people will know that we have such a beautiful spa," Musina told AFP. — AFP



The former hotel Russia in Priozersk.



A view of Priozersk.

Lifestyle



Wild bees hover on the honeycomb at a cliff in Lamjung district of Nepal.



Honey hunters of Gurung ethnic community harvest honeycomb at a cliff in Lamjung district of Nepal.



A man of Gurung ethnic community hunts honey at a cliff in Lamjung district of Nepal.



Sticky future: Climate change hits Nepal's honey hunters



Honey hunters of Gurung ethnic community harvest honeycomb at a cliff in Lamjung district of Nepal.

Hanging from a rope-and-bamboo ladder off a Himalayan mountain cliff, skilled Nepali climbers gather highly prized hallucinogenic honey -- an ancient tradition stung by environmental degradation and rapid climate change.

Wreathed in smoke to drive away defensive clouds of giant bees, 26-year-old Som Ram Gurung dangles dangerously 100 metres (325 feet) off the ground, slicing off dark and dripping hunks of delicious honeycomb. For as long as anyone can remember in villages of Lamjung district, collecting the honey was worth the risk. The combs are valued as "mad honey", sweetness with a sting in its tail that collectors say provides an intoxicating buzz with mild psychoactive properties derived from rhododendron nectar that the bees love. It was never easy to harvest.

The high-altitude honey comes from the world's largest honey bee species, *Apis laboriosa*, which favors inaccessible cliffs. But the skilled craft is now beset with extra challenges, many driven by the increasing effects of a heating planet.

Honey hunters say shifting weather patterns and environmental threats are impacting their remote forested valleys,



Honey hunters of Gurung ethnic community make traditional bamboo ladder, in Lamjung district of Nepal.

100 kilometers (60 miles) northwest of Kathmandu. Doodh Bahadur Gurung, 65, who taught his son Som Ram his skills, said hunters had seen a rapid slump in the number of hives and amounts of honey harvested.

"When we were young, there used to be beehives on almost all cliffs because

of the abundance of wildflowers and water sources," said Doodh Bahadur. "But with each passing year, it's becoming harder to find hives."

Dams, pesticides, wildfire

He blamed the decline in bees on increasingly irregular rainfall, wildfires,

agricultural pesticides and the diversion of rivers due to a surge of hydro-power dams and accompanying construction of roads.

"Streams are drying up due to hydro-projects and irregular rainfall," he said, noting wild bees prefer to nest near water. "Bees that fly to farms also face the problem of pesticides, which kill them." With erratic rain, drier winters and baking heat, bushfires have become more common. Government data shows Nepal tackled over 4,500 wildfires this year, nearly double the year before.

"Wildfires are more common now," Doodh Bahadur said. "There aren't enough young people to douse them in time". A decade ago, his village of Taap could harvest 1,000 litres a season. Today, Doodh Bahadur said they count themselves lucky to get 250 litres.

The hunters' observations are confirmed by scientists. They say rising temperatures due to fossil-fuel-driven climate change is a key factor. "Bees... are highly susceptible to changing temperatures," said bee specialist Susma Giri, from the Kathmandu Institute of Applied Sciences.

"They are wild creatures and can't adjust to human movements or noise, which directly affects wild bees."



This aerial photograph shows honey hunters of the Gurung ethnic community making traditional bamboo ladders in Lamjung district of Nepal.



A man of Gurung ethnic community eats a fresh honeycomb while hunting honey in Lamjung district of Nepal.



A man of Gurung ethnic community looks on while he hunts honey at a cliff.



Men of Gurung ethnic community arrive to hunt honey at a cliff in Lamjung district of Nepal.



Honey hunters of Gurung ethnic community harvest honeycomb at a cliff.



A honey hunter of Gurung ethnic community carries raw honeycomb at Taap village.

Lifestyle

'Alarming economic consequences'

ICIMOD rang the alarm in May, noting at least 75 percent of Nepal's crops depend on pollinators such as bees.

"Among the key factors for their decline... are climate change and loss in habitats," ICIMOD said. "The reduced pollination that ensues has already had alarming economic consequences." A 2022 study, in the journal Environmental Health Perspectives, calculated annual losses from reduced pollination in Nepal amounted to as much as \$250 per capita -- a massive sum in a country where annual average income is \$1,400.

Shrinking supplies means the rare honey commands high prices. A liter that sold for \$3.5 two decades ago now sells for \$15. Traders say there is increasing demand from the United States, Europe, and Japan, fuelled by its reported health benefits on social media.

Honey traders in Kathmandu estimate annual exports to be around 10,000 liters, and internationally, a 250-gramme pot of "mad honey" can command prices of \$70 online. "The demand for 'mad honey' increases yearly, but quality production has decreased," said Kathmandu-based honey exporter Rashmi Kandel.

'Losing everything'

With honey drying up, fewer young people want to join the traditional month-long mountain hunt. Across Nepal, young



A honey hunter of Gurung ethnic community harvests honeycomb at a cliff.

people are leaving rural life, seeking better-paid jobs abroad.

Suk Bahadur Gurung, 56, a local politician and part of the honey hunting team, is gloomy the next generation will follow

the trade. "You need skills and strength," Suk Bahadur Gurung said. "There aren't many youths who want to do it."

Som Ram Gurung held out his swollen arms and legs after descending from

the cliff. "Stings cover my body," he said, adding he is due to take up a factory job in Dubai with a monthly salary of around \$320. His father Doodh Bahadur laments both the dwindling bees and the

departing youth. "We're losing everything," he said. "The future is uncertain for everyone."—AFP



A honey hunter of Gurung ethnic community carries raw honeycomb after a harvest.



Honey hunters of Gurung ethnic community look on during a harvest at a cliff in Lamjung district of Nepal.

Alice Munro's daughter says stepdad abused her, and mom knew

Canadian writer Alice Munro's daughter said Sunday that her stepfather sexually abused her as a child and that her mother was told but stayed with him, in a damning account published after the Nobel laureate's death. Andrea Robin Skinner wrote in the Toronto Star that she was nine when, in 1976, "one night, while she (Munro) was away, her husband, my stepfather, Gerald Fremlin, climbed into the bed where I was sleeping and sexually assaulted me."

She wrote that when she was alone with Fremlin -- who died in 2013 -- he "exposed himself during car rides, told me about the little girls in the neighborhood he liked, and described my mother's sexual needs." Skinner said that, when she was 25, she shared everything that had happened with Munro -- but the acclaimed author decided to stay with Fremlin, whom she wed in the 1970s after her first marriage ended. "She reacted exactly as I had feared she would, as if she had learned of an infidelity," Skinner wrote of Munro.

"We all went back to acting as if nothing had happened. It was what we did," she added. At 38, Skinner said she took her allegations to the police after Munro complimented her husband in a New York Times interview. Fremlin pleaded guilty in 2005 to indecent assault.

"What I wanted was some record of the truth, some public proof that I hadn't deserved what had happened to me," Skinner wrote. "I also wanted this story, my story, to become part of the stories people tell about my mother," she added.

Munro, who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2013, died at 92 in May. Her death prompted glowing tributes, including from Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Victoria-based Munro's Books, founded by the author, said in a statement it "unequivocally supports" Skinner in sharing her story of sexual abuse as a child. "Along with so many readers and writers, we will need time to absorb this news and the impact it may have on the legacy of Alice Munro, whose work and ties to the store we have previously celebrated," it wrote, adding the shop had been independently owned since 2014. A separate statement from the Munro family, also published on the Munro's Books website, praised the shop owners for being "part of our family's healing." "We wholly support the owners and staff of Munro's Books as they chart a new future, and respectfully request that they not be asked or expected to answer questions about the Munro family," it added.—AFP

Napoleon's pistols sold in France for 1.7 million euros: Auctioneers

Two pistols that Napoleon Bonaparte once intended to use to kill himself were sold in France on Sunday for 1.69 million euros (\$1.8 million), the auction house said, with the government insisting that they stay in the country as national treasures. The identity of the buyer at the auction in Fontainebleau south of Paris of the finely adorned objects was not made public but the final sale price, with fees, was above the estimates of 1.2-1.5 million euros.

Ahead of the sale of the weapons, the national treasures commission of the French culture ministry had classified the objects as national treasures and placed a ban on their export, in a decision published in the government's official journal on Saturday. The issuing of the export ban certificate opens a 30-month period during which the French government can make a purchase offer to the unidentified new owner, who has the right to refuse.

Whatever its value and age, a cultural property qualified as a national treasure can leave France only temporarily, with a mandatory return. "Being



A staff member shows two pistols, which belonged to Emperor Napoleon I, during the preview before their auction, in Paris on June 18, 2024.—AFP

and occupied Paris. "After the defeat of the French campaign, he was totally depressed and wanted to commit suicide with these weapons but his grand squire removed the powder," auction house expert Jean-Pierre Osenat told AFP ahead of the sale.

Napoleon instead took poison but vomited and survived, and later gave the pistols to his squire to thank him for his loyalty, Osenat added. Memorabilia of the emperor is extremely sought after among collectors.

One of his famous "bicornes" black cocked hats with its blue, white and red trimmings sold for 1.9 million euros in November. Upon his abdication, Napoleon went into exile on the island of Elba off the coast of Italy. He would soon make a dramatic return to France, only to have his career definitively ended when he was defeated by the British at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, dying in exile on the island of St Helena six years later.—AFP

classified as a national treasure gives an incredible value to the object," said a representative of the Osenat auction house, asking not to be named.

The richly decorated guns inlaid with gold and silver feature the engraved image of Napoleon in full imperial pomp. They are said to have almost been used to end the French ruler's life in 1814, when he was forced to give up power after foreign forces defeated his army

'Despicable Me 4' tops North American box office on opening weekend

Animated comedy "Despicable Me 4" rose to the top of the North American box office on its first weekend in theaters, according to figures from industry watcher Exhibitor Relations published Sunday. The fourth major installment of the Minions universe -- which features Will Ferrell voicing a new villain -- racked up \$75 million in ticket sales in

the United States and Canada since its Friday release by Universal Pictures.

"This is an outstanding opening for the 4th episode of an animation series, ranking only behind Toy Story 4," said box office analyst David A. Gross.

In second place with \$30 million was "Inside Out 2," the coming-of-age Disney and Pixar film which was knocked off the

top spot after enjoying three consecutive weekends there. Apocalyptic horror "A Quiet Place: Day One" was in third place after taking in \$21 million with its story of New Yorkers who must remain silent to survive an invasion by extraterrestrial creatures with acute hearing.

"MaXXXine," a slasher that sees a mysterious killer stalking an aspiring ac-

trix in Hollywood, took fourth place with \$6.7 million in ticket sales. Will Smith's action-comedy "Bad Boys: Ride or Die," which also stars Martin Lawrence, took the last top five spot as it earned \$6.5 million.

Rounding out the top 10 were:

"Horizon: An American Saga -- Chapter

One" (\$5.5 million)
"Sound of Hope: The Story of Possum Trot" (\$3.2 million)
"Kalki 2898 AD" (\$1.9 million)
"The Bikeriders" (\$1.3 million)
"Kinds of Kindness" (\$860,000).—AFP



(From left) Dana Gaier, Chloe Fineman, Will Ferrell, Chris Renaud, Madison Polan, Kristen Wiig, Chris Meledandri, Steve Carell, Miranda Cosgrove, and Joey King attend Universal Pictures And Illumination Present "Despicable Me 4" Premiere on June 09, 2024 in New York City.—AFP photos



The Minions arrive for the "Despicable Me 4" premiere at the Rose Theater, Jazz At Lincoln Center in New York City.

Sports

Greenidge recalls freedom that let him hit Lord's double ton

Bavuma returns to lead S Africa to W Indies in rare Test series

LONDON: The West Indies will be the underdogs when they face England in the first Test at Lord's starting Wednesday, with a side ranked eighth in the rankings likely to feature several faces little known to the home crowd.

It was a very different story 40 years ago when the West Indies, at the height of their Test supremacy and with a team boasting several English county stalwarts, arrived at the 'Home of Cricket' for a match that remains remembered for a stunning double century by Gordon Greenidge.

West Indies went through the whole of the 1980s without losing a Test against England, winning 17 out of 24 games and drawing the rest. But it was a rare even contest during the second Test of the 1984 series at Lord's.

England's Graeme Fowler and Allan Lamb both scored centuries against a West Indies attack featuring celebrated fast bowlers Malcolm Marshall and Joel Garner. Meanwhile, all-rounder Ian Botham took eight wickets and made 81.

It was not until they had batted on into the fifth morning that England declared. Some pundits felt it was an over-cautious move by England captain David Gower, who had brought his batsmen off for bad light on the fourth evening, and made a draw inevitable.

Yet in an era long before limited-overs cricket had transformed Test-match run-rates, the West Indies made light of a target of 342 to finish on 344-1 with some 12 overs still left in the day's play.

'No plan'

Barbados opener Greenidge was 214 not out off 242 balls, including 29 fours and two sixes, following a furious assault. "Well, it's certainly not something you can sit down in the dressing room and plan," Greenidge told AFP during an interview at Lord's.

"You go out to bat, see what's happening and so on. You get one or two that hit

the middle of the bat and feel good and comfortable with it, then things flow from there, so much so that you really can't account for how well it's going—you just want it to keep going."

Greenidge's five-hour innings remains the highest individual score in a victorious fourth innings chase in a Test match, with the West Indies' total the most any side have made in the fourth innings to win a Test at Lord's.

Larry Gomes played his part too, the left-hander making an unbeaten 92 as he gave Greenidge superb support in an unbroken stand of 287. "I was so sorry he didn't get his hundred as well," said Greenidge, now aged 73. "People were saying that we should have let him get his hundred, but he wasn't too bothered at all."

"He wanted to get the match over with and make sure you were on the winning team." So dominant were Greenidge and Gomes that Viv Richards, the outstanding batsman of his generation, was not required to score a single run in a nine-wicket win.

"Obviously, it was good to have guys in the background there that, should you lose a couple of wickets, they were good enough to hold up the innings and not lose the game," said Greenidge, with England's only success on the day the run out of Desmond Haynes.

Greenidge, also a mainstay at Hampshire after spending much of his childhood in England, said West Indies captain Clive Lloyd—himself a fine attacking batsman—had allowed him free rein. "He did not inhibit the players in any way," explained Greenidge. "The players were allowed to play as free as they possibly wanted to. But not to say if they made a mess of it, he didn't have strong words."

None were needed from Lloyd, with cricket journalist Christopher Martin-Jenkins writing: "Greenidge pasted the ball about Lord's like a gifted artist pouring out his soul onto canvas, using

every colour in his collection of oils."

England all-rounder Derek Pringle, hit for several blistering boundaries by Greenidge, told the Cricketer: "I dropped Larry Gomes at first slip, but I'm not sure if it would have made much difference because Greenidge was the man who did all the damage. "He hit the ball very hard and very frequently... he played magnificently well."

And as if to prove his innings at Lord's was no fluke, Greenidge made another double century in the fourth Test at Old Trafford as West Indies swept the series 5-0 in what became known as a 'Black-wash' of England.

Meanwhile, Temba Bavuma will return to international cricket for the first time this year when he captains South Africa in a two-match Test series in the West Indies next month. His lengthy absence from South African teams illustrates what coach Shukri Conrad says is the reality of a modern cricketing world dominated by white-ball cricket.

"It is what it is and we just have to make it work," Conrad said at a press conference announcing a 16-man squad for the tour. White-ball and English county commitments mean that Conrad will only have eight of his 16-man squad available for a pre-tour camp in Durban next week.

Bavuma was injured during South Africa's first Test against India last December and missed the second Test in which South Africa were beaten in one-and-a-half days on a sub-standard pitch. He then missed a two-Test series in New Zealand when South Africa sent a weakened squad to defeat in both matches because contracted players were compelled to play in the SA20, a local franchise competition.

Bavuma was not involved in the T20 World Cup in which South Africa were beaten finalists. Most of the country's T20 stars are playing in the Major League Cricket tournament in



Gordon Greenidge (left) and Desmond Haynes.

the United States, which ends on July 28. Those players selected for the West Indies tour will fly directly to the Caribbean in time for a warm-up match ahead of the first Test.

Conrad said he chose to take a positive view of the situation. "We've got the luxury of a warm-up game, so we've got 10 days in Trinidad before the first Test match," he said. "I mentioned to Temba that it's the first time as a Test unit that we're going to spend some extended time together."

"My first series was against the West Indies (in February and March 2023) when we got together three days before the first game and we got together two days before the India series because

there were Monday matches going on.

"You just have to roll with the punches. It is the modern day world. Players can easily move from T20 and Test match cricket. "I'm very comfortable that guys will be in America. They'll take a short flight across and then we'll have a week's preparation before the first Test."

The squad for the Tests in Trinidad and Guyana includes one uncapped player, batsman Matthew Breetzke, 25, who has played six T20 internationals and has been playing for English county Northamptonshire. Having played only four Tests in the past year, the West Indies tour will be the start of a run of eight Tests for the Proteas through to January. — AFP



MUMBAI: Indian cricket captain Rohit Sharma (L) holds the trophy as he greets fans during an open bus roadshow in Mumbai.—AFP

Rohit to remain Test, ODI captain

NEW DELHI: Rohit Sharma will stay on as captain of India's Test and one-day teams, the country's cricket board said, after he ended his T20 international career with a World Cup triumph. Senior batsman Rohit led India to the T20 title last month, ending the cricket-mad nation's global trophy drought since the 2013 Champions Trophy.

Rohit, 37, Virat Kohli, 35, and Ravindra Jadeja, 35, announced their T20 exit after the win over South Africa in the final in Barbados. It was also the last match for outgoing coach Rahul Dravid. "After this victory, the next stage is the 2025 WTC (World Test Championship) final and the Champions Trophy," Jay Shah, secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, said in a video message.

"I am truly confident that we will win both the tournaments under the leadership of Rohit Sharma," Shah praised the trio of veteran players, as well as Dravid. "This was our third final in the last one year," Shah said, referring to the ODI World Cup and the World Test Championship.

The ODI Champions Trophy is scheduled to be held in February and March 2025 in Pakistan, a nation which India has refused to tour in recent times due to political tensions. The World Test Championship cycle will end in June 2025 with the final at Lord's in London.

India have twice finished runners-up in the Test championship, losing the final to Australia last year. Rohit's India also lost the ODI final to Australia at home in 2023. Rohit took over the captaincy of the white-ball team in 2021 and became the all-format leader a year later. — AFP

Anderson 'proud' of longevity as Test exit looms

LONDON: James Anderson said Monday he was "most proud" of his endurance as a Test bowler as he prepares for his farewell match with England after a career spanning two decades. The paceman, 42 at the end of this month, will bow out from international cricket after playing in the first match of the series between England and the West Indies at Lord's starting on Wednesday.

It will be his 188th match in the format—he has already taken 700 Test wickets. No fast bowler has taken more wickets and only India batting hero Sachin Tendulkar has played more matches in the five-day game.

"Playing my 188th Test at just short of 42 years

old, makes me the most proud and I'm still pushing myself to be the best I possibly can," Anderson told a news conference at Lord's. "Even though I've got one game left, I've still tried to train as hard as I can."

England, looking ahead to the 2025/26 Ashes against Australia, effectively called time on a Test career that Anderson started against Zimbabwe at Lord's 21 years ago. "I feel like I'm still bowling as well as I ever have," he said. "But I knew it had to end at some point, whether it's now or in a year or two."

"The fact it's now is something I've got to deal with and accept. The last couple of months I've made peace with that. "I can't complain. I don't have any regrets, I've played hundreds of games for England, played with people who are much more talented than me but didn't get the opportunity because of injury."

Asked about his emotions, he said: "I feel pretty normal these last couple of days, trying not to think too much about it. "It's been a strange couple of months. I feel pretty happy with where things are now and excited for the week."

Anderson said he had yet to decide whether this



James Anderson

week's match would represent his farewell to first-class cricket or if he would play on for county side Lancashire. "I've loved being out on the field for Lancashire, always have," said Anderson, who recently took an impressive 7-35 for the county. "I've not played a lot for them over the last 20 years, but always tried to give my all." — AFP

Jayasuriya new Sri Lanka coach

COLOMBO: Former Sri Lanka skipper and one-time chief selector Sanath Jayasuriya was appointed Monday to replace head coach Chris Silverwood, who quit following the country's early exit from the T20 World Cup.

Sri Lanka Cricket said Jayasuriya, 55, will be the "interim" coach until a full-time appointment is made for the national team. Jayasuriya said he would coach the national squad ahead of a white-

ball series against India this month and Sri Lanka's tour of England in August.

"I have been asked to take over coaching and I am happy to do it," Jayasuriya told AFP. Jayasuriya, a former Test and ODI captain, had also been a national selector. Sri Lanka Cricket chief executive Ashley de Silva said the appointment was with immediate effect.

"Sanath, with his wealth of international cricketing experience, is well positioned to guide the national team, until we find a permanent solution," de Silva said in a statement. Jayasuriya represented Sri Lanka 586 times across the three formats of the game, hitting 42 centuries and taking 440 wickets. He played his last international in 2011.

Vingegaard scoffs at Pogacar 'scared' slur, eyes Tour de France

ORLEANS: Defending champion Jonas Vingegaard on Monday dismissed Tadej Pogacar's assertion he had been "scared" on their pulsating stage 9 gravel roads struggle where the Visma man sat on the challenger's wheel at every attack.

Instead Vingegaard struck back at the slight, suggesting his defensive ploy had simply gone over Pogacar's head. "Maybe some people don't understand our tactics but that's their problem," said the softly spoken 27-year-old.

Chalk and cheese rivals Vingegaard and Pogacar are locked in an enthralling struggle for the 2024 Tour title after the first week, separated by 1min 15sec with newcomer Remco Evenepoel sat in-between. The deadpan Dane and his Dutch Visma team won the past two Tours adhering to classic old school tactics - waiting for the moment when you are at your strongest and your rival is at his weakest, and striking a devastating blow.

"We only focused on not losing time yesterday," said Vingegaard, the 2022 and 2023 champion, after

Sunday's run over the white gravel. Pogacar and Evenepoel, however, said it was a pity Vingegaard had not helped them attack.

"I would have lost the Tour de France yesterday if I had done that. I'd had a puncture and was riding Jan's (teammate Tratnik) bike," Vingegaard said at his team hotel in Orleans Monday. "I have my plan and I trust it. I'm generally better in the third week," he said. In stark contrast to the modest champion, the swashbuckling Slovenian and fan favourite Pogacar is a proponent of the new cycling, applying top speed as often as possible and engaging in relentless attacks.

The 27-year-old Vingegaard hugged Pogacar's wheel throughout the first two weeks in 2023 before crushing his rival over two days, first with the stage 16 individual time trial and the next day on the stage 17 mountain finish. Vingegaard finished the Tour in the yellow jersey, winning by 7min 29sec.

Happy to be alive
Vingegaard, however, suffered



Tadej Pogacar

serious injuries in March and was hospitalized for 12 days, and is gingerly feeling his way back to full form. "I've been lucky the first week hasn't been too hard," he said. "I feel much better than expected, but I'm not quite on the form of last year yet."

Vingegaard said the crash at the Tour of the Basque Country had changed him deeply. "I'm just first of all happy to be alive," he said. "In the race it makes me a dark horse, not

that I mind pressure, but here I'm under no pressure to win. If I lose, life goes on and, as I said, I'm really happy just to be alive now."

But Vingegaard is a long way from blowing off the 2024 Tour and a hat-trick of wins: his eyes remain very firmly on the prize. "Last year I took seven and a half minutes in two days," he said. "So I'm racing carefully day by day. And racing for the victory." — AFP

Sports

Olmo takes reins as Spain battle France for Euros 2024 final berth

Germany midfielder Kroos will be out for the remainder of the tournament

MUNICH: Dani Olmo did not start Euro 2024 as part of Spain coach Luis de la Fuente's first choice side but how the three-time champions finish will depend in no small part on him. The 26-year-old RB Leipzig attacking midfielder replaced the injured Pedri against Germany early on in the quarter-final and contributed to both of Spain's goals in a thrilling 2-1 extra-time victory.

Olmo slotted home the first and created the second for Mikel Merino in a superb display in Stuttgart, and is set to start against France in the semi-final on Tuesday. At the beginning of the group phase, with Barcelona playmaker Pedri fit and in form, De la Fuente opted for him as the team's central creator over Olmo.

In the past, the technically gifted Olmo has also operated on the left for Spain but electric Athletic Bilbao winger Nico Williams has proven undroppable this summer. Instead Olmo waited patiently for his chances to come and made sure he took them, firstly in Spain's third group-stage match against Albania.

They won 1-0 and Olmo impressed, setting up Ferran Torres for the only goal of the game. "Dani Olmo is a superb player, a fantastic footballer, I really value him," said De la Fuente. "He thinks about the team more than himself as an individual."

The versatile playmaker tucked away Spain's fourth in the last-16 romp over Georgia as a substitute and when he stepped in for Pedri against Germany after just eight minutes, he needed no time to acclimatize to the pace of the game. Olmo forced a good save from goalkeeper Manuel Neuer before

breaking the deadlock with a clinical finish after 51 minutes. The midfielder then curled in a dangerous ball for Merino to head home when the game seemed set for the lottery of penalties.

'Bring on the semis'

"I'm exhausted but I'm so proud of the fantastic team we have, how we fought to the end, it's incredible, I'm so happy," said Olmo after he was named player of the match. "It's everyone's tournament, that's what matters the most...this win is for (Pedri) and everyone, and bring on the semi-finals."

Pedri suffered a knee sprain after a robust tackle by veteran Germany midfielder Toni Kroos and will be out for the remainder of the tournament. De la Fuente has kept all his squad on-side and ready to contribute, and Olmo is the best example of how that has paid off. Pedri is not the only regular starter De la Fuente is missing for the semi-final clash against Les Bleus in Munich.

Right-back Dani Carvajal was sent off late in extra time against Germany and Robin Le Normand is also suspended. Nacho Fernandez and Jesus Navas are the most likely candidates to fill in and the coach said he has full belief in any of his squad.

"I have 26 top players who are competitive for these matches, if one is absent, another will play," he explained. "This group has exceptional human and footballing qualities. I know they won't let me down." Olmo certainly did not against Germany, although his Berlin-born partner might have a different opinion. Didier Deschamps' dull but durable France have



DONAUESCHINGEN: Spain's players attend an MD-1 training session at the team's base camp in Donaueschingen, on July 8, 2024, on the eve of their UEFA Euro 2024 semi-final football match against France. — AFP

proven hard to break down thus far, conceding just one goal in five matches, the best record out of the four semi-finalists. Spain, by contrast, are

the leading scorers and Olmo's job is to help them unpick the blue wall and take La Roja to the Berlin final on July 14. — AFP

Hussein Al-Tamimi wins gold at Arab championships

KUWAIT: Kuwait athletic team continues its successful participation in the Arab under-23 championships which will conclude on July 9th, as Hussein Al-Tamimi won the gold medal of the shot put event as he recorded 17.39 meters, meanwhile Abdullah Al-Azmi placed third in the long jump with 7.20 meters.

Runner Abdullah Al-Munayes won the bronze medal in the 110m hurdles race in a time of 15.20 seconds. Secretary General of the Athletics Federation Hussein Dashti lauded the high spirit and distinguished performance of Kuwait athletes at the Arab competitions.

He said "competition is fierce among the Arab athletes and Kuwait's athletes' achievements are outstanding, and he hoped to win more medals before the end of the championships". Dashti dedicated the wins to the political leadership and Kuwait people as he thanked the delegation for being keen to exert all efforts while competing in the name of Kuwait.



Kuwait's Hussein Al-Tamimi (centre) on the podium after receiving the gold medal.

Copa America crunch-time for surviving quartet

MIAMI: The Copa America is down to the final four with a pair of fascinating semi-finals and favourites Argentina hoping they can win their third straight major title. The Argentines, world champions and defending Copa title holders, open the semi-final action when they face surprise package Canada on Tuesday in New Jersey. Then on Wednesday in Charlotte, Uruguay - who knocked out Brazil after a shoot-out on Saturday - will play a Colombia team which, unbeaten in 27 games, beat Panama 5-0 in their quarter-final.

Argentina and Uruguay, currently tied on 15 Copa America titles, are both hoping they can break that deadlock to become the most successful nation in the tournament's history. Colombia have a solitary title from 2001 while Canada are playing in the tournament for the first time. Argentina needed penalty shoot-out heroics from their goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez to get past Ecuador in the last eight and while Lionel Scaloni's team have yet to really hit top gear they start as clear favorites against Canada.

American coach Jesse Marsch has made an instant impact with Canada, taking over in mid-May and quickly implementing his high-energy, pressing style to great effect. Marsch, who was reported to be close to taking over as USA coach before the decision last year to re-hire Gregg Berhalter, has had the last laugh as his team have produced a memorable run to the last four while the Americans failed to get out of their group.

Canada got past a Venezuela team that had won all

three of their group stage games, winning on penalties at the end of a pulsating encounter on Friday. However, they know that Lionel Messi and Argentina represent a very different proposition.

The teams met in the opening group game of the tournament with Argentina winning 2-0, but there is no shortage of confidence in Marsch's team. "It's going to take everything," said Bayern Munich wing-back Alphonso Davies.

"Going into this game, we know what's on the line. We win and go forward, we lose and go home. They're going to come out with everything. We're hungrier than ever, we expect a battle - as they should," he said.

Three of the four quarter-finals were decided on penalties, but Marsch insists his team will play their usual attacking style. "The game against Argentina will have to be the best we've ever played... We're not going to sit back and just try to defend. We will be aggressive. We're going to try to play the way we want to play and see if we can keep it up," he promised.

Argentina's line-up remains largely the one which triumphed in the World Cup in Qatar in 2022 although Messi, troubled by a hamstring strain, has yet to perform anywhere near the level he showed in that tournament.

But the midfield is packed with quality options and striker Lautaro Martinez has picked up four goals while the defence, marshalled by Lisandro Martinez, has looked solid. Colombia continue to impress under Nestor Lorenzo with the late career "second wind" for playmaker James Rodriguez providing them with a creative spark. Rodriguez has never quite lived up to expectations at club level but has recaptured the electric form he showed at the World Cup in Brazil 10 years ago. "I'm having a good time. The boys are also having a very good Cup. Without their help I couldn't play well. Everything is coming together," he said after providing two assists and scoring a penalty in the thrashing of Panama.



ARLINGTON: Canada's forward #10 Jonathan David celebrates alongside teammates their victory after a penalty shoot-out during the Conmebol 2024 Copa America tournament quarter-final football match between Venezuela and Canada in Arlington, Texas. — AFP

Bruising encounter

Uruguay are in buoyant mood after eliminating Brazil in a bruising encounter in Las Vegas, but they will be without the suspended Nahitan Nandez and have injuries to defender Ronaldo Araujo and wing-back Matias Vina. Veteran Argentine coach Marcelo Bielsa has brought his trademark direct, hard-running style to Uruguay and that promises a game which will be high-tempo, with Colombia dangerous on the break thanks to the pace of winger Luis Diaz.

"The match against Colombia will be just as demanding (as playing Brazil) because they are a team that has been developing a lot match by match," Bielsa said. "Like Brazil, they have important strikers in every position, but we are confident we can play on an equal footing with any opponent," he added. The Copa America final will be held in Miami on July 14. — AFP

France in turmoil as it 'hosts the world' for Olympics

PARIS: France has been plunged into political turmoil three weeks before hosting the Olympics, making it hard to know who will be in key government positions when the Games open on July 26.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal underlined the uncertainty as he offered his resignation on Sunday evening following snap elections that resulted in a hung parliament. "Our country is facing an unprecedented political situation and is getting ready to host the world in a few weeks," Attal said, offering to stay on in his position "as long as duty demands".

Whether his resignation is accepted will depend on President Emmanuel Macron, who is yet to react to the results publicly which saw his centrist bloc shrink by nearly 100 MPs. It is unclear whether the head of state will seek to keep a caretaker government in place, but the left-wing alliance that topped Sunday's vote - without a majority - is already pushing to name a candidate to replace Attal.

The fate of Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin, who has overseen all the security preparations for the Games, is also in the balance. "What organizers worry about the most are things like delinquency and crime, and of course terrorism, as well as traffic conditions," Paul Dietschy, a history and sports professor at the Universite of Franche-Comte in France, told AFP.

"The interior minister is the most important position," Darmanin said last week that if the far-right National Rally or hard-right France Unbowed party formed a government, then he would resign immediately. "The Olympic Games have been very well-prepared. Everyone knows it and everyone welcomes it," he told AFP.

The local organizing committee and the International Olympic Committee were both blindsided by Macron's election gamble so close to the start of the July 26-August 11 Games - as were most government ministers and voters. — AFP



HAGUENAU: France's gymnast Melanie De Jesus Dos Santos applauds during a women's artistic gymnastics match between France, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium, as part of the preparations for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, in Hagenau. — AFP

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804

Industrial Shuwaikh

Qadsia	24814764
Dasmah	22515088
Bneid Al-Gar	22532265
Shaab	22531908
Qibla	22518752
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22459381
Mirqab	22451082
Sharq	22456536
Salmiya	22465401
	25746401

Hospitals

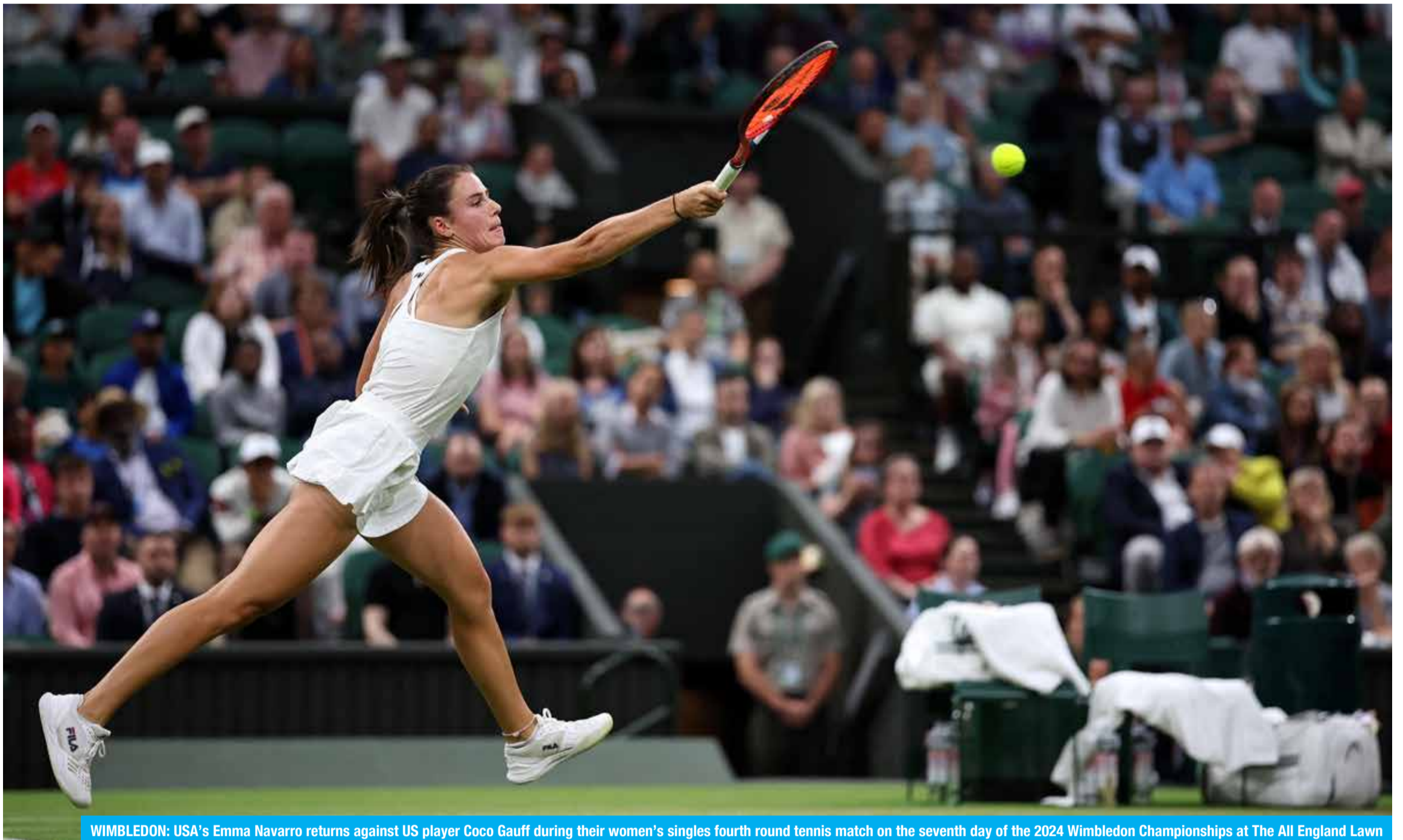
Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300

LOST

I. Shahanas A.S. s/o samsudheen M.K. residing at building no:214 street6, Jleeb,Kuwait informing to the public that my Bpharm(Bachelor of Pharmacy) 2 markist from the university of calicut as per the details given below have been irrevocably lost in kuwait during travel and as such I intend to apply for the duplicate mark list. Reg No: JDA.JBPH072 First year Mark list - Aug/2010 Second year Mark list - Dec/2010 If anybody happens to get the originals, may kindly contact Mob: 99279054

Gauff crashes at Wimbledon

Alcaraz, Sinner locked on semi-final collision course



WIMBLEDON: USA's Emma Navarro returns against US player Coco Gauff during their women's singles fourth round tennis match on the seventh day of the 2024 Wimbledon Championships at The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon. — AFP

LONDON: World number two Coco Gauff was sent crashing out of Wimbledon by American compatriot Emma Navarro on Sunday as Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner were firmly locked on an All England Club semi-final collision course.

Gauff's 6-4, 6-3 fourth round defeat means that only two of the top 10 women's seeds are left in the tournament. Elsewhere, unheralded Lulu Sun became the first New Zealand woman to reach the last-eight at Wimbledon, while Madison Keys quit her last-16 clash in floods of tears.

Navarro, ranked 19th, reached the quarter-finals of a Grand Slam for the first time with her defeat of US Open champion Gauff. Gauff, who made the semi-finals at the Australian Open and French Open this year, has still to get past the last 16 at Wimbledon, the tournament, where she made her breakthrough as a 15-year-old in 2019. Her shock defeat followed the unexpected exit of world number one Iga Swiatek in the third round on Saturday. "I think I played really aggressively. Coco's an amazing player and I have a ton of respect for her," said Navarro.

Only fourth-ranked 2022 champion Elena Rybakina and Jasmine Paolini, the world number seven, remain from the top 10 women. Paolini will be Navarro's quarter-final opponent. World number three Alcaraz defeated French 16th seed Ugo Humbert 6-3, 6-4, 1-6, 7-5 to make the quarter-finals of a Grand Slam for the ninth time in just 14 appearances.

However, it was another uncomfortable afternoon for the Spaniard, who had needed five sets to see off Frances Tiafoe in the third round. His erratic performance on Sunday saw him drop serve five times and commit an uncharacteristic 33 unforced errors.

The 21-year-old, bidding to become just the fifth man to win the French Open and Wimbledon back-to-back, eased through the first set under the Centre Court roof before crucially saving four break points in the fifth game of the second.

Humbert stormed back, breaking the champion three times in the third set as Alcaraz went spectacularly off the boil. But Humbert handed over a service break in the 11th game of the fourth set and Alcaraz took full advantage to quickly seal the tie.

'Fight to last ball'

"I will be there, fighting until the last ball," said Alcaraz, who is chasing a fourth Grand Slam title. Alcaraz will take on American 12th seed Tommy Paul, who beat Roberto Bautista Agut 6-2, 7-6 (7/3), 6-2. Over on Court One, top seed Sinner moved into the last-eight with a 6-2, 6-4, 7-6 (11/9) win over American 14th seed Ben Shelton.

Sinner, who won his maiden Slam crown at the Australian Open this year, will face Russian fifth seed Daniil Medvedev for a place in the semi-finals in a rematch of their final in Melbourne. "It was a tough match, especially the third set. I had to keep saving

set points," said Sinner, a semi-finalist in 2023.

Medvedev, also a semi-finalist last year, progressed when 10th seed Grigor Dimitrov retired in the first set of their last-16 tie with a knee injury. Sun made history for New Zealand with a three-set victory over Emma Raducanu, shattering home hopes of ending a 47-year wait for a British women's champion.

The 23-year-old qualifier, ranked at 123, triumphed 6-2, 5-7, 6-2 over the 2021 US Open winner. Sun hit 52 winners against Raducanu, who took a medical time-out in the third set to treat problems with her ankle and back. "It was a great match against Emma. I really dug deep to get the win," said Sun. Sun will next face Croatia's Donna Vekic, the world number 37, who clinched a 6-2, 1-6, 6-4 win over Spain's Paula Badosa on the back of 33 winners.

American 12th seed Keys was just one game away from a third quarter-final at the All England Club before she was forced to quit against Paolini. After dropping the first set, Keys hit back to level the match at 3-6, 7-6 (8/6). The 2017 US Open runner-up then raced into a 5-2 lead in the decider when she suffered a left leg injury in the eighth game. At 5-4, she took a medical time-out, returned with her left leg bandaged but with her movement severely restricted, she wept openly on court before quitting at 5-5.

"I'm very sorry for her, it's sad," said French Open runner-up Paolini, who had never won a grass-court match until two weeks ago. — AFP

New Chelsea boss Maresca wants to get fans inside

LONDON: New Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca said it was vital to rebuild the connection between the club and fans following a tumultuous two years at Stamford Bridge. The former Leicester boss replaced Mauricio Pochettino last month after the Argentine left by mutual consent.



Enzo Maresca

The Italian, 44, impressed club bosses after taking Leicester back into the top flight at the first time of asking. "For me, it's quite clear we need to create as soon as possible the right mentality, the right culture - a culture that the fans can be proud of the team," Maresca told the club's website.

"We're going to try to be an aggressive team on the ball and off the ball. We need to create this connection between the fans and the club, especially at home." Under Pochettino, and his predecessors Graham Potter and caretaker boss Frank Lampard, the atmosphere at home games was often one of frustration as fans vented their anger at the players, the management and the club hierarchy.

The team lost just one of their final 15 league games to qualify for the Europa Conference League but they finished trophyless for the second straight season. "When you join a club like Chelsea, you have to know it's a club that has to win," said Maresca.

"For us, we're going to try to do our best to be there, to fight and to compete with the clubs that in this moment are winning and fighting to win titles. "One of the reasons I'm here is because I'm convinced that the squad is very good. It's full of talent, so the most important thing now is that we are able to create the right culture to drive us through the season. — AFP

Giannis ends Greek Olympic berth wait

PIRAEUS: Giannis Antetokounmpo steered Greece to an Olympic berth on Sunday as he overcame a slow start to score 23 points in an 80-69 qualifying tournament victory over Croatia in Piraeus. The game was one of four finals on Sunday to determine the last qualifiers for the Paris men's basketball tournament.

In Riga, Brazil beat hosts Latvia 94-69. In Valencia, Spain edged the Bahamas 86-78. In the Olympic tournament in Lille, Greece and Spain will play in Group A with Australia and Canada. Brazil will line up in Group B with France, Germany and Japan.

The final place in the Olympics went to qualifier Puerto Rico, who upset Lithuania 79-68 in San Juan. Puerto Rico advanced into Olympic Group C with the United States, South Sudan and Serbia.

Before the qualifying tournament started, Antetokounmpo had not played competitively since injuring a calf on April 9 playing for the Milwaukee Bucks. He returned for the tournament opener in Piraeus on July 2 and, even though he was rested for Greece's second game, ended up collecting the tournament most valuable player award.

On Sunday, Croatia, with 2.16-metre (7-foot-1) Los Angeles Clippers centre Ivica Zubac at the heart of their

defence, packed the paint to deny Antetokounmpo. Croatia led by as many as four points in the first quarter. As Antetokounmpo began to penetrate and Greece went 12-of-32 on three-point attempts, the hosts took control. Antetokounmpo finished as the top scorer and also grabbed eight rebounds to ensure his first Olympic appearance.

"It's incredible. I don't think the scenario could have been better. Being in your house, with people that support you. It's an incredible feeling," Antetokounmpo said. "Since I was a kid I always wanted to play the Olympic Games." "I don't want to get ahead and be talking about medals," he said at the press conference. "The last time we went to the Olympic Games was 2008. One step at a time."

Zubac had 19 points and 13 rebounds for Croatia. In Riga, Brazil hit eight out of eight three-point attempts as they took a 34-11 lead at the end of the first quarter and then cruised to victory.

Forwards Leo Meindl and Bruno Caboclo each scored 21 points. Caboclo, who plays for Red Star in Serbia, was voted tournament MVP. "I'm so excited, I'm so happy. These are the best plans I could imagine," he said looking ahead to the Games. In Valencia, Spain took the lead for the first time against Bahamas midway through the second quarter and nursed their advantage the rest of the way.

Guard Lorenzo Brown top scored for Spain with 19. He was matched by NBA guard Buddy Hield for Bahamas. Rudy Fernandez scored nine points for Spain to book a record sixth trip to the Olympics at the age of 39. He is tied with six other men and four women on five Olympic basketball tournaments. — AFP



ATHENS: Greece's Giannis Antetokounmpo (C-L) is marked by Croatia's Ivica Zubac (C-R) during the final game of the FIBA Olympic Qualifying Tournament between Croatia and Greece at the Peace and Friendship Stadium in Athens. — AFP