

R₊
RIDE SAFE

BOOK YOUR RIDE NOW

DOWNLOAD THE APP NOW

@ridesafe.app

2 Red Palace: A symbol of bravery, tradition, unity

8 EU accepts Apple plan to open tap-to-pay to rivals

11 Pioneering women in today's Weekender

16 Super-sub Watkins sends England into Euros final

Zionist carnage in Gaza City

60 martyrs found • Bibi demands border control • US sanctions settlers, OKs 500-pound bombs



GAZA: Fighting and bombardment shook Gaza's biggest city on Thursday, even after the Zionist military declared an end to its operation in an eastern district that saw Gaza City's heaviest combat in months. The upsurge in fighting, bombardment and displacement followed Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's statement in late June that "the war in its intense phase is about to end". It also came as talks were held in the Gulf emirate of Qatar towards a truce and hostage release deal after more than nine months of war.

Gaza's civil defense agency said around 60 bodies had been found in the ruins of Shujaiya. "Once the (Zionist) occupation forces withdrew from the Shujaiya neighborhood, civil defense crews, with local residents, managed to recover about 60 martyrs up to now," agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said. Some 85 percent of buildings are now "uninhabitable" and Shujaiya has been turned into a "disaster zone", he added, estimating that 120,000 people had been left homeless.

Hamas said troops had pulled back from Shujaiya, leaving "more than 300 residential units and more than 100 businesses destroyed". Witnesses said tanks and troops had moved into other Gaza City districts. An AFP correspondent reported air strikes on the Sabra neighborhood while fighters engaged in heavy clashes with Zionist forces in Tel al-Hawa.

Explosions and orange flashes shook the darkened city before daylight brought automatic weapons fire, AFP TV images showed.

Hamas reported 45 air strikes in the Gaza City area, as well as in Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah, where Netanyahu had said the intense phase of the war was nearing its conclusion. Netanyahu demanded Thursday that the Zionist entity retain control of key Gaza territory along the border with Egypt as part of any accord to suspend the war with Hamas. The condition conflicts with Hamas' position that the Zionist entity must withdraw from all Gaza territory after a ceasefire.

Speaking after the return of Zionist negotiators from talks with mediators in Qatar, Netanyahu said the Zionist entity needed control to stop weapons reaching Hamas from Egypt — one of four conditions for a deal with the Palestinian fighters. He did not say if the measure would be permanent.

Hamas said it had not been informed "of any new developments" from the latest talks and accused the Zionist entity of "delaying tactics" aimed at "sabotaging" truce efforts. On Wednesday, the Washington Post had reported that both the Zionist entity and Hamas had "signaled their acceptance of an 'interim governance' plan" in which neither would rule the territory and a US-trained force of Palestinian Authority supporters would provide security.

GAZA: Palestinians make their way past rubble of destroyed buildings after the Zionist military withdrew following a two-week offensive from the Shujaiya neighbourhood, east of Gaza City, on July 11, 2024. — AFP (See Page 5)

Continued on Page 6

NEWS IN BRIEF

Passports of bedoons canceled

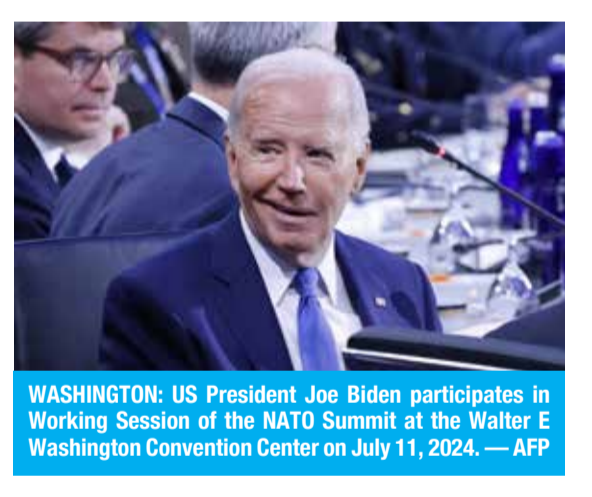
KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah ordered the suspension of article 17 passports issued to illegal residents (bedoons) and all applications submitted, except for humanitarian cases (treatment and study abroad), pending further study and scrutiny by competent authorities. All article 17 passports are considered canceled, and holders with humanitarian cases (treatment and study) must visit the Adan service center.

Spain PM slams NATO over Gaza double standards

WASHINGTON: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez on Wednesday urged the West to reject "double standards" regarding the conflict in Gaza as he joined NATO leaders in supporting Ukraine. Spain under Sanchez has infuriated the Zionist entity's right-wing government by recognizing a Palestinian state and criticizing the Zionist entity's conduct of its war against Hamas.

"If we are telling our people that we are supporting Ukraine because we are defending the international law, this is the same to what we have to do towards Gaza," he said at NATO's 75th anniversary summit in Washington. The socialist leader said there should be a "consistent political position" in which "we don't have double standards."

Sanchez said the world needed to press to "stop this terrible humanitarian crisis" affecting the Palestinians and called for an international peace conference to push for a Palestinian state. "We need to create the conditions for an immediate and urgent ceasefire," he said. "There is a real risk of escalation to Lebanon." Sanchez said he also supported "democracy, freedom and the right to exist of a country"



WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden participates in Working Session of the NATO Summit at the Walter E Washington Convention Center on July 11, 2024. — AFP

Iraq, Kuwait stress dialogue

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Al-Sudani and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Iraq Tariq Al-Faraj stressed on Thursday the need to continue dialogue on issues of common interest between the two countries. Faraj told KUNA that this took place during his meeting with Sudani in Baghdad, where they discussed ways to enhance relations and cooperation in the economic and investment fields, along with other vital fields. — KUNA

Bosnians mark genocide in Srebrenica

SREBRENICA, Bosnia And Herzegovina: Thousands of solemn mourners gathered in the town of Srebrenica in Bosnia on Thursday to remember the 1995 massacre of Bosnian Muslims, less two months after the United Nations established a memorial day to mark the genocide. On July 11, 1995, Bosnian Serb forces captured the eastern Bosnian town — which was then a UN-protected enclave — and killed 8,000 Muslim men and boys in the following days.

It was the worst massacre in Europe since World War II and two international courts ruled it was genocide. "Unfortunately, while I stand here other mothers lose their children in Ukraine and Palestine," said Munira Subasic, president of the Mothers of Srebrenica association. "The world and Europe have learned nothing," she told several hundred people who attended the ceremony.

"It's hard when July comes. They ended up like this only because they had a (Muslim) name," said Mevlida Hasanovic as she prayed at the tomb of her cousin, who was 18 when he was killed. Hasanovic lost a dozen male relatives in the massacre including her

Continued on Page 6



SREBRENICA: Bosnian Muslims pray in front of coffins of victims of the Srebrenica 1995 genocide at the memorial cemetery in the village of Potocari on July 11, 2024. — AFP

Weekend to see 53C heat

KUWAIT: Temperature in Jahra reached 52 degrees Celsius on Thursday as power consumption hit a record high of 17,092 MW as Kuwait and the rest of the Gulf region are affected by a strong heatwave caused by a hot dry air mass from the Indian low depression. Head of Kuwait's Meteorological Department Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi forecast temperatures will soar to 53 degrees on Friday and the weather will remain extremely hot on Saturday. Qarawi said temperatures will range between 49 and 53 degrees on Friday and 48 and 50 on Saturday, accompanied by dusty weather caused by strong northwesterly winds blowing from the desert.

Dino skeleton to fetch millions at New York auction

NEW YORK: The largest stegosaurus skeleton ever found is expected to fetch millions of dollars at auction in New York next week, likely fueling objections from paleontologists. The fossil, estimated to be approximately 150 million years old, was put on display at Sotheby's on Wednesday and will be exhibited there until its sale on July 17.

Named Apex, the giant skeleton — 11 feet tall and nearly 27 feet long — is billed as "the most complete and best-preserved" stegosaurus specimen of its size, counting 254 fossil bone elements of an approximate total of 319. Such sales have become more frequent in recent years, drawing criticism from paleontologists, who say that these finds should be preserved in museums or other public spaces and not sold to private bidders.

"It's a very, very rare animal, and to find one of this size and this completeness is phenomenal," Cassandra Hatton, head of science and popular culture at Sotheby's, told AFP. The auction house estimates Apex's value at \$4-6 million, though still less

Continued on Page 6



NEW YORK: A 150-million-year-old fossil of a Stegosaurus specimen is on display at Sotheby's on July 10, 2024. — AFP



Red Palace, a symbol of bravery, tradition, unity

One of the most important historical landmarks in Kuwait



Fighters during the Battle of Jahra.

By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: The Red Palace is one of the most important historical landmarks in Kuwait that highlights the country's unique architecture and desert nature while serving its defensive purposes. The palace was built using red clay and sits around 6,500 sq m. As much as it's a cultural and historical attraction, the palace is also a symbol of Kuwaiti bravery and unity.

It was built in 1897, a year after Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah "The Great" ascended to the throne. It is located in Jahra, around 32 km away from Kuwait City, a city where Sheikh Mubarak was very influential. It was the site of an important battle called the "Battle of Jahra", during which Kuwait gained an

important victory during the reign of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah that eventually led to the Uqair protocol, when the borders were drawn between Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

According to the NCCAL, the palace consists of three sections: The residence of the Amir, the mosque and the diwaniya. The residence and sanctuary of the Amir occupies the northwest side of the palace and consists of nine rooms, with two staircases, one leading to the roof and the other to his room, the only room built on the roof. The western side of the palace is occupied by the diwaniya, a place reserved for the seating of sheikhs and their guests, while the southern side is reserved for horse stalls and fodder. The mosque is located near the guard room and has its

own house. The Red Palace is currently used as the headquarters of the Badia Heritage Center and is affiliated with NCCAL.

The Red Palace has been closed for a number of years. Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi made an inspection tour of the Red Palace and Museum on Wednesday evening to check the refurbishment works of the historical site. He was accompanied by Secretary General of NCCAL Dr Mohammad Al-Jassar and a number of senior officials of the council. The minister was apprised of the progress of the first two stages of the rehabilitation project, including the renovation of the roads, sidewalks, terraces, gardens and parking lots.

Kuwait and UNICEF discuss cooperation

KUWAIT: Kuwait and UNICEF on Thursday discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the two sides, especially with regards to childcare. The meeting—between the Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood, and Minister of State for Youth Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah and UNICEF's Representative to the Gulf Area, Eltayeb Adam—also explored projects carried out by the UN entity, especially within early childhood development and protection, said a ministerial statement. Also present at the meeting was UNICEF program specialist Nour Al-Huwaidi. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Turkish Ambassador Tuba Nur Sonmez pays a solidarity visit to Bosnian Ambassador Nusret Cancar on July 11.

Remembering Srebrenica Genocide amid massacre in Gaza

By Tuba Nur Sonmez
Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait

2024 marks the twenty-ninth anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica, in which at least 8,372 lives were lost, thousands were displaced, and families and communities were devastated. Following a vote on May 23, 2024 in the UN General Assembly, it was decided to designate July 11 as the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica, to be observed annually. Turkey was one of the co-sponsors of the resolution.

Aggressors were led by war criminals, who were later convicted by the International Court in The Hague (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia). They systematically murdered the victims after overrunning the peacekeepers who were supposed to be protecting the UN "safe area" of Srebrenica. The Srebrenica Genocide, described by the International Court of Justice as the largest genocide in Europe since the Second World War, left a dark mark on human history.

On this day of mourning, I extend my deepest condolences to the grieving families of our martyrs and all our Bosniak brothers and sisters. As the Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait, I came to visit for solidarity with Bosnian Ambassador to Kuwait Nusret Cancar on this sad day. We never forget the wisdom and painful truth in the words of the late Aliya Izetbegovic: "Whatever you do, do not forget the genocide, because forgotten genocide will be repeated." To avoid experiencing similar atrocities again, we will never forget and will not let Srebrenica be forgotten.

In the 1990s, all these atrocities happened before the eyes of the international community and the United Nations. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, over more than three years, tens of thousands of people were brutally killed in southeastern Europe, in front of the world. The international community was ineffective in stopping the inhumane massacres, including the Srebrenica genocide. It is quite sad to see today, as it was before, that the international community is unable to stop Zionist monstrous attacks on the defenseless people of Gaza every single day since October 7.

Just as it was in Srebrenica, another shameful genocide is being committed in Gaza. We strongly hope that all perpetrators of genocide will be judged properly and that justice will be served. The names, languages, and identities of those who commit genocide may change, but the victims are always the same: civilians, children, women, elderly people, and all the defenseless. To prevent the repetition of such suffering, it is essential to establish a culture of peace, tolerance, and reconciliation. We should call on all people and the international community to remember Srebrenica, and to raise their voices, and act to stop the ongoing genocide in Gaza. We will never forget.



KUWAIT: Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Wasmi and senior officials attend the closing ceremony of the 26th "Quran learning and recitation" competition. — KUNA photos

Awqaf promotes Quran learning and recitation

KUWAIT: Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Wasmi said the Quran learning and recitation competition reflects the efforts of memorizing the book of Allah and caring for its learners. Al-Wasmi spoke during the closing ceremony of the 26th competition, which was under the slogan (Maknoun) "protected". The event was held under the patronage of the Amir His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He said the Awqaf Ministry is keen on organizing Quran contests for citizens (of both genders). The contest has recorded 43,686 participants over 26 years, with

4,185 winners. The Awqaf Ministry had, among its priorities, made various efforts that are aimed at caring for the holy Quran, its sciences, and attracting all groups of Kuwaiti society to the contest.

He expressed pride in crowning the new group of Quran learners. The number of winners this year reached 242 (of both genders), in addition to 33 winners from the disabled group. Meanwhile, Secretary General of the Awqaf Nasser Al-Hamad said Kuwait became the focus of the entire world for Quran recitation and for recognizing its learners. Al-Hamad said the Secretariat is keen on continuing its efforts in supporting sustainable societal development.

This year's contest had 2,604 participants. 2,077 were tested—892 males and 1,185 females. The number of participating entities was 50, and 4 of them were awarded with contest plaques. The number of winners from the reform institutions and juveniles was 10. The number of those who achieved 100 percent was 13 (six males and seven females). — KUNA



Local

Education, job market alignment 'essential' for Kuwait Vision 2035

30,000 high school graduates gear towards the next stage

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Vision 2035 is an ambitious plan aimed at the overall development of the country. One of the most important aspects the government should pay attention to is "creating an alignment between the educational output and the job market needs". As 30,000 high school graduates are gearing up towards the next stage of their lives, according to Ministry of Education numbers back in September, it is only paramount for the government to realize that the job market must absorb graduates of universities in a few years to come, establishing actual jobs that would contribute to the development vision.

In this regard, the Cabinet had taken a decision in August 2022 to establish a committee that would look into the needs of the job market, coordinating with gov-

ernment entities to make sure that graduates would fit in the slot of newly created jobs. Authorities, namely the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, had also expressed a desire to provide students with scholarships in Kuwait and abroad for majors that would add to the development vision of the country once graduates become eligible for a job.

Speaking to KUNA, acting dean of admission and registering at Kuwait University (KU), Dr Fadhel Aziz said that the mechanism of admission would be explained to eager students in the upcoming period, especially the part about the job market's needs and new majors created to cover future careers. KU launched in July the "Here Begins Your Future" exhibition at the Avenues Mall as a step to

inform students and enable them to take informed decisions.

The Civil Service Commission (CSC), on its part, revealed that in June around 24,000 jobs were announced, while the annual number of grades for petitioners and those resigning reached 6,500. Since 2023, there are 28,000 awaiting jobs, and if the number does not decrease in the upcoming few years, there would be an issue, especially with the aforementioned 30,000 high school graduates who would probably graduate in four years at minimum, inflating the future numbers of job seekers in return.

The CSC also launched a workshop recently focusing on the new mechanisms and job descriptions for engineering and media jobs, connecting that to the avail-

able future jobs within the development vision mainframe. This adds to the efforts of the Public Authority for Manpower which recently issued statistics on the job market and career seekers. In the statistics for those seeking jobs in the public and private sectors annually between 2001 and 2024, the authority revealed that it was at its highest in 2021, when a staggering 32,326 individuals applied, while the lowest was in 2024 with only 4,036.

On the surface, the statistics displayed extreme fluctuations, which should be addressed before they have a negative impact on the development plan. The Manpower Authority also issued a list of top private sector entities employing Kuwaiti citizens, indicating that the banking sector topped the list with 64 percent,

followed by telecommunications at 60 percent, finance at 40 percent, and petrochemicals at 30 percent.

The Trending Economics—a website providing users with accurate information for 196 countries, including historical data and forecasts for more than 20 million economic indicators, exchange rates, stock market indexes, government bond yields, and commodity prices—said that Kuwait registered its higher unemployment rate in 2020, reaching around 3.3 percent. The source, using data for economic indicators based on official sources, added that the unemployment numbers decreased by 2021 to 2.8 percent and continued the trend in 2022, settling at 2.5 percent and rising slightly to 2.65 percent in 2023. — KUNA

Japan, Arab ministers enhance cooperation

TOKYO: Japan and Arab ministers agreed on Thursday to enhance their cooperation in various areas to benefit the development of all parties involved, said the fifth Japan-Arab Economic Forum. The fields of interest included industrial development, energy and economic security, high-quality infrastructure, digital transformation, low-carbon energy and energy saving, and resource development, added a joint press statement issued after the forum.

During the ministerial conference on the second day of the Economic Forum, the two sides exchanged views on co-creating sustainable and resilient economic development through a wide range of fields. Japan expressed its desire to cooperate with the Arab public sectors and businesspersons towards sustainable and resilient economic development under the theme "Japan-Arab New Horizons for Innovation and Creativity," the document said. Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa and Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Ken Saito co-chaired the ministerial-level talks, which were attended by Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit.

Kuwait's Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Housing, Dr Mahmoud Bushehri, and other Arab ministers also attended. The ministers also decided to hold the sixth Japan-Arab Economic Forum in one of the Arab countries in 2026, the press release said. Kamikawa said the concept of the forum was to create synergy between Japan and the Arab countries and to progress toward prosperity together, and that the aim of the ministerial conference was to deepen discussions on directions for new economy and business cooperation between Japan and the Arab countries, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

Abul-Gheit said that cooperation on climate change, artificial intelligence (AI), education, and other areas would help expand investment, according to public broadcaster NHK. Abul-Gheit also expressed hope that the Arab League would learn from Japan's knowledge, it said. Around 700 participants from a wide range of sectors from Japan and the Arab countries took part in the two-day forum.

The joint press release said that, at the public-private business and economic conference held on Wednesday, the participants confirmed the importance of expanding and deepening mutual economic relations between the two sides, especially through stimulating investment by the Arab side for Japanese companies to diversify the economic relationship.

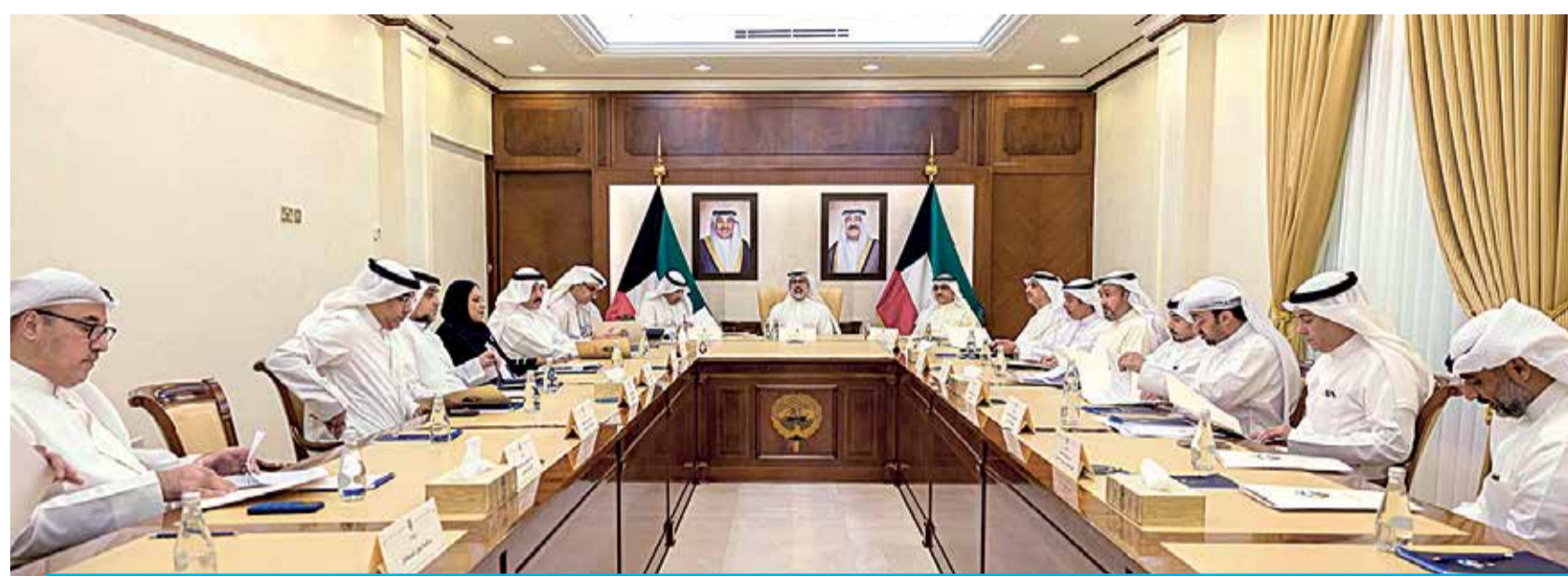
At Wednesday's gathering, the two sides also agreed to advance the discussion with the aim of promoting and supporting cooperation in sectors such as economic diversification and cooperation for innovation in energy, climate change, green products, water, waste management, hydrogen, and ammonia, as well as in the fields of new technologies, telecommunications, AI, and building resilient supply chains. — KUNA

Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital globally recognized as breast surgery center

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Hospital has been recognized by the Surgical Review Corporation (SRC) as a distinguished breast surgery center, becoming the world's seventh hospital in this field, announced the Ministry of Health. The SRC is an internationally recognized healthcare leader committed to advancing the safety, efficacy and efficiency of surgical care worldwide, the ministry said in a post on its X account on Thursday. Established in November 2018, Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Hospital is the largest medical center in the Middle East and the world's sixth-largest hospital, covering 720,000 sqm and composed of five nine-storey towers. — KUNA



Deputy FM presides diplomatic meeting



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Thursday chaired a consulate and diplomatic corps' meeting, during which items on the agenda were discussed, according to a ministry statement. — KUNA photos

19 outstanding students to enroll for special programs

KUWAIT: The Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Talent and Creativity, one of the centers of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, announced on Thursday the completion of the registration of distinguished Kuwaiti students. 19 students were selected to enroll in special enrichment programs to hone their skills and qualify them for prestigious international universities.

The director general of the center, Nada Al-Dihani, confirmed in a press release that one of the main pillars of the center's strategy is to support and motivate outstanding Kuwaiti students who have high scientific abilities and skills that enable them to enroll in well-known international universities. These universities, such as the Universities of Pennsylvania, Johns Hopkins, and Yale (in the United States of America) and the Imperial University in the United Kingdom, annually organize summer camps and programs in various countries across the globe.

The Center relies on these programs to create a new generation of young men and women who have the capacity to develop and improve their skills. About 300 outstanding students from all schools in Kuwait applied for preliminary tests, and 19 of them were selected to enroll in these programs at international universities. — KUNA



Photo shows the 19 outstanding students.

PAAET approves proposal to accept non-Kuwaiti students

KUWAIT: The board of directors of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training has approved the proposal to accept non-Kuwaiti students to study according to available vacancies and in accordance with specific controls and fees. The director general of the Authority, Dr Hassan Al-Fajam, said in a press statement following a meeting of its board of directors on Thursday that the proposal for students dismissed due to over stay or the low rate was also approved in accordance with specific regulations. The meeting was chaired by the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr Adel Al-Adwani.

Al-Fajam added that the strategic plan of the Authority (2023-2028), which was drafted in cooperation with the general secretariat of the Supreme Planning Council, has been approved by Development and the Arab Planning Institute. He explained that the strategic plan was developed in implementation of the New Kuwait 2035 vision in the field of education and training and a new promotion system for faculty members in colleges, which will be implemented at the beginning of the second semester of the academic year 2024/2025.

He pointed out that one of the most prominent features of the new promotion system is the complete transformation of the electronic promotion system and allowing the application for promotion to be submitted three months before the comple-



KUWAIT: Officials are pictured during the meeting. The board of directors of the PAAET has approved the proposal to accept non-Kuwaiti students. — KUNA

tion of the legal period. He stressed the importance of encouraging a culture of invention. Patents can constitute up to a maximum of 20 percent of the total scientific output submitted for promotion.

He mentioned that the Authority's Board of Directors also adopted several priority proposals, in addition to approving the promotion of 13 faculty members from the various faculties of

the authority and the recommendations of the research committee to accommodate diploma holders from the members of the training staff. The board also approved the formation of an advisory committee to study some scientific and academic topics that have been completed by the board, headed by board member Dr Fayez Al-Dhafiri. — KUNA

Kuwait Times
Established 1961THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYANEditor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYANEDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24833199 Extn. 359
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 361
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125
P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.com

'LuLu Proudly South African' fest a resounding success



KUWAIT: LuLu Hypermarket hosted a spirited celebration of the diversity of South African food, culture, and community with their 'LuLu Proudly South African' promotion, held from July 10-16, across all outlets of the hypermarket in Kuwait. The official launch of the promotion took place on July 10 at the LuLu Hypermarket Al Qurain outlet. The event was inaugurated by the Ambassador of South Africa Manelisi Genge, in the presence of LuLu Kuwait's top management.

Stepping into any LuLu Hypermarket during the promotion was akin to setting out on a safari to South Africa. Eye-catching displays featuring

iconic landmarks and beautiful decorations transported shoppers to the heart of the Rainbow Nation. However, the true heart of the 'LuLu Proudly South African' promotion lay in the incredible offers and discounts available on a wide range of South African food brands. Customers enjoyed significant savings on popular products like Blue Diamond almonds, Heartland's food range, Bokomo's breakfast cereals, Bakers' biscuits, Wellington's sauces, Ceres' fruit juices, The Harvest Table's healthy options and Robertsons' spices.

Delectable aromas of authentic South African

food wafted from the street-food stalls, and food sampling kiosks set up along the aisles of the hypermarket. While the food-stalls tempted customers with offers on flavorsome South African dishes, the free food sampling kiosks allowed for an adventurous exploration of South Africa's myriad delicacies. LuLu Hypermarket's 'LuLu Proudly South African' promotion transformed an ordinary shopping experience into an extraordinary event, providing shoppers with an unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the rich flavors, traditions and cultural diversity of the Rainbow Nation.

GCC, UK seek to finalize FTA talks



Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Jasem Al-Budaiwi with British Secretary of State for Business and Trade Jonathan Reynolds. — KUNA

RIYADH: Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Jasem Al-Budaiwi highlighted the need for finalizing the negotiations with the United Kingdom on a free trade agreement before the end of 2024. During his meeting with the British Secretary of State for Business and Trade Jonathan Reynolds in London on Wednesday, Al-Budaiwi said the British Secretary expressed a genuine desire to finalize the talks at an early date.

Al-Budaiwi congratulated Reynolds on his appointment to the post on July 5, wishing him success in his responsibilities that include FTA negotiations, according to a statement from the GCC Secretariat. The aspired FTA with the UK will give momentum to the strategic partnership between both sides, the statement quoted him as saying. The talks with the British side focused on economic and trade cooperation, the statement added. — KUNA



Kuwait Central Bank announces stability of money supply

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait announced on Thursday the stability of the money supply in its broad concept at KD 1.40 billion (last May) on a monthly basis. The bank's Economic Research Department reported to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that private

sector deposits with local banks increased last May by 2.0 percent to reach KD 6.36 billion.

The deposits of the private sector in foreign currencies decreased by 9.2 percent to reach KD 85.1 billion, while the total balances of local banks' demands on the Central Bank decreased by 5.3 percent to reach KD 2.3 billion. Also, the total assets of local banks increased by 7.0 percent last May, at KD 4.88 billion, while the net foreign assets of local banks increased by 5.6 percent to KD 5.13 billion. The term deposits with the central bank stabilized last May at KD 930 million, while the balances of cash credit facilities (loans) increased by 8.0 percent to KD 2.55 billion. — KUNA

NBK promotes financial literacy among 'NBK Aspire' students

KUWAIT: As part of its initiatives to promote financial literacy and awareness among all sectors of society National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues active participation in the "Let's Be Aware" banking awareness campaign launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait, in collaboration with Kuwait Banking Association (KBA). In this context, the bank held a discussion session for the students participating in the 'NBK Aspire' Summer Internship Program for 2024, targeting students between the age of 14 and 18 years, shedding light on its outstanding efforts in the campaign, which earned it the first place in promoting the campaign in 2023 by the Central Bank of Kuwait, outperforming all local banks.

The session witnessed discussion of a number of topics including - social media safety and protection, not sharing personal information, the risks of investing in cryptocurrencies and what to do when in dangerous situations both online and offline. It also touched on the difference between external and internal communication and how the bank serves employees with the same efforts done with our customers.

Strong presence

During the session, the speakers highlighted NBK's strong presence of different social media platforms including Instagram, X, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and TikTok, showing the bank's dedication to keeping pace with all developments in order to meet customers' changing needs and expectations, as well as maintain active engagement with followers

on these platforms. They mentioned that the impressions on NBK's different channels reached 10 million, an 18% increase on end of June last year, whereas total follower base exceeded 2 million.

They added that the bank continues to intensify its efforts to promote and develop the content of the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, by publishing educational and awareness content related to the campaign across all its social media platforms as well as other digital channels. This translated in a total engagement towards the campaign of more than 300,000, a 215 percent increase compared to end of June last year. 'Aspire' participants were engaged in the workshop, active in discussions and participated

in an activity to show their creativity in social media strategies and design.

NBK is a key supporter and partner in all CBK's campaigns and initiatives to increase financial and banking awareness among different sectors of society. As a leading financial institution in Kuwait, it frequently organizes various activities to raise awareness on all topics related to the banking sector. The goal of 'NBK Aspire' is to encourage students during their summer vacation to receive training and engage in the banking business experience. It also reflects the bank's steadfast commitment to deliver its social responsibility by empowering and upskilling the young generation to play an active role in the future.



Scan & Subscribe
KD 20 a year

For Individuals Only



Scan Now

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



Tel: 24833199 Ext: 220



Kenyan president sacks cabinet

Ukraine seizes ship carrying 'looted' grain for Russia

Page 6

Page 7



GAZA: Palestinians walk along a now dirt road, past destroyed and razed buildings after the Zionist military withdrew following a two-week offensive from the Shujaiya neighbourhood, east of Gaza City on July 11, 2024. — AFP

Zionists leave Shujaiya in ruins

Palestinians return to ghost town after Zionist forces withdraw from central Gaza neighborhood

GAZA: Just hours after the two-week offensive on Gaza City's Shujaiya district ended, Palestinians had already found 60 bodies as they picked through the piles of concrete and dust left behind, officials in Gaza said Thursday. Families of missing residents and civil defense agency crews moved in for the grim search after the Zionist entity announced late Wednesday that it had ended its operation there against Hamas.

"Once the (Zionist) occupation forces withdrew from the Shujaiya neighborhood, civil defense crews, with local residents, managed to recover about 60 martyrs up to now," agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said. Some 85 percent of buildings are

now "uninhabitable" and Shujaiya has been turned into a "disaster zone", he added, estimating that 120,000 people had been left homeless.

Residents who returned found a ghost town. Sabrin Abu Asr said the district was "in ruins" as she went back to see the debris of her home. Like most buildings, only a skeletal frame remained after two weeks of clashes between the Zionist army and Palestinian militants that forced tens of thousands of people to flee. The rest lay collapsed in piles of crushed concrete, cinder blocks and twisted rebar.

Zionist troops launched a ground offensive at the beginning of May in the southern city of Rafah, which was

then presented by the Zionist entity as the last Hamas stronghold. But since then, Zionist forces have attacked the north and center of the Gaza Strip.

A full evacuation order was issued for Shujaiya on June 27. The Zionist entity has warned that all of Gaza City will remain a "dangerous" combat zone. Former residents could only bundle whatever they could salvage and seek shelter elsewhere, carrying possessions on a bike, a donkey-drawn cart or on their backs. "Shujaiya district lies in ruins ... we are devastated," said Abu Asr, who left by foot with a single can of food. "Our plight must be felt by others. Someone needs to empathize with the people of Gaza," she added.

'Defies description'

The Zionist military said it dismantled eight tunnels and killed dozens of militants during the operation in Shujaiya. Zionist forces left behind a destroyed armored vehicle, now standing between two buildings nearly flattened in the fighting. It has since been scrapped for parts, its door and roof already gone.

Nearby, Mohamad Nairi, his hands and t-shirt covered in dust, struggled to come to terms with what happened. "When we returned to Shujaiya district, we found immense destruction that defies description. All the houses were demolished," he said. The assault has now moved to the rest of Gaza City, which the Zionist forces have told residents to evacuate. — AFP

WHO urges more surveillance in bird flu fight

GENEVA: The World Health Organization warned Thursday that its ability to manage the risk to humans posed by the H5N1 bird flu virus was being compromised by patchy surveillance. The WHO said the United States last week reported a fourth human case of H5N1 avian influenza following exposure to infected dairy cows, while Cambodia had reported two cases in children who had contact with sick or dead chickens.

"For the moment, no human to human transmission has been reported, which is why WHO continues to assess the risk to the general public as low," the UN health agency's chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said. "However, our ability to assess and manage that risk is compromised by limited surveillance for influenza viruses in animals globally," he told a press conference. "Understanding how these viruses are spreading and changing in animals is essential for identifying any changes that might increase the risk of outbreaks in humans, or the potential for a pandemic."

The WHO called on all countries to step up influenza surveillance and reporting in animals and humans, and for countries to share samples and genetic sequences. It also urged greater protection for farm workers who may be exposed to infected animals, and for greater research on bird flu.

Spread in US cattle

Avian influenza A(H5N1) first emerged in 1996. The 2.3.4.4b clade of the virus, first detected in 2020, is behind an exponential growth in the number of outbreaks in birds, alongside an increase in the number of infected mammals. The human cases recorded in Europe and the United States since the virus surged have largely been mild. Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO's head of epidemic and pandemic preparedness and prevention, said H5N1 had now been detected in 145 cow herds in 12 US states.

"I think that's only going to continue, given that we've seen some expanse of spread, given that we have some, limited sampling that's happening in dairy cattle — not just in the United States, but globally," she said. "We really need to understand the extent of the circulation in dairy cattle."

WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan said it was typically easier to eradicate disease from domesticated animals, because it is known where the animals are, and bio-security measures can be applied. "The difficulty is when that disease exists in pockets of wild animals," he said, due to the risk of mixing. — AFP

Tourism boom fuels housing crisis in Spanish cities

MADRID: Francisco Carrillo sobbed with relief as he lay on the bed in his new apartment in Madrid provided by a charity after three years of sleeping rough in the backroom of a theatre. The 62-year-old pensioner found he couldn't afford rental prices in the capital when he moved from Jaen in southern Spain to seek treatment for throat cancer. "Tonight, I'm going to sleep like a baby," he said.

Carrillo is one of a growing number of Spaniards who have found themselves priced out of the market amid a shortage of social housing and regulations that deter long-term rentals. The situation has been exacerbated by a boom in holiday lets on platforms such as Airbnb and Booking.com, which has spurred a wave of protests across the country in recent weeks.

The rate of homelessness has risen by 24 percent since 2012 to 28,000 people, according to official statistics while, according to a Bank of Spain report, about 45 percent of people living in rented accommodation are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, the highest proportion in Europe. Homelessness has increased substantially across Europe over the last decade, the European Commission said, but the extent of the problem in Spain is masked by young Spaniards opting to live with their parents for longer. More than 60 percent of 18-34-year-olds live in the family home and Spain had the fastest rising rate of young people living with their parents among major European economies between 2008 and 2022.

Spain's social housing stock is just 1.5 percent of all homes compared to a European average of 9 percent, the report added. Competition for apartments to rent privately is fierce. About 40 people answer each listing that comes on the market in Madrid, according to property listings website Idealista. The Socialist government's current plan for public housing will add 184,000 units over the next three years. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said in May he would like the social housing stock to match the European average during his term ending in 2027. But the Bank of Spain estimates that an additional 1.5 million more homes are needed to meet that target. Housing Minister Isabel Rodriguez said on



BARCELONA: A demonstrator takes part in a protest against mass tourism on Barcelona's Las Ramblas alley, on July 6, 2024. — AFP

Tuesday that the government had begun to work on a new plan to meet that target.

Filling the void

To fill part of the void left by the state, charities are turning to private capital — even if it's a fraction of what's required. The flat provided to Carrillo by Mundo Justo (Fair World) belongs to Techo, a social investment fund that provides rental homes to charity groups working with the homeless, and which in April floated on the Spanish stock market with the support of 33 business partners.

Techo owns around 230 flats and works with 50 NGOs who charge rent at 30 percent below market rates. For investors it's an opportunity to secure a return while also boosting their environment, social and governance (ESG) scores, said Blanca Hernandez, chair of the real estate investment trust.

Big cities such as Madrid are also having to cope with migration from the countryside to urban centers where the jobs are, said Diego Lozano, CEO of the city's housing agency. As many as 48,000 people are on a waiting list for social housing in Madrid. Lozano said the city is working to almost triple its social

housing stock to 15,000 by 2030 but admitted that still won't meet demand.

He also blamed a recent law designed to protect tenants' rights by allowing vulnerable people to remain in a property for up to two years without paying rent, which he said had a cooling effect on owners weighing long-term rentals. Landlords are demanding rent payment guarantees from tenants that the poorest can't provide, according to three NGOs consulted by Reuters.

Others are switching to the lucrative short-term market that isn't governed by the same regulations. The supply of long-term rentals has fallen 15 percent in a year, while short-term rentals mainly for tourists increased by 56 percent in the year to March, according to Idealista.

Pensioner Carmen Cajamarca, 67, received a letter giving her one month to leave her rented flat in the Madrid neighborhood of Lavapiés after the building where she has lived for 25 years was sold to an Argentine fund that is refurbishing its apartments for holiday lets. Cajamarca said she will leave Madrid, and is delaying as long as possible as she searches for a new home. "This is only for tourists ... and the people who have always lived here, where are we going to live?" she said. — Reuters

International

Ukraine seizes ship carrying 'looted' grain for Russia

Cameroon-flagged cargo ship allegedly helped Russia export Ukrainian grain to the Middle East

KYIV: Ukraine seized a foreign cargo ship on the Danube River and detained the captain on suspicion of helping Moscow export Ukrainian grain from Russian-occupied Crimea, officials said on Thursday. Kyiv has accused Russia of trading stolen Ukrainian grain since the 2022 war began. Ship seizures, however, have been rare and shipping sources said they were concerned about possible retaliation at a critical time in the year as Ukraine grain exports reach a peak.

The Cameroon-flagged USKO MFU was presented with an arrest order and detained along with its Azeri captain after entering the waters of Reni, a Ukrainian port on the Danube where the river forms the border with Romania, prosecutors said. The head of Ukraine's prosecutor's office for Crimea, Ihor Ponochohny, told Ukrainian TV that officials were surprised to spot the vessel on the Danube, since ships implicated in illegally carrying grain from Russian-held areas tended to steer clear of Ukraine's waters. Since 2022, Ukraine has imposed arrest in absentia on 21 ships involved in the trade, he said. "The seizure should be a clear signal for those countries that help Russia circumvent sanctions and sell agricultural products stolen in the occupied territories, that there may be responsibility for this," he said.

The vessel had repeatedly docked at the Crimean sea port of Sevastopol to pick up agricultural products in 2023-24, Ukraine's SBU security service said. An official with the vessel's Turkey-based ship manager Iyem Asya told Reuters that the vessel's current cargo was loaded

in Moldova. "The ship, while under our ownership, did not take any cargoes from Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine and never used Ukrainian ports," the official said. "Ukrainian soldiers boarded the ship while it was sailing along the Danube with a Romanian pilot present. They forcibly anchored it on their side of the river. Our lawyers are now pursuing the case."

Russian forces have occupied large parts of Ukraine's southern agricultural regions and Kyiv has accused Russia of stealing and destroying its grain. The SBU said the captain and 12 crew members had helped Russia to export Ukrainian grain taken from the occupied south to the Middle East for sale on behalf of Russia. "The investigation is ongoing to establish all the circumstances of the crime and identify other persons involved in the illegal activity," the SBU said.

Ukraine's Prosecutor's Office said that on one of its voyages in November 2023, the USKO MFU loaded over 3,000 metric tons of agricultural products in Sevastopol intended for a Turkish company. The ship last reported its position on July 8 at anchor near Reni port on the Danube, LSEG ship-tracking data showed on Thursday. The captain could face up to five years in prison for violating travel restrictions governing Ukraine's Russian-occupied territories, the SBU said.

The Danube is crucial to Ukraine's Black Sea exports, which it revived without Russia's assent after Moscow quit a UN-brokered deal last summer to let Kyiv sell food during the war. Asked if



AT SEA: This handout photo shows the Cameroon-flagged ship USKO MFU off the coast of Ukraine. — Office of Ukraine's Prosecutor General

there had been a change in Ukrainian policy, a source in law enforcement told Reuters on Thursday: "This is our policy. This vessel and the cap-

tain worked for the occupiers and now he entered the waters controlled by Ukraine. And we had an immediate reaction." — Reuters

UK crossbow murders suspect in 'serious condition': Police

LONDON: The suspect in a crossbow attack in which three women were killed is in a serious condition in hospital in London, UK police said Thursday. Kyle Clifford, 26, was detained late Wednesday after a day-long manhunt in connection with the deaths of the wife and two daughters of a BBC radio racing commentator in the town of Bushey, north of London. A crossbow had been recovered, local police said.

Clifford was receiving medical treatment and was "in a serious condition and is yet to speak with officers", police said, confirming that officers had not had any previous reports about him by the victims. The victims were Carol Hunt, the 61-year-old wife of BBC radio and Sky Sports racing commentator John Hunt, and their two daughters, Louise, 25, and Hannah, 28, the broadcasters said.

In a previous statement, police said Clifford, who was found by officers in Enfield in north London where he is from, "was known to the victims" and no additional suspects were being sought. Detective Superintendent Rob Hall called it an "unprecedented attack", adding the police were "determined to understand the full circumstances of what happened that evening and the events leading up to it". — AFP

What is a 'multipolar' world? Experts are not so sure

WARSAW: The leaders of Russia, India and China often wax poetic about establishing a "multipolar" world - though it is far from clear what such a system would entail. The three countries along with Iran and North Korea regularly lead calls for a new world order that sees a reduced role for the United States and its Western allies. But beyond their shared desire to see a reduction in Western domination in global affairs, proponents offer few strands that actually bind their vision of the future, according to experts.

Regardless, the term - and the sentiment - is likely to be here to stay. "We must jointly advocate for an equal and orderly multipolar world," China's President Xi Jinping said during a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) this month. "All participants ... are committed to the formation of a fair multipolar world order," Russian President Vladimir Putin said at the same summit. And in late 2023, India's Narendra Modi declared: "The new world order is multipolar".

'Contradictory interests'

In speeches, Putin often frames the invasion of Ukraine as less a war of conquest and more a fight to beat back American hegemony in Europe. The idea is likely to strike a chord with Beijing, which has been steadily expanding its footprint across

the Asia-Pacific region where the US has long been dominant. "There is the common vision of pushing for the end of the Western age," said French political analyst Jean-Marc Balencie.

But how exactly that will be achieved remains largely undefined, and "this allows for several scenarios, because leaders often have contradictory interests", Balencie said. "Many of the BRICS and SCO countries say they wish to build a multipolar world and are taking significant actions to that end," Stephen Wertheim from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace told AFP, referring to groupings of countries from the so-called Global South. "I doubt that these countries know exactly what kind of order, especially what kind of institutional forms, they seek to realize in 20 years' time," Wertheim said.

Official doctrines published by the Kremlin, New Delhi and China are often full of striking promises about shaking up geopolitics. "We must build partnerships in which countries treat each other on an equal footing" reads one statement from China in 2023, framing its proposals "for a shared future".

Russia, meanwhile, says it wants to promote "the world majority" against the so-called "golden billion" of the West - a conspiracy theory, popular in Russia, that a secret global elite hoards the world's resources. Russian political scientist Sergei Karaganov says developing more institutions like BRICS and SCO for countries representing the majority of the global population is vital.

Increased cooperation across tech platforms and deepening ties in the education and scientific fields were also necessary, he adds. But such simplistic formulas often ignore geopolitical fault lines across the globe.

In Southeast Asia, China's growing influence has

worried its smaller neighbors, while the West has increasingly turned to India to act as a hedge against Beijing's growing boldness. In the former Soviet states, Russia's influence is also a source of anxiety for many. And while Russia has chosen a total break with Washington and Europe after invading Ukraine, no other power has been as keen to follow its path. The "Global South encompasses so many countries and blocs with their own interests", said Yun Sun, a co-director of the China and East Asia program at the Stimson Center in Washington.

Tricky alternatives

What a multipolar world looks like in practice is fraught with unknowns. On the economic front, the Kremlin and China remain keen to see a new currency replace the dollar as the primary vehicle for trade. But will New Delhi be eager to exchange greenbacks for the yuan? And is there any country ready to build substantial reserves with the unstable Russian ruble?

For many countries, multipolarity offers "alternatives to going head-to-head with the West", Balencie said. "Small countries want to maintain their sovereignty while obtaining security and economic assistance from larger powers," Wertheim added.

Faced with joining competing Cold War-style alliances, they "may be able to play the blocs off each other, but they will also be vulnerable to falling under the control of their patron", he said. Yun noted that "the word multipolarity suggests equality, but it is misleading". China, India and Russia "might be unhappy with certain aspects of the US dominance, but it doesn't mean they share the exact same vision as for what the alternative should look like". — AFP

Dino skeleton to fetch millions at...

Continued from Page 1

than Stan, the world's most complete tyrannosaurus rex skeleton sold in 2020 for a record \$31.8 million. Apex was discovered in May 2022 on the private land of paleontologist Jason Cooper. The auction house says it has collaborated with Cooper to "document the entire process, from discovery and excavation to restoration, preparation and mounting," in order to guarantee the "highest standards and transparency."

In 2022, Christie's auction house had to withdraw

a T-rex skeleton a few days before auction in Hong Kong, due to doubts about its authenticity. Stegosaurus skeletons are already on display around the world, but according to Sotheby's, Apex is 30 percent larger than Sophie, the most complete stegosaurus on public display to date, which is housed in the Natural History Museum in London.

The debate around auctions of dinosaur fossils is one "I've heard a lot," said Hatton. "When you have a scientifically important specimen, the museums usually show up and find donors to bid on their behalf or they bid themselves." "Most of the people I work with are donating specimens to museums or loaning them to museums, they understand the significance and importance of these specimens." According to Sotheby's, Cooper has already donated fossils to museums around the world. — AFP

Bosnia and Herzegovina," Dodik said on X.

A UN court sentenced Bosnian Serb wartime political leader Radovan Karadzic and his army chief Ratko Mladic to life in prison for war crimes including the Srebrenica genocide. Bosnia's 1992-1995 war between its Croats, Muslims and Serbs claimed approximately 100,000 lives. Nearly three decades after the war ended, the Balkan nation remains deeply divided along ethnic lines.

On Thursday, the remains of 14 more victims of the bloodshed, including a 17-year-old boy, were buried at a memorial cemetery in Potocari, just outside Srebrenica. Beriz Mujic, whose remains were found in the Srebrenica region last year, was laid to rest next to his brother Hazim.

The remains of 6,988 Srebrenica victims have been buried, most of them under white tombstones in Potocari. The remains were found in 87 mass graves, and a spokeswoman for Bosnia's institute for missing persons told AFP that they are still looking for around 1,000 people. To cover up the crime, Bosnian Serb forces moved the bodies of the victims to so-called secondary mass graves.

Kada Sikovic, accompanied by her two daughters and son, stood by the coffin of her husband, Musan, with tears rolling down her face. Parts of his chin bone were recovered in 2010 but she had resisted holding a burial ceremony until more remains were found last year. "Thank God we found some of his bones," she told AFP. She remembered the painful moment when the family split in Srebrenica in 1995. "He cried, kissed the girl (daughter), took the little one (five-year-old) son in his arms and said: 'See you.'" — Agencies

Spain PM slams NATO over Gaza...

Continued from Page 1

such as Ukraine". NATO leaders at the summit issued a declaration that said Kyiv was on an "irreversible" path to join the alliance. NATO leaders on Thursday looked to bolster ties with Asian partners after slamming China as a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war, before holding talks with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky at the end of a summit in Washington. The 32-nation alliance has used the pomp-filled set piece in the US capital to showcase its resolve against Moscow and backing for Kyiv.

The three-day gathering has been overshadowed by political uncertainty in the United States as President Joe Biden - who will give a press conference Thursday - fights for his own political survival. After spending the bulk of the summit focused on bolstering Ukraine, NATO shifted attention eastwards by welcoming the leaders of Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea.

A strongly-worded declaration from NATO released Wednesday called Beijing a "decisive enabler of Russia's war against Ukraine" through its supplies of dual-use goods such as microchips that can help Moscow's military. China "cannot enable the largest

war in Europe in recent history without this negatively impacting its interests and reputation." NATO leaders said.

Beijing hit back by warning NATO to "stop hyping up the so-called China threat and provoking confrontation and rivalry." China presents itself as a neutral party in the conflict, but it has however offered a critical lifeline to Russia's isolated economy, with trade booming since the conflict began.

The United States has been pushing its European allies for years to pay closer attention to the challenges posed by China. The Washington summit is the third such gathering attended by leaders from the four Asia-Pacific partners. Diplomats said several initiatives with the partner countries were due to be announced, including bolstering cooperation against cyberattacks and disinformation, and providing Ukraine non-lethal help.

But the Pacific leaders' presence is more about signaling NATO's greater interest in the region at a time of growing competition between Washington and Beijing. The United States on Wednesday also announced an important step to bolster NATO's own deterrence against Russia in Europe by saying it would begin "episodic deployments" of long-range missiles to Germany in 2026.

The White House said it would eventually look to permanently station them in Germany, and the missiles would "have significantly longer range" than current US systems in Europe. — AFP

Bosnians mark genocide in...

Continued from Page 1

father and husband, whose grave is next to her cousin's. His remains were buried twice as they were found in two different mass graves. The 54-year-old woman is still waiting for "at least one bone" of a brother to be found so she can bury him, she told AFP. "Their souls know that we are here next to them. When I get here, I feel as if we just parted ways in Srebrenica," she said.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan sent a video message which was played at the ceremony, Bosnian N1 news web portal reported. "We will not forget Srebrenica and we will not allow it to be forgotten so that a similar crime is not repeated anywhere in the world," Erdogan said. "I pray that the souls of our martyrs may rest in peace and be in heaven."

In May, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring July 11 the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica. The resolution was fiercely opposed by Serbia and Bosnian Serbs, who continue to play down the crime.

Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik has repeatedly denied a genocide occurred and says his administration will not recognize the resolution. But Dodik expressed sympathy to the families of the victims on Thursday. "Regardless of our differences, we must show respect for the pain and suffering that has befallen many people of all nations and religions in

Zionist carnage in Gaza City...

Continued from Page 1

The United States is "moving forward" with sending 500-pound bombs to the Zionist entity after a pause over concerns that 2,000-pound munitions in the same shipment could be used in populated areas, a US official said Thursday. "We've been clear that our concern has been on the end-use of the 2,000-pound bombs, particularly in advance of (the Zionist entity's) Rafah campaign which they have announced they are concluding," the US official said on condition of anonymity.

"Because of how these shipments are put together, other munitions may sometimes be co-mingled. That's what happened here with the 500-pound bombs," the official said, adding: "Because our concern was not about the 500-pound bombs, those are

moving forward as part of the usual process."

The United States on Thursday imposed new sanctions against Zionist extremists over violence against Palestinians, including financial restrictions on four settlement outposts in the West Bank. The State Department also blacklisted Lehava, which it described as the "largest violent extremist organization in (the Zionist entity)" with more than 10,000 members.

The Zionist military offensive has killed at least 38,345 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to figures from Gaza's health ministry. The latest toll included 50 new deaths over the previous 24 hours, it said. On Wednesday, the Zionist army dropped leaflets warning "everyone in Gaza City" that it would "remain a dangerous combat zone".

Hamas official Hossam Badran told AFP that the Zionist entity was "hoping that the resistance will relinquish its legitimate demands" in truce negotiations. But "the continuation of massacres compels us to adhere to our demands", he said. The Zionist military said on Wednesday it had completed its mission in Shujaiya after two weeks. — Agencies

International

Kenyan president sacks cabinet

Ruto bows to pressure from protestors once again • Activists welcome decision

NAIROBI: Kenyan President William Ruto on Thursday fired his entire cabinet apart from the foreign minister, bowing to pressure from nationwide protests that have created the biggest crisis of his two-year presidency. The youth-led protests against planned tax hikes started off peacefully but turned violent, killing at least 39 people in clashes with the police last month. Some demonstrators briefly stormed parliament, before Ruto abandoned the new taxes.

"I will immediately engage in extensive consultations across different sectors and political formations and other Kenyans, both in public and private, with the aim of setting up a broad-based government," Ruto said in a televised address to the nation, adding that he would announce additional measures later. He also dismissed the attorney general but said the office of the deputy president was not affected.

This government would, he said, help him to develop "radical programs" to deal with the country's huge debt burden, increase job opportunities, eliminate government waste and "slay the dragon of corruption".

The sweeping cabinet changes were what Kenyans have been asking for, veteran anti-corruption activist John Githongo told Reuters. "Let us see what happens now if the new ministers deal with big issues around corruption and just the arrogance and excess of his administration and the fact that a lot of Kenyans died during the demonstrations," he said. "Hopefully this should temporarily calm things."

Prominent Gen-Z protester Hanifa Adan welcomed the announcement, writing on X: "THE PRESIDENT OF KENYA HAS DISSOLVED THE CABINET!!!! THE POWER LIES WITH THE PEOPLE ALWAYS!!!!"

While large street protests have subsided, anger against the government has not, and hundreds of Kenyans attended a memorial concert in Nairobi

Sunday, chanting "Ruto must go". Analysts said Ruto's decision to sack allies including former interior minister Kithure Kindiki offered the possibility of a fresh start but warned of further risks.

"The challenge that Ruto now faces is forming a new cabinet that includes various vested interests, whilst simultaneously calming popular anger in the face of an explicitly leaderless movement," Gabrielle Lynch, professor of comparative politics at the University of Warwick, told AFP.

Declan Galvin, managing director of Exigent Risk Advisory, told AFP that "a clean slate will be good for him... There is no crisis without opportunity so maybe Ruto can get this right the second time."

#RutoMustGo

Ruto has been caught between the demands of lenders such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to cut deficits and a hard-pressed population reeling from rising cost of living. Last week he proposed spending cuts and additional borrowing in roughly equal measure to fill the nearly \$2.7 billion budget hole caused by the withdrawal of the tax hikes.

Ruto's frequent high-profile trips abroad, as well as news that the deputy president's office spent over \$70,000 on curtains, have infuriated ordinary citizens burdened with a cost-of-living crisis. Ruto said borrowing would have to increase to pay for some services even as Kenya grapples with massive foreign debt equivalent to roughly 70 percent of GDP.

Analysts have said the tax rollback means Kenya is likely to miss IMF targets although the government does not have debts that are due. The budget deficit is now projected at 4.6 percent of gross domestic product in the fiscal year that started on July 1.



NAIROBI: A youth raises his fist as he poses among crosses representing lives lost during recent protests against government proposed tax hikes. — AFP

Ojango Omondi, a community activist from the Social Justice Centres Working Group in Nairobi, said dismissing so many cabinet ministers was a "move towards justice", but activists would want to see who Ruto appoints in their place. "It's one thing to dismiss, the second is to ensure that the people that will be chosen in the cabinet are accountable

the constitution and the rule of law," Omondi said.

Ruto has sought to engage with some of the protesters, hosting an event on X with young Kenyans last week. But this has failed to appease some demonstrators, who are calling for him to step down, using the hashtag #RutoMustGo and staging smaller rallies across Kenyan cities. — Agencies

Algeria president says intends to run for second term

ALGIERS, Algeria: Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, accused of leading a crackdown on dissent since mass protests in 2019, announced Thursday he will seek a second term in an election set for September. Tebboune, 78, was elected in 2019 with 58 percent of the vote, following months of pro-democracy protests. "Given the desire of many parties, political and non-political organizations, and youth, I announce my intention to run for a second term," he said in an interview posted on the presidency's official Facebook page. "All the victories achieved are the victories of the Algerian people, not mine," he said.

Tebboune announced in March that the presidential election will be held on September 7, three months ahead of schedule. He gave no reasons for the decision. Thursday's announcement had been expected after several pro-government parties called in recent weeks for his reelection.

He joins a field of more than 30 hopefuls who have said they intend to stand. The final list of candidates will be published on July 27 but Tebboune enters the race as favorite.

A former prime minister under longtime president Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who was ousted during the 2019 protests, Tebboune has overseen a crackdown on the Hirak movement that led the protests. The protests continued in the early months of his presidency because of his own association with Bouteflika's two-decade rule.

Taking advantage of the restrictions on gatherings required during the COVID pandemic, Tebboune's administration banned demonstrations by Hirak and stepped up prosecutions of dissident activists, journalists and academics.

In February, human rights watchdog Amnesty International said that five years after the pro-democracy protests erupted, Algerian authorities were still restricting the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

In a report based on testimonies of detainees, families and lawyers, Amnesty said Algerian authorities had "escalated their repression of peaceful dissent" since the Hirak protests fizzled out in early 2020.

"It is a tragedy that five years after brave Algerians took to the streets in their masses to demand political change and reforms, the authorities have continued to wage a chilling campaign of repression," said Amnesty's Middle East and North Africa director, Heba Morayef. — AFP

Astronauts confident Boeing Starliner to bring them home

WASHINGTON: The first two astronauts to fly Boeing's Starliner capsule said from the International Space Station late Wednesday they were confident in the spacecraft's ability to return them home whenever the company and NASA solve thruster issues that have kept them in space far longer than expected. "I have a real good feeling in my heart that this spacecraft will bring us home, no problem," NASA astronaut Sunita "Suni" Williams said during the test crew's first news conference since docking to the ISS more than a month ago.

Williams and Barry "Butch" Wilmore, both veteran NASA astronauts and former US Navy test pilots, were launched aboard Starliner from Florida on June 5 and docked the next day at the ISS, where they were initially scheduled to spend roughly eight days.

Several issues with Starliner's propulsion system have extended their mission indefinitely. Five of Starliner's 28 maneuvering thrusters failed during its trek to the station, a propellant valve did not properly close and there have been five leaks of helium, which is used to pressurize the thrusters. "We're absolutely confident," Wilmore told reporters. "That mantra you've heard, failure is not an option." "And that's why we're staying, because we're going to test it. That's what we do," Wilmore said, acknowledging that an ongoing investigation by the US space agency and Boeing involving thruster tests on Earth is key for their return.

The current test mission is Boeing's final step before the spacecraft can clinch NASA certification for routine astronaut flights and become the second US orbital capsule alongside SpaceX's Crew Dragon,

which has dominated the nascent human spaceflight market amid Starliner's development delays.

More testing

To understand why some thrusters overheated and stopped working during Starliner's flight to the ISS, NASA officials and Boeing engineers began test-firing identical thrusters at New Mexico's White Sands Missile Range to try to replicate the mishaps. At the same time, an investigation at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Alabama aims to determine why a type of seal in Starliner's propulsion system has let helium leak out.

The return of Wilmore and Williams to Earth on Starliner depends on the results of the thruster tests, according to NASA officials. NASA's commercial crew chief Steve Stich told reporters on Wednesday that "we're taking our time" with the testing and that the results of the New Mexico thruster tests "are not quite what we would have hoped for."

Stich said he hopes the testing will be completed by this weekend. Stich previously said this testing could last "a couple weeks," followed by a detailed NASA review of the data to inform the agency's decision on letting Starliner fly the astronauts home. Also docked to the space station is SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule that ferried four astronauts to the ISS in March, and a Russian Soyuz capsule that delivered three others in September. Stich acknowledged that at least one of those vehicles could provide an alternative ride home for Wilmore and Williams. "We have a little bit more time to go through the data, and then make a decision as to whether we need to do anything different" with the return plan, Stich said. "But the prime option today is to return Butch and Suni on Starliner. Right now, we don't see any reason that wouldn't be the case."

Starliner is approved to stay docked to the ISS for 45 days - which would be July 21 - or up to 90 days using various backup systems and depending largely on the health of its lithium ion batteries, which have



IN SPACE: This undated handout picture from NASA released on July 2, 2024 shows NASA's Boeing Crew Flight Test astronauts (from top) Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams. — AFP

caused concerns in the past. Though NASA and Boeing have said Starliner is capable of returning the astronauts to Earth in the event of an emergency on the ISS, the capsule is not approved to fly home under normal, non-emergency circumstances until its thruster issues are resolved or at least better understood.

A Russian satellite last month broke apart into some 180 pieces of debris near the space station's orbit and forced astronauts into their various docked spacecraft, including Wilmore and Williams getting into Starliner, to prepare for a potential escape. Boeing cited the event as an example of Starliner's readiness to return home if absolutely necessary.

Mark Nappi, Boeing's Starliner chief, told reporters that such an emergency return scenario would simply involve Starliner undocking from the station and safely returning the crew to Earth, despite questions about the thrusters. "I feel confident that if we had to, if there was a problem with the International Space Station, we can get in our spacecraft, and we can undock, talk to our team, and figure out the best way to come home," Williams said. — Reuters

AI helps S Korean beauty buffs find perfect shade match

SEOUL: Customers have booked out South Korean cosmetics giant AmorePacific's new artificial intelligence (AI) beauty lab, where robots custom mix face products and the latest technology recommends the most suitable lipstick colors. "Everyone has their own specific skin tone, but usually they buy the most common color available over-the-counter," said Kwon You-jin, a 32-year-old customer at the firm's bespoke skin cosmetics service. "Knowing more data about my own skin, and seeing the before-and-after firsthand, is a very good experience,"

she said, after receiving an AI-generated report on the condition of her skin. A robot then mixed a foundation that perfectly matched her skin tone.

More cosmetics firms are embracing AI to boost sales, with global brands such as L'Oréal and LVMH-owned Sephora using it to tailor products to customers' needs. Global beauty industry sales including cosmetics hit \$625.6 billion in 2023, climbing steadily annually since dipping in 2020 during COVID-19 according to Statista Market Insights.

AmorePacific said it uses AI to recommend the best choices for a customer from 205 different skin foundations or 366 different lip product colors. "We used deep learning, machine learning techniques to take the process that experts use to evaluate data from many peoples' skins into an (automated) service," said engineer Lee Young-jin, an adviser for AmorePacific's custom beauty business.

Analysts said using AI instead of human con-

sultants could speed up product development and reduce variables. "No matter how professional an expert is, individual deviations can be large, and evaluating cosmetics by consulting 30 to 40 experts all the time is difficult," said Yang Yong Suk, principal researcher at South Korea's Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute (ETRI) who co-developed a deep learning model for a cosmetic product's texture. "These days, product development time has shortened, and an ever-larger amount of new products are launched faster," Yang added. "Combining AI technologies could lower hurdles further."

The market for using AI in beauty and cosmetics industries is forecast to more than double from \$3.27 billion in 2023 to \$8.1 billion in 2028 as services such as personalized beauty recommendations, skin analysis and diagnostics, and virtual makeup artists expand, analysis provider Business Research Company said in January. — Reuters

Bangladesh police fire tear gas, rubber bullets at students

DHAKA: Bangladesh police on Thursday fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse university student protesters demanding the scrapping of quotas they say are rigged to support pro-government job candidates. The quota system reserves more than half of well-paid civil service posts, totaling hundreds of thousands of government jobs, for specific groups including children of heroes from the country's 1971 liberation war.

Students launched protests earlier this month, demanding a merit-based system, and have continued demonstrations despite Bangladesh's top court suspending the quota scheme this week. Officers forcibly dispersed around 150 students in the eastern city of Comilla after they attempted to blockade the main highway to the capital Dhaka, police inspector Syed Fazle Rabbi told AFP. "Police fired rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse them," he said.

Comilla Medical College Hospital Director Sheikh

Fazle Rabbi told AFP that 11 protesters had been injured, with two since discharged. None of the injured had been hit by rubber bullets. Amnesty International said in a statement that it had seen reports of at least 20 injured in the incident and urged authorities to "halt the use of unnecessary and excessive force".

Police in Dhaka tried in vain to stop thousands of young protesters from blocking roads around the megacity for the second time in as many days. Footage aired by local broadcaster Jamuna TV showed several protesters mounting a police vehicle and hundreds of others dismantling a police barricade.

'We will not leave'

In the port city of Chittagong, police charged hundreds of protesters with batons in an attempt to prevent them from marching on a major road, witnesses told AFP. "Police tried to stop us from holding our protests," Dipa, a student from the city who did not give her last name, told AFP. "We will not leave the road until our demand is met." Students are demanding that only those quotas supporting ethnic minorities and disabled people - six percent of jobs - should remain. Bangladesh's top court on Wednesday temporarily suspended the quotas, but protesters have vowed to continue until the parts of the scheme they oppose are scrapped completely. — AFP



DHAKA: Students surround a vehicle during a protest to demand merit-based system for civil service jobs in Dhaka on July 11, 2024. — AFP

FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2024

EU accepts Apple offer to let rivals use iPhone's tap-and-go payments

Deal ends a lengthy probe and spares tech giant a heavy fine

BRUSSELS: The EU on Thursday approved Apple's offer to allow rivals access to the iPhone's ability to tap-to-pay within the bloc, ending a lengthy probe and sparing it a heavy fine. The case dates back to 2022 when Brussels first accused Apple of blocking rivals from its popular iPhone tap payment system in a breach of EU competition law.

"Apple has committed to allow rivals to access the 'tap and go' technology of iPhones. Today's decision makes Apple's commitments binding," EU competition chief Margrethe Vestager said in a statement.

"From now on, competitors will be able to effectively compete with Apple Pay for mobile payments with the iPhone in shops. So consumers will have a wider range of safe and innovative mobile wallets to choose from," she said. The EU previously found that Apple enjoyed a dominant position by restricting access to "tap-as-you-go" chips or near-field communication (NFC), which allows devices to interconnect within a very short range, to favor its own system.

Now competitors will have access to the

standard technology behind contactless payments to offer alternative tap-to-pay tools to iPhone users in the European Economic Area (EEA), which includes the EU but also Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Only customers with an Apple ID registered in the EEA would be able to make use of these outside apps, the European Commission said in a statement. The changes must remain in force for 10 years and a "monitoring trustee" must be chosen by Apple to report to the commission during that period on their implementation. Apple had risked a fine of up to 10 percent of its total worldwide annual turnover. Apple's total revenue in the year to September 2023 stood at \$383 billion.

"Apple Pay and Apple Wallet will continue to be available in the EEA for users and developers, and will continue to provide an easy, secure and private way to pay, as well as present passes seamlessly from Apple Wallet," the company said in a statement. The probe's conclusion comes at a particularly difficult moment in relations between the EU and Apple, especially over the bloc's

new competition rules for big tech. The Digital Markets Act (DMA) seeks to ensure tech titans do not privilege their own services over rivals, but the iPhone maker says it puts users' privacy at risk.

One of the DMA's main objectives is to give consumers more choice in the web browsers, app marketplaces, search engines and other digital services they use. The EU in June accused Apple of breaching the DMA by preventing developers from freely pointing consumers to alternative channels for offers and content outside of its proprietary App Store. It also kickstarted another probe under the DMA into Apple's new fees for app developers. The company could face heavy fines if the DMA violations are confirmed.

In March, the EU slapped a 1.8-billion-euro (\$1.9 billion) fine on Apple in a different antitrust case but the company has appealed the penalty in an EU court. Brussels also forced Apple last year to scrap its Lightning port on new iPhone models, in a change that was introduced worldwide and not just in Europe. — AFP



PARIS: This photograph shows a person holding an iPhone equipped with a Paris Metro Navigo pass in a metro station in Paris. — AFP

IEA trims forecast for global oil demand growth

PARIS: The International Energy Agency trimmed its forecasts Thursday as it said world oil demand growth continues to slow and consumption in China dipped.

The Paris-based body that advises industrial nations on energy policy said oil demand increased by just 710,000 barrels per day in the second quarter, the slowest rate in over a year. "Oil consumption in China, long the engine of global oil demand growth, contracted in both April and May" the IEA said in its monthly report on the oil market. Chinese demand in the second quarter was also marginally below the same period in 2023.

While demand in that quarter benefitted from the reopening of the Chinese economy after COVID lockdowns, the IEA said that the recent drop also "points to an intrinsic slowdown" and that "the downswing in the industrial fuels indicates a broader weakness in manufacturing". The world's second-largest economy is grappling with a real estate debt crisis, weakening consumption, an ageing population and geopolitical tensions overseas. The IEA trimmed its forecast for Chinese oil demand this year by 0.2 million barrels per day (mbd) to 17 mbd. While that would be a gain of 0.5 mbd from 2023, it is far short of the 1.5 mbd gain last year. The IEA sees Chinese demand growth slowing to 0.3 mbd in 2025, also a drop of 0.2 mbd from its previous forecast.

The return to pre-COVID normalcy and weak growth will also see China's weight in global oil demand growth decline, from about 70 percent of gains last year to 40 percent this year and next, according to the IEA. Emerging economies such as India and Brazil will account for a greater share in global oil demand growth, while advanced economies in the OECD will see consumption decline.

"Global gains are forecast to average just below 1 mbd in 2024 and 2025, as subpar economic growth, greater efficiencies and vehicle electrification act as headwinds," the agency said. It trimmed its 2024 global oil demand forecast by 0.1 mbd to 103.1 mbd and its 2025 forecast by 0.2 mbd to 104.0 mbd. Earlier this month the IEA said it expected global oil demand to stabilize at around 106 mbd by the end of the decade as demand in advanced economies falls. — AFP

Ex-leaders tell G20 to tax the super-rich

BRASILIA: Former presidents and prime ministers have sent an open letter to current leaders of the world's 20 largest economies urging support for a global tax on billionaires, which they called a rare political opportunity. The move comes as Brazil's G20 presidency, which put the proposal on the table in February, seeks to build support for a declaration at the group's finance ministers and central bank governors meeting later this month in Rio de Janeiro.

Signed by 19 Club de Madrid members, a forum of former leaders with over 100 participants, the letter praised US President Joe Biden's billionaire income tax proposal but called for joint cooperation to combat tax evasion by the wealthiest. "A global deal to tax the ultra-rich would be a shot in the arm for multilateralism; proving that governments can come together for the common good," said the letter.

Among signatories from across the political spectrum were Chile's Michelle Bachelet, Sweden's Stefan Lofven, Spain's Felipe Gonzalez and Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, France's Dominique de Villepin, Canada's Kim Campbell, Australia's Julia Gillard and South Korea's Han Seung-soo. Brazil's proposal, crafted by French economist Gabriel Zucman from the independent EU Tax Observatory, calls for an annual 2 percent levy on fortunes exceeding \$1 billion, which could raise up to \$250 billion annually from about 3,000 individuals. — Reuters

Germany to ban Chinese giants from 5G network

BERLIN: Germany said Thursday it will phase out the use of components from Chinese telecom giants Huawei and ZTE in its 5G networks in the coming years due to national security concerns. It was the latest move by Berlin to reduce economic reliance on Beijing that some fear have left it vulnerable, and follows warnings from the EU that the firms pose a risk to the bloc.

Parts from Huawei and ZTE will no longer be used in "core" 5G mobile networks by the end of 2026 at the latest, the interior ministry in Berlin said. In 5G access and transmission infrastructure, the systems of the telecom firms must be replaced by the end of 2029.

"We are protecting the central nervous systems of Germany as a business location - and we are protecting the communication of citizens, companies and the state," said Interior Minister Nancy Faeser. "We must reduce security risks and, unlike in the past, avoid one-sided dependencies."

The ministry said that 5G networks form part of Germany's "critical infrastructure" and are important for the functioning of sectors ranging from health to transport and energy. Telecoms networks must be protected from cyberattacks, which could be an "existential threat", it added. Officials have reached agreements with Germany's 5G network operators, Deutsche Telekom, Vodafone and Telefonica, on banning Huawei and ZTE.

Government sources had already indicated in September last year that Berlin was considering such a move, although the dates announced are later than those originally envisaged to give companies time to adopt the new measures. Faeser would not be drawn on whether she feared retaliatory measures from China, although she said that Beijing had been informed about the bans.

"For me as interior minister it is a matter of find-

Faster UK economy growth gives gift to new government

LONDON: Britain's economy grew more quickly than expected in May, providing some momentum for the new government of Prime Minister Keir Starmer but adding to doubts about whether the Bank of England will cut interest rates next month. Economic output increased by 0.4 percent in May, after a 0.2 percent rise in April, the Office for National Statistics said. A Reuters poll of economists had pointed to another 0.2 percent monthly increase. The strength of the upturn could dissuade the BoE from beginning to cut interest rates as soon as Aug 1, its next scheduled monetary policy announcement date. Three policymakers this week emphasized the strength of domestic price pressures.

The chance of a rate cut in three weeks' time fell below 50 percent on the futures markets from just above 50 percent on Wednesday. May saw a broad-based increase in economic output, with the services, manufacturing and

US consumer prices post first drop in four years

WASHINGTON: US consumer prices fell for the first time in four years in June amid lower gasoline costs and moderating rents, firmly putting disinflation back on track and drawing the Federal Reserve another step closer to cutting interest rates in September. The second straight month of benign consumer price readings reported by the Labor Department on Thursday should help to bolster confidence among officials at the US central bank that inflation is cooling after surging in the first half of the year.

The report also showed a measure of underlying



BARCELONA: People walk past the ZTE stand at the Mobile World Congress (MWC) in Barcelona. — AFP

ing regulations for telecommunications networks, for critical infrastructure, and I have done that," she told a press conference.

Factors that authorities looked at when deciding on the ban included whether the manufacturer was directly or indirectly controlled by the government, or whether they had been involved in activities that had a detrimental impact on Germany or other EU states. China and Germany have long had close ties, with Germany's crucial manufacturers - from auto companies to machine-tool makers - exporting vast quantities of products to the world's number two economy. But Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent energy crisis triggered soul-searching in

construction industries all growing and the latter up by 1.9 percent on the month, driven by house-building.

The figures represented an early boost for the new Labour administration, which has set itself the aim of achieving the fastest growth among the Group of Seven advanced economies on a sustained basis.

"The improving economic outlook suggests the government may benefit from the economic recovery being stronger than most forecasters anticipate," Ashley Webb, an economist with consultancy Capital Economics, said. Britain's economy appears to have snapped out of its low-growth rut, at least for now. Output has grown by 1.5 percent since the turn of the year, marking its best five months since early 2017, excluding the rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Goldman Sachs on Thursday nudged up its growth forecast for 2024 to 1.2 percent from 1.1 percent.

Still, the longer-run picture remains weak, with the economy only 2.7 percent larger than its pre-pandemic level of late 2019. According to the latest quarterly data, only Germany has fared worse since the pandemic. Over the three months to May, the economy expanded by 0.9 percent, the strongest reading since the three months to January 2022, compared with the consensus forecast for a 0.7 percent expansion.

The BoE said last month it expected the economy

inflation posting the smallest increase since August 2021 on a monthly basis. Financial markets saw a very high probability of the Fed starting its easing cycle in September. "Barring rogue price data in July, the Fed has a checkered flag to reduce rates in September," said Brian Bethune, an economics professor at Boston College. "This guidance will be solidified at the July meeting."

The consumer price index dipped 0.1 percent last month, the first drop since May 2020, after being unchanged in May, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics said. The CPI was weighed down by a 3.8 percent drop in gasoline prices, which followed a 3.6 percent decrease in May. Shelter costs, which include rents, increased a moderate 0.2 percent after advancing 0.4 percent in May.

Food prices rose 0.2 percent after edging up 0.1 percent in May. In the 12 months through June, the CPI climbed 3.0 percent, the smallest

Europe's top economy about an over-reliance on authoritarian governments and led to Berlin seeking to "de-risk" by cutting its reliance on China.

It unveiled a strategy for managing ties with Beijing last year, in which it sought to strike a balance between competing interests, with China described as a "partner, competitor and systemic rival".

There have been growing signs of the government's new tougher approach. Last week, Berlin blocked the sale of a gas turbine unit belonging to a subsidiary of the Volkswagen group to a Chinese investor after media reports suggested it had close links to the Chinese armaments industry. — AFP



LONDON: Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves delivers a speech at the Treasury announcing the first steps the new Labour Government will take to deliver economic growth. — AFP

would grow by 0.5 percent over the second quarter - something that now looks likely to prove too low. "These GDP figures may make an August rate cut less likely by providing those rate setters who are concerned about underlying price pressures with sufficient confidence about the UK's economic recovery to continue putting off loosening policy," Suren Thiru, economics director at accountancy body ICAEW, said. — Reuters

gain since June 2023. That followed a 3.3 percent advance in May. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the CPI ticking up 0.1 percent and gaining 3.1 percent year-on-year.

The annual increase in consumer prices has slowed from a peak of 9.1 percent in June 2022. June's moderation narrowed the CPI gap with the measures tracked by the Fed for its 2 percent inflation target. The Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) price indexes both increased 2.6 percent in May.

The CPI report followed news last week that the unemployment rate rose to a 2-1/2-year high of 4.1 percent in June from 4.0 percent in May. Economic growth has also slowed in response to the central bank's hefty rate hikes in 2022 and 2023, with second-quarter gross domestic product forecast near the 1.8 percent annualized rate that policymakers view as the non-inflationary growth pace. — Reuters

NBK ECONOMIC INSIGHT

Kuwait's GDP fell in Q4 2023, led by oil sector; non-oil sector dips

Government prioritizes economic reforms, development

KUWAIT: Preliminary estimates show GDP declined by 4.4 percent y/y in Q4 2023, easing slightly on Q3's outcome of -5.8 percent. The oil sector remained constrained by OPEC-mandated crude oil production cuts, while the non-oil sector recorded a steeper decline than in the previous quarter. For 2023 as a whole, the non-oil economy contracted for the second consecutive year. Parallel data on the expenditure side of the national accounts showed that investment's share of GDP stood at a modest 17 percent of GDP in 2022 (the latest year available). This is something that could be pushed much higher as the new government pursues its diversification and development goals.

Oil sector in contraction territory

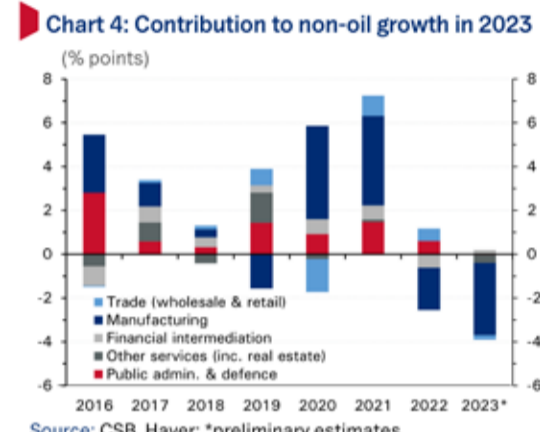
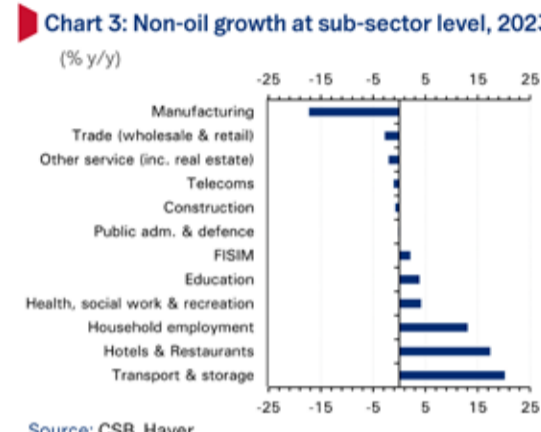
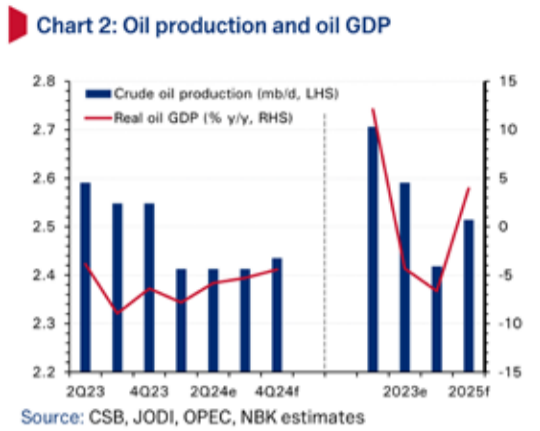
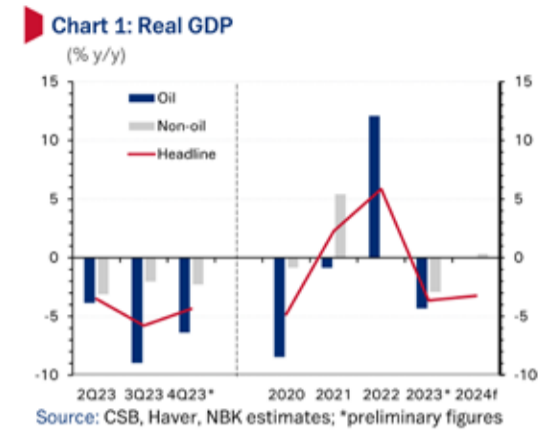
The figures showed oil GDP in Q4 down 6.4 percent y/y, a slight improvement on Q3, with Kuwait maintaining crude oil production at 2.55 mb/d in line with its OPEC+ production cut obligations. For the full year, oil GDP contracted by 4.3 percent, a marked turnaround from the robust expansion witnessed in 2022 when a tighter oil market had prompted Kuwait and its OPEC counterparts to raise production.

But oil's positive performance in 2022 largely came against the grain, for in seven of the last ten years, oil GDP growth has tended to be negative, fluctuating in line with OPEC supply policy, which in turn has had to adjust to the post-US shale landscape of ample supply and downward oil price pressures by having to cut production more often than raise it. Kuwait's crude oil production in 2023 (2.59 mb/d) is consequently about 10 percent lower than it was in 2014 (2.87 mb/d).

Looking ahead, oil GDP growth will likely begin ticking up from Q4 2024 after OPEC+ announced in June that members' 2024 voluntary production cuts, of which Kuwait's share is 135 kb/d, will be gradually unwound over the course of a year from October. We estimate Kuwait's oil GDP will rise by 0.9 percent q/q in Q4 and by 4.0 percent y/y in 2025 if this production is restored fully as planned, though OPEC has left open the possibility that it could pause and even reverse these supply gains if market conditions dictate.

Non-oil activity

Meanwhile, GDP in the non-oil sector remained in contraction territory at -2.3 percent y/y in Q4 23, a sequence which extended for a fifth consecutive quarter. For 2023 as a whole, non-oil activity fell by 2.9 percent, a second consecutive annual decline following 2022's fall of 0.1 percent (downwardly revised from +0.3 per-



cent). This is the weakest reading in the available series and well below the 2011-2019 average of +3.3 percent per year. Performance at the sectoral level in 2023 was led by transportation & storage (+20 percent), hotels & restaurants (+17.4 percent) and household employment (+13.1 percent). The latter pointed to burgeoning demand for domestic labor while the increase in hospitality sector output, for the second consecutive year, not only signifies strong consumption but also efforts made in recent years to develop and expand local dining and tourism capacity. That said, the performance of the larger sectors, such as manufacturing (-17 percent y/y), which has underperformed in recent years despite strong gains in oil refining output, trade (-2.8 percent) and other services & real estate (-2 percent) was mark-

edly more negative in 2023 compared to 2022. The Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) also published GDP characterized by expenditure, with data up until 2022, providing a useful look at Kuwait's economy from a different perspective. It is clear to see that in 2020, amidst the pandemic that private consumption (-11 percent) and total investment (-36 percent) fell sharply, contributing to that year's near-5 percent decline in real GDP.

Consumers lead recovery

Private and government consumption led the recovery in 2021, while investment was little changed (+1.8 percent). Exports drove the continued recovery in 2022, the year in which Kuwait's oil output and oil exports recorded double-digit increases to balance a tight market

reeling from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Investment also surged 44 percent in 2022 – but this was from the low, COVID-affected base: in levels terms, real investment remained well below pre-COVID years. This was signaled in cuts to capex in successive government budgets, falling from a peak of KD 3.8 billion in FY19/20 to KD 2.5 billion in FY23/24. It also reinforces what we know from other figures about the shape of the economic recovery post-COVID, which has lent mostly on consumer spending and oil exports. Gross investment (public and private), at 17 percent of GDP in 2022, will need to increase quite substantially if the government is to succeed with its reform and economic diversification goals.

The release confirms previous indications that Kuwait's economy recovered to its pre-pandemic size more quickly than originally thought. Nominal GDP clocked in at KD 42.9 billion (\$ 143 billion) in 2021 from KD 33.6 billion in 2020, increasing by 28 percent y/y largely on the back of surging oil prices which propelled oil GDP up more than 67 percent. In 2023, however, GDP was back down, at KD50.3 billion (-9.8 percent), again reflecting changes in oil GDP. Partly reflecting this fall and partly an increase in population (+2.3 percent y/y according to PACI data) per capita income had dropped to \$33.7k in 2023.

Economic reforms

The modest growth in the non-oil economy since the COVID-19 pandemic, averaging +0.8 percent per year compared to a pre-pandemic average of 3.3 percent (2010-2019) highlights a sector performing well below potential in recent years. Partly this reflects a succession of challenging external shocks and developments including the pandemic itself, oil price volatility and aggressive global central bank monetary tightening. But it also comes despite traditionally elevated levels of government spending and a divergence in non-oil performance between Kuwait and some of its GCC peers. Changes in the composition of public spending, with more emphasis on capital investment, will be necessary to close the performance gap with neighboring Gulf economies. The role of the private sector will need to be greatly enhanced, with the government providing the regulatory tools, incentives and likely capital initially to provide the leg-up for businesses to ultimately expand and deepen the non-oil base and drive longer-term productivity gains. The new government, for its part, has stated that it intends to use the coming period to prioritize structural fiscal and economic reforms and accelerate implementation of development plan projects.



NOW LEASING

STORAGE | SHOWROOMS | SHOPS | OFFICES



SCAN FOR THE LOCATION

**EAST AHMADI
KUWAIT**

CALL 505 44 121



دار الصفاة
Dar Al Safat
General Trading

China's top brass poised to meet with all eyes on ailing economy

Economy grappling with property crisis, weak consumption and aging population

BEIJING: Top Chinese officials gather in Beijing on Monday, with all eyes on how they might kickstart lackluster growth at a key political meeting that has traditionally seen officials unveil big-picture economic policy changes. The world's second-largest economy is grappling with a real estate debt crisis, weakening consumption, an aging population and geopolitical tensions overseas.

President Xi Jinping will oversee the ruling Communist Party's secretive Third Plenum, which usually takes place every five years in October, though Beijing has offered few hints about what might be on the table. State media in June said the delayed four-day gathering would "primarily examine issues related to further comprehensively deepening reform and advancing Chinese modernization", and Xi last week said the CCP was planning "major" reforms. Analysts are hoping those pledges will result in badly needed support for the economy.

"There are many hopes that this Third Plenum will provide some new breakthroughs on policy," Andrew Batson of the Beijing-based consultancy Gavekal Dragonomics told AFP.

"China's government has struggled to execute a successful economic strategy since emerging from the pandemic," he added. But he said he did not expect a "fundamental departure from the course Xi has already laid out", in which technological self-sufficiency and national security outweigh economic growth. And the People's Daily, the Communist Party's official newspaper, warned on Monday that "reform is not about changing direction and transformation is not about changing color".

Ting Lu, chief China economist at Nomura, said the meeting was "intended to generate

and discuss big, long-term ideas and structural reforms instead of making short-term policy adjustments".

The Third Plenum has long been an occasion for the Communist Party's top leadership to unveil major economic policy shifts. In 1978, then-leader Deng Xiaoping used the meeting to announce market reforms that would put China on the path to dazzling economic growth by opening it to the world.

And more recently following the closed-door meeting in 2013, the leadership pledged to give the free market a "decisive" role in resource allocation as well as other sweeping changes to economic and social policy.

Growth figures expected

This year's conclave will begin the same day China is due to release its growth figures for the second quarter. Experts polled by AFP expect China's economy to have grown, on average, 5.3 percent year-on-year between April and June.

Beijing has said it is aiming for five percent growth this year—envious for many Western countries but a far cry from the double-digit expansion that for years drove the Chinese economy. Authorities have been clear they want to reorient the economy away from state-funded investment and instead base growth around high-tech innovation and domestic consumption.

But economic uncertainty is fuelling a vicious cycle that has kept consumption stubbornly low.

Among the most urgent issues facing the economy is a persistent crisis in the property sector, which long served as a key engine for growth but is now mired in debt, with several top firms facing liqui-



People shop for fruits and vegetables at a supermarket in Handan, in northern China's Hebei province on July 10, 2024. — AFP

dated. Authorities have moved in recent months to ease pressure on developers and restore confidence, such as by encouraging local governments to buy up unsold homes.

Analysts say much more is required for a full rebound as the country's economy has yet to

bounce back more than 18 months after damaging COVID-19 restrictions ended. "Short-term stimulus is badly needed to boost the teetering economy," Nomura's Ting said. But, he added, "major steps towards market-oriented reforms might be limited this time". — AFP

India's TCS profits rise as client spending picks up

MUMBAI: Indian IT giant Tata Consultancy Services posted Thursday an 8.7 percent on-year rise in net profit for the June quarter, matching analyst expectations and reflecting higher levels of client spending.

The Mumbai-headquartered firm is the second-biggest in India by market cap and earns more than 80 percent of its revenue from Western markets. TCS had seen demand taper after the end of the coronavirus pandemic as customers cut back on tech spending due to higher inflation and an uncertain global economic outlook. But the company has forecast stronger performance in the year ahead with a global economic bounceback and willingness by customers to spend on generative artificial intelligence technologies. Quarterly revenue rose 5.4 percent year-on-year to hit \$7.49 billion (626.1 billion rupees) while net profit was \$1.44 billion for the same period, the company said.

The results were buttressed by a 9.4 percent year-on-year revenue bump in the company's manufacturing division.

In a statement, chief executive K Krithivasan said TCS had a "strong start to the new fiscal year", with "all-round growth across industries and markets". Chief financial officer Samir Sekaria said the firm had been able to deliver a "strong operating margin performance" despite higher payroll costs due to "annual wage increments in this quarter".

The group's Indian rival Infosys is due to report its quarterly results next week. TCS shares closed 0.37 percent higher in Mumbai ahead of the earnings announcement. — AFP

UK fast-tracks biggest company listings shake-up in decades

LONDON: Britain's markets watchdog on Thursday paved the way for the biggest shake-up in three decades of rules for companies listing on the London Stock Exchange as it seeks to catch up with New York and the European Union post-Brexit. The regime, which aims to attract a wider range of listings by reducing red tape, is backed by the country's new Labour government as it focuses on reviving growth and investment.

"These new rules represent a significant first step towards reinvigorating our capital markets, bringing the UK in line with international counterparts and ensuring we attract the most innovative companies to list here," said Rachel Reeves, Britain's finance minister in the Labour government elected last week.

The rules will give company founders more power over decision-making and disclosures to investors. They also remove a requirement for companies to seek a shareholder vote on significant transactions, with the exception of reverse takeovers and a listing cancellation.

Britain's finance ministry under the previous government had requested the changes to help London to compete more effectively with Amsterdam, Paris and elsewhere in the European Union — which has already eased its listings rules. London has already lost some high-profile listings to other markets, including UK chip designer Arm Holdings, which chose to list in New York. Fast fashion retailer Shein meanwhile has begun the process for a London listing. — Reuters

China is building two-thirds of wind, solar plants globally

BEIJING: Almost two-thirds of big wind and solar plants under construction globally are in China, where surging renewable capacity has squeezed coal's generation share to new lows, research released on Thursday showed. China is building 339 gigawatts (GW) of utility-scale wind and solar, or 64 percent of the global total, a report from US-based think tank Global Energy Monitor (GEM) found. That is more than eight times the project pipeline of the second-place US, with 40 GW.

China's pace puts the global goal to triple renewable capacity by the end of 2030 "well within reach" even without more hydropower, the report's authors said, calling on China to lift its targets in climate pledges to the UN next year. Beijing is also on track to meet its own 2030 goal to install 1,200 GW of wind and solar by this month — six years early — Sydney-based think tank Climate Energy Finance said last week.

Absorbing the boom in renewables remains a challenge for China's coal-centered grid and faster development of transmission lines is needed, GEM research analyst Aiqun Yu said. Still, the new capacity pushed renewable generation to record highs recently, according to a separate analysis published by Carbon Brief on Thursday.

China generated 53 percent of its electricity from coal in May, a record low, while a record 44 percent came from non-fossil fuel sources, indicating its carbon emissions may have peaked last year if the trend continues, according to the analysis conducted by Lauri Myllyvirta, senior fellow at Asia Society Policy Institute.

Coal's share was down from 60 percent in May 2023. Solar rose to 12 percent of power generation in



LIANYUNGANG, China: Employees working on solar photovoltaic modules that will be exported at a factory in Lianyungang, in China's eastern Jiangsu province. — AFP

May and wind to 11 percent as China added large amounts of new capacity. Hydropower at 15 percent, nuclear with 5 percent and biomass at 2 percent made up the rest of the non-fossil fuel power. The increased renewable generation led carbon dioxide emissions from the power sector, which make up some 40 percent of China's overall emissions, to fall 3.6 percent in May.

"If current rapid wind and solar deployment continues, then China's CO2 output is likely to continue falling, making 2023 the peak year for the country's emissions," Myllyvirta wrote.

His analysis found solar power generation soared by a record 78 percent year-on-year in May to 94 terawatt hours (TWh). Data from China's National Bureau of Statistics showed a 29

percent increase, but that excluded rooftop solar panels and therefore missed about half of the electricity from solar.

The new analysis calculated wind and solar output using power generating capacity data and utilization figures from the China Electricity Council, an industry association. Wind power generation rose 5 percent on the year to 83 TWh as a 21 percent increase in capacity was offset by lower utilization because of variations in wind conditions. Hydropower generation rose 39 percent from last year, when hydropower was hit by a drought.

Gas-fired generation fell 16 percent, and power generation from coal fell 3.7 percent, even as total electricity demand increased 7.2 percent year-on-year. — AFP



LuLu Exchange opens 36th branch at Kuwait Int'l Airport Terminal 1

KUWAIT: LuLu Exchange Kuwait — one of the nation's most trusted names in cross-border payments and foreign currency exchange — inaugurated its 36th customer engagement center at Kuwait International Airport Terminal 1 on Thursday.

The opening aligns with the company's expansion strategy in Kuwait as the country progresses towards achieving financial inclusion. The engagement center was inaugurated by Narayan Pradhan, COO of LuLu Exchange, in the presence of Rajesh Rangray, GM of LuLu Exchange Kuwait, and other senior management from the country's operations.

Speaking at the event, Pradhan said, "This new cus-



KUWAIT: Narayan Pradhan inaugurates LuLu Exchange's new engagement center in the presence of Rajesh Rangray and other senior management from the country's operations on Thursday.



tommer engagement center marks a significant step in enhancing accessibility and convenience for our customers. This strategic location underscores our commitment to seamless service delivery and innovation in digital payments. Kuwait remains a key market for our operations, and we are thankful to our valued customers and partners for their continued support in our growth."

Established in 2011, LuLu Exchange Kuwait is one

of the country's leading financial services providers, pioneering digital transformation through several industry-first initiatives to better serve retail and corporate customers. As one of Kuwait's most forward-thinking payment companies, LuLu Exchange delivers financial services promptly, transparently, and reliably through its network of customer engagement centers and mobile payments app — LuLu Money.

Weekender

FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2024



Kuwaiti artist

Ghadah Alkandari

sees art as part of her genetic makeup



By Sahar Moussa

Ghadah Alkandari is a Kuwaiti artist born in Delhi in 1969. In 1992, she received a BA in Mass Communications from the American University in Cairo. Renowned for her boundless creativity and unique artistic vision, Alkandari transforms ordinary subjects into extraordinary masterpieces. Her work, characterized by its bold colors, intricate details and profound themes, transcends traditional boundaries and invites viewers to explore new dimensions of artistic expression. Alkandari's dedication to her craft and her ability to consistently surprise and delight make her a true visionary, and her work continues to leave an indelible mark on the world of art. Ghadah Alkandari was interviewed by Kuwait Times to discuss her art and passion.

Kuwait Times: Tell us about yourself.
Ghadah Alkandari: I'm an artist whose art is a huge part of her genetic makeup. I always say that my drawings and paintings are byproducts of my everyday living. Whereas my breathing, eating and sleeping spark no interest, it's the artistic aspect of my daily routine that others enjoy. Hence the exhibitions.



KT: When did you start painting and how did you know you had this talent?

Alkandari: My mother tells me that I started drawing at two. I don't remember ever not doing what I do. It was always an emotional coping mechanism for me,

and I felt a huge sense of security from it.

KT: Who are your biggest artistic influences?

Alkandari: I was influenced from an early age by the books I read and the movies I watched: Archie, Asterix, Mad Magazine and Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (the colors!). Then when I was older, in my later teens, I started noticing the Surrealists, Fauvists and Expressionists. I loved the mind of Salvador Dali and the works of Matisse, Modigliani and Kuwaiti artist Sami Mohammed.

KT: Where do you find inspiration?

Alkandari: My inspiration comes from curiosity and play. I like to try different things: What would happen if I froze this or burned that? I'm also inspired by forests, cemeteries and science. The list is long and disparate! But the one thing that people erroneously think I'm inspired by is other people's art. That's not how it works with me — it all comes from within.

KT: What kind of material and colors do you use in your art?

Alkandari: I use everything. My paintings are mainly in acrylic because I'm fast and have zero patience. But I can use anything, whatever is available.

KT: What is your favorite time of day to create?

Alkandari: At night - too many adult things to do during the day!



KT: You use a lot of Palestinian symbols in your art. Can you tell us more about it and your stand towards the Palestinian cause?

Alkandari: My father raised us to be thoughtful of Palestine and the cause, so it was always in the forefront. I've also been volunteering with the Palestinian

Culture Center for nearly 30 years, and my children are part Palestinian. Artistically, I love Palestinian embroidery and frequently feature it in my Instagram posts. And since October 7, my posts have mostly been centered around Palestine. I believe that everyone has a role

ple laugh or cry. These are the most rewarding things to me. And of course it's wonderful to be recognized in public! I never get tired of it, and never take it for granted.

KT: What is your favorite artwork and why?

“

I believe that everyone has a role in keeping Palestine loved and alive. And my role is to keep talking about it.

”

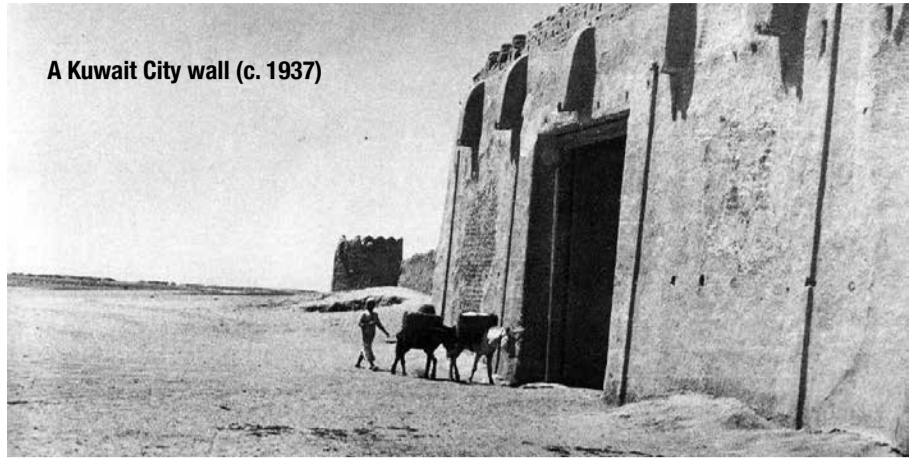
in keeping Palestine loved and alive. And my role is to keep talking about it.

KT: How do you define success as an artist?

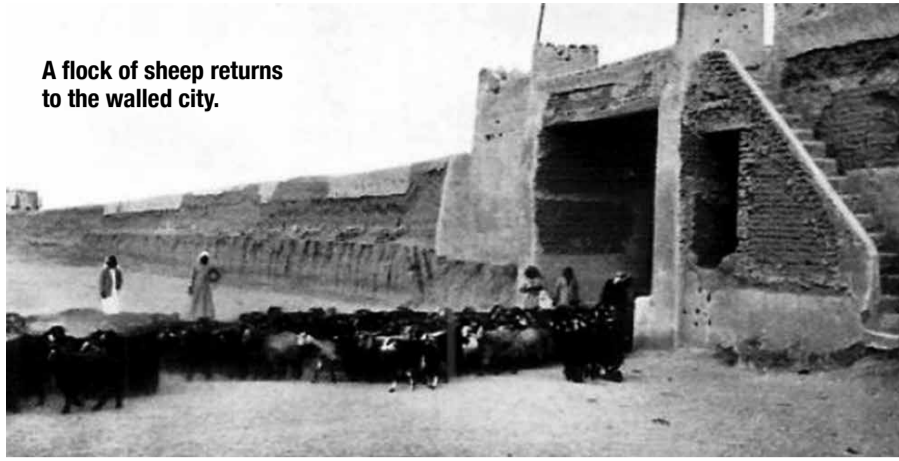
Alkandari: It's many different things: It's people visiting your exhibitions; sharing their stories inspired by your works; it's a mother sending you a private message letting you know you've inspired their daughter to draw; it's making peo-

Alkandari: I have many favorite artworks, so it's hard to pinpoint. I can say that my favorite ones are the ones that inspire me to keep going. Sometimes I get in a rut, and seeing old paintings that randomly pop up galvanizes me to pick up a brush again.





A Kuwait City wall (c. 1937)



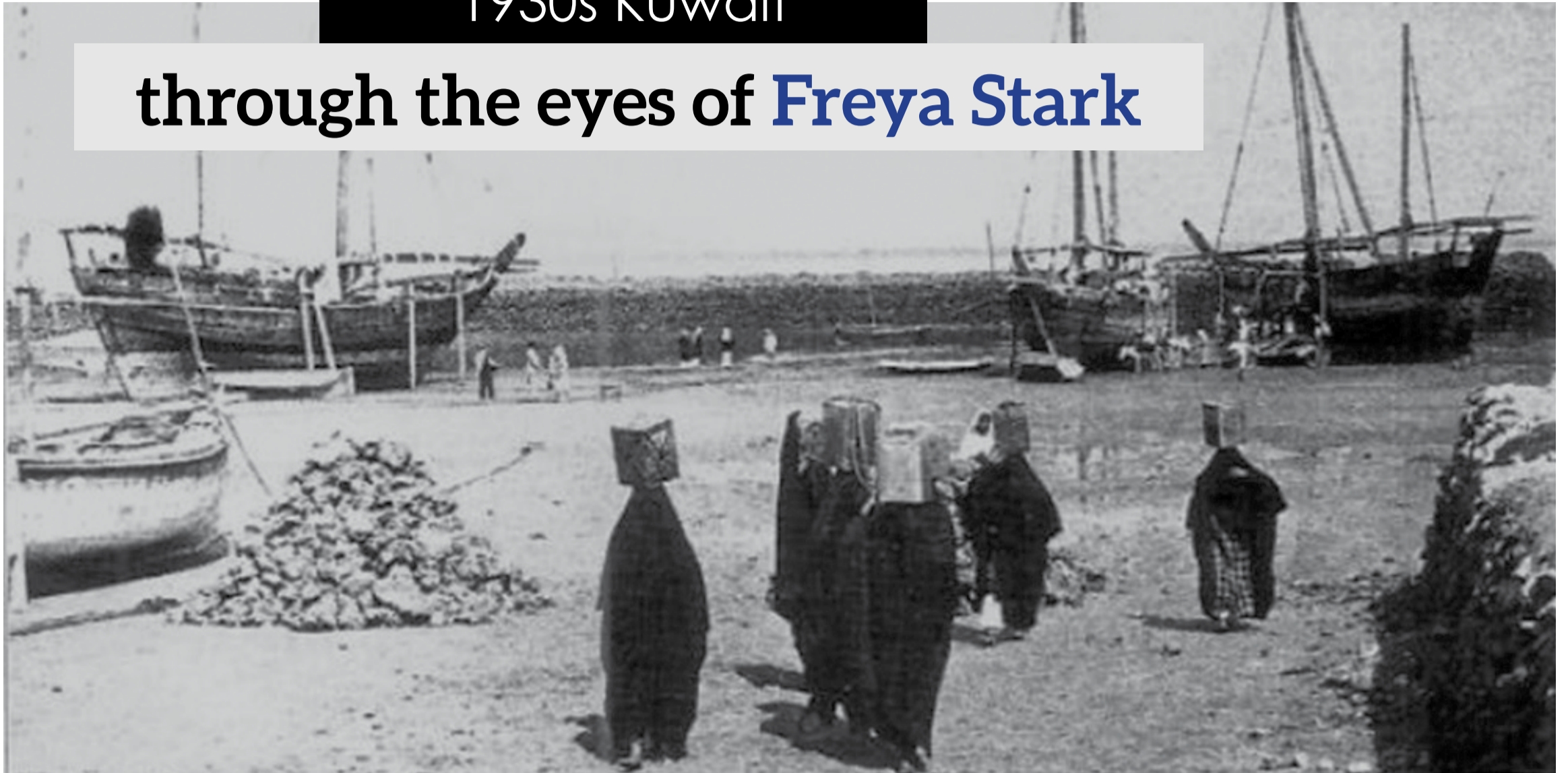
A flock of sheep returns to the walled city.



Darwaza Abdulrazzaq

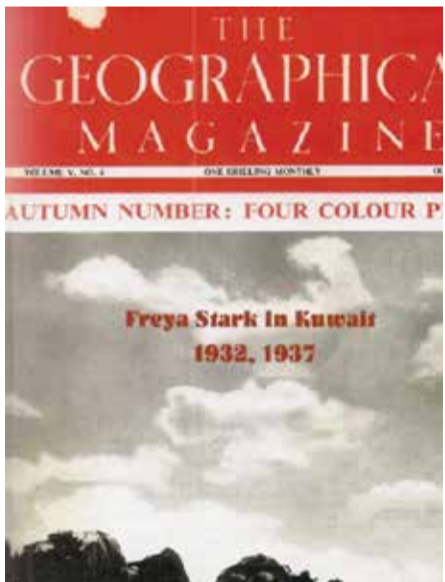
1930s Kuwait

through the eyes of Freya Stark

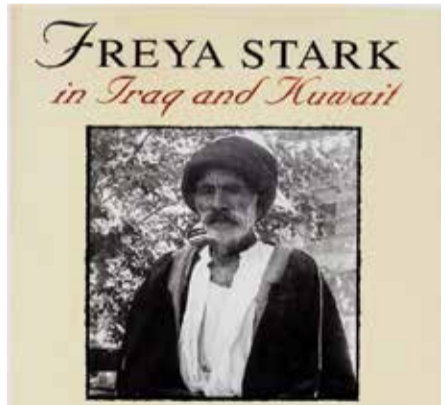


By Mahmoud Zakaria

Dame Freya Madeline Stark was one of the best-known figures of recent times, acclaimed for her intrepid exploration and her prolific writing. Her talent for befriending local people as she traveled gave her photographs a unique perspective. Born in Paris in 1893 and died in 1993 in Italy, she was brought up in Italy. In 1911, she moved to England to study English and history at Bedford College.



Cover of Geographical magazine about a trip by Freya Stark to Kuwait.



Cover of a book by Malise Ruthven.

When World War I interrupted her studies, Stark served as a nurse on the Austrian front from 1915. At the age of 28, she began learning Arabic, and from 1928 onwards, she traveled almost continually through the Near East, Iraq, Persia and southern Arabia. In 1950, she traveled extensively in Greece and Turkey, and between 1960 and 1970, she visited China, Afghanistan, Nepal and Kashmir.

Stark's journeys to Kuwait in 1932 and 1937 have been described in two references. The first one is the book "Freya Stark in Iraq and Kuwait", published in 1994 by Malise Ruthven. The second is an article published in Geographical Magazine in Oct 1937. In Nov 2003, the Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait republished and translated the two articles so that we could have a quick look at the past of Kuwait. This article reminds readers of the social and economic conditions in Kuwait at that time, giving us a true vision of life in Kuwait before the discovery of oil.

Of all the sights in Kuwait, Freya was most impressed by the Arab dhows in the harbor, built of shiny yellow wood from Malabar, their ribs often made out of single forked branches of trees. "Who can describe the beauty of those boats with their high carved sterns? Or the feeling of time turned backward as one walks along what the crusading fleet drawn up for overhauling on the sands of Acre or Athlit?" Stark inspected the long slender batteel, the admiral's boat that com-



Freya Stark

manded the pearling fleet, the larger boom that sailed as Zanzibar. She admired the bold and simple lines of the sambuq, the straight-down keel of the jalboot (or jollyboat), and the baghlah, the most ancient craft of all, a mere bundle of reeds crafted into the shape of a boat and tied together, with a "hollow place in the middle for the fisherman to sit in the oozing water".

On her second visit to Kuwait five years later, Stark was taken by the British Resident, Gerald de Gaury, to the island of Failaka, a two-hour crossing by launch. They were accompanied by Yusuf Al-Mutawwa, a gentle old man who lived "on a respectable income

made years ago by his work in the trade of dates".

Stark noticed that new slaves were no longer being brought into the sheikhdom, and increasing numbers of those already there were being set free. Times were changing — though not too fast. "Civilization," she concluded, "will come tempered, more like a marriage and less like a rape; and the poor little town — that looks to her untried bridegroom hopefully for all temporal blessings — may yet, with gentle treatment, keep her peculiar charm."

Stark wrote about her observations: "The wall, as a matter of fact, is not old. It was built in 1916, hastily in three months against the assaulters, but it might be any age, slapped up with mud, with an inner raised walk and small steep-staired towers at intervals, and three gates between sea and sea.

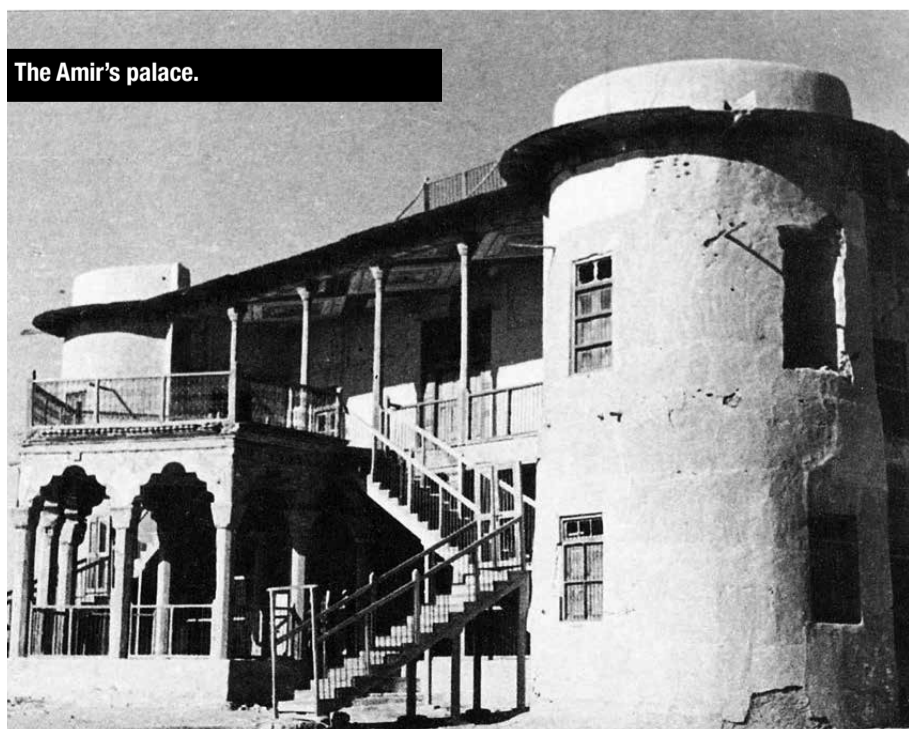
"The police who sit in the three gatehouses might also be dated, as you please. The three old men lounge in their seats or squat in the windowless den brewing coffee, keeping their eye on who goes in or out, and in their toothless way, upholding the rule of law. They wait for the approaching end of their days with that dignity which is the keynote of Arabia, made of poverty and leisure, of a complete unconsciousness of dress as an asset to respectability or of physical comfort as an essential to happiness.

"Kuwaiti boys with time on their hands lure the common little blue and brown kite for the sky. A few decoys tied to stones sit demurely about



Women head to the seaside to do the laundry.

in the dust. Here and there, traps are arranged — circular concave metal discs that close with a snap when the spring is released. This centers on a white caterpillar tied by the waist, who wriggles slowly round and round like a semaphore, succulently obvious from above. The boys wait at a distance and get four or five prisoners in a day, selling them to children who like to walk about with a bird at the end of a string in their hand."



The Amir's palace.



A shopping street in Kuwait (c. 1937)

Modeling in Kuwait

Fusion of art, modesty and aspirations

By Harichandana P D

In Kuwait, where cultural norms and modesty guidelines are deeply ingrained, the modeling industry serves as a unique platform blending tradition with contemporary creativity. Kuwait Times spoke to Diana and Katarina, models working in Kuwait, to explore the intricacies and experiences that define life in the modeling world of Kuwait.



Bridging art and culture

Embracing cultural richness

Diana, a 26-year-old Syrian model and a marketing graduate from the American University of Kuwait, embarked on her modeling career at the age of 17. Initially introduced to the field while working in promotions, she found herself drawn to modeling as an artistic outlet that resonated with her passion for creativity. "Modeling has some sort of art in it. And art has always been something that I liked and have been into. It's the artistic part of the modeling job that I enjoy the most," she said.

For Diana, a typical day begins with the ritual of coffee, followed by rigorous gym sessions to maintain physical fitness which is a necessity in an industry that demands endurance and core strength, especially during long shoots in heels. She emphasized the seasonal nature of modeling in Kuwait, where peak periods are filled with back-to-back studio sessions. Diana's approach to modeling is not just about posing; it's a meticulous preparation involving makeup, nails and a selection of heels to suit various assignments.

Diana believes pursuing a career in modeling truly has its advantages. "Firstly, you meet a lot of people who are so nice to you, and it also opens doors to you for expressing yourself in artistic ways. It's nice to go as a model to shows and see the results," she explained. She attributes her successful presentations of designers' outfits to be the result of effective teamwork, making her feel motivated and thankful for the job.

Challenges in the industry,

she explains, extend beyond physical demands. There are misconceptions about modeling, particularly regarding its perceived ease and superficiality. Diana highlighted the mental resilience required to navigate the highs and lows



of the profession. "I have had a few modeling gigs where I was mentally not okay. When this happens, I try to put my feelings aside to give the client the best results."

Moreover, she appreciates Kuwait's modesty guidelines, which ensure that boundaries are respected and that cultural sensibilities are upheld, although she wishes them to be a little more open-minded. "I really like that there are modesty guidelines which protect us women from being taken advantage of, but I would like to see a bit of change where showing a bit of skin is more acceptable." She hopes Kuwait's modeling industry evolves in a way where it becomes a little more liberal

and additionally introduces runways in Kuwait.

Integrating Kuwaiti cultural elements into her modeling profession has been both a challenge and a source of inspiration for Diana. She incorporates local trends and aesthetics into her style, blending traditional influences with modern fashion sensibilities. For example, using simple gold accessories was influenced by Kuwaiti women for shoots.

Looking ahead, Diana draws inspiration from international models like Bella Hadid, not only for their physical appearance, but also for their professionalism and attitude towards their craft. "I would like to influence people to make them into thinking that modeling is not just sitting and posing but is a deeper form of art, which is influenced by teamwork and cooperation between the designer and the model, and the efforts, mental energy and physical energy it takes," she pointed out.

Diana advises every aspiring models to work on their confidence. "You need to be extremely confident to enter this field. You must learn to put your feelings aside and present yourself in the best way possible." She also suggests how it's okay to say no if you're not comfortable for a shoot. "Be yourselves, do what you think is right and enjoy it!"

Diana envisions a future where her modeling experience intersects with marketing, aiming for a career that balances creativity with strategic insight.

Katarina, a 23-year-old Serbian model, traces her journey to Kuwait from a burgeoning career that began in her homeland at the age of 16. Her transition to international modeling brought her to Kuwait in 2023, where she discovered a vibrant fashion scene amidst a backdrop of rich cultural heritage. "What I find unique about being a model in Kuwait is besides looks, people look for personality. People are truly kind, and they don't seem to like negativity. Clients like you when you have a good personality and reflect positivity," she shared.

Katarina describes her life as a model in Kuwait to be quite simple and calm. "My day usually begins in the afternoon with a coffee followed by me preparing my heels, hair and makeup for the day's shoot. The shootings usually go on for 2-3 hours, after which I return home and take rest."

Having a strong personality, Katarina shares how amidst the misconceptions and ill-opinions that society may have about models, it is always important to not be affected by them. "All you must do is prove them wrong and have a strong attitude and personality. You must not

take anything to heart and should learn to ignore negativity in order to survive in this industry," she advised.

For Katarina, adapting to Kuwait's cultural norms initially presented challenges, particularly in navigating



modesty guidelines and incorporating traditional elements into her modeling assignments. However, she quickly embraced these cultural differences, integrating local clothing like abayas into her shoots. "I wear a lot of abayas and other traditional outfits of women in Kuwait for my shoots, since it helps

to do a lot of interesting and creative shoots." This creative fusion also enriches her portfolio with diverse and culturally resonant imagery.

Katarina's aspirations extend beyond modeling, as she draws inspiration from iconic figures in the industry such as Emrata, Naomi Campbell and Adriana Lima. "I appreciate and follow their careers. When I watch them do their thing, it takes me in awe," she said.

Although her personal attribution of modeling holds some kind of standard within it, she believes every girl should try it. "There will be something about you that makes you different and unique from the other girls, be it your looks, fashion or personality. But one thing to remember is to be confident and to try it," she said, adding: "Don't stop and never look back. People will try to sabotage you but don't listen, don't give up and just do your thing!"

Katarina envisions a future where she not only continues to model, but also establishes her own agency, collaborating with luxury brands and pushing the boundaries of creativity.

DIANA



KATARINA



Event: Swahili Language Festival
Location: Talk Cultural Club
Date: July 12, 2024

Event: Spaghetti Bridge Challenge
Location: ASCC
Date: July 12, 2024

Event: Dolce Music Open Day
Location: 8 Mall
Date: July 13, 2024

Event: Coding and Robotic Adventure
Location: Argan Bedaya
Date: July 13, 2024

Event: ISS Challenge
Location: ASCC
Date: July 12, 2024

Event: Korean Retro Night
Location: Madang Cultural Center
Date: July 13, 2024

Event: Phone Photography Techniques
Location: AAB World
Date: July 13, 2024

Sports

India captain Gill hails crucial T20 win in Harare

Sri Lanka T20 skipper quits ahead of India's tour

HARARE: India captain Shubman Gill led his team to what he described as a "crucial" 23-run win in the third T20 international against Zimbabwe at the Harare Sports Club on Wednesday.

India took a 2-1 lead in the five-match series. Gill hit 66 off 49 balls in an Indian total of 182 for four after he won the toss and decided to bat. Zimbabwe replied with 159 for six. "It was a crucial win for us," Gill said at the post-match presentation. He added he was delighted with the way India started with both bat and ball.

The win continued an Indian comeback after they lost a low-scoring first match on Saturday. "Everyone is contributing and that is a good sign," said Gill.

India raced to 49 without loss in four overs at the start of a 67-run opening stand between Gill and Yashasvi Jaiswal, then reduced Zimbabwe to 39 for five in the first seven overs of the home team's innings.

Opening bowlers Khaleel Ahmed and Avesh Khan took three wickets in the power play before off-spinner Washington Sundar claimed two wickets in his first over.

Sundar finished with three for 15 in four overs and was named man of the match. India were bolstered by the inclusion of their three World Cup squad members, Jaiswal, Sanju Samson and Shivam Dube, who missed the first two matches because of India's World Cup victory celebrations in Mumbai.

Jaiswal made 36. Samson faced only seven balls towards the end of the innings and made 12 not out. Dube did not bat but conceded 27 runs in two overs of medium-pace bowling. Abhishek Sharma, who hit a century as an opening batsman in India's 100-run win in the second match on Sunday, batted at number

three and was out for 10. Zimbabwe captain Sikander Raza bemoaned a poor fielding performance.

"We are proud of our fielding but the wheels came off today. We gave away 20 extra runs," he said. Dion Myers made a spirited 65 not out off 49 balls as he and Clive Madonde (37) added 77 for the sixth wicket to lift the Zimbabwe innings after their poor start.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's T20 captain Wanindu Hasaranga resigned Thursday ahead of India's white ball tour of the island later this month, the cricket board said.

The 26-year-old all-rounder quit following Sri Lanka's early exit from the T20 World Cup in June. Sri Lanka Cricket said Hasaranga decided to give up the captaincy and remain in the side as a player in the "best interest" of the team.

"Sri Lanka will always have my utmost best efforts as a player, and I will support and stand by my team and leadership as always," he was quoted as saying in his resignation letter to the board.

No replacement was announced and Kusal Mendis remained the country's ODI skipper with Dhananjaya de Silva staying on as Test captain.

Hasaranga's resignation comes days after former skipper Sanath Jayasuriya, 55, was appointed "interim" coach until a permanent replacement for Chris Silverwood is named.

Former England coach Silverwood, 49, quit Sri Lanka's national side for "personal reasons", according to Sri Lanka Cricket, which thanked him for his "valuable contributions during his tenure".

Sri Lanka won only one match at the T20 World Cup tournament, against the Netherlands, and finished third in their group behind



HARARE: Zimbabwe's Clive Madonde plays a shot during the third T20 international cricket match between Zimbabwe and India at Harare Sports Club in Harare on July 10, 2024. — AFP

South Africa and Bangladesh.

Former skipper Mahela Jayawardena also stepped down as "consultant coach" last month. India will play its first T20 against hosts Sri Lanka on July 26 with the second match the following day and the final

on July 29. All three matches will be at Pallekele.

They will play three ODIs matches starting August 1 with the second on August 4 and the final three days later. All matches are scheduled at Premadasa Stadium. — AFP

England still on top against West Indies

LONDON: Gudakesh Motie had a morning to remember as he dismissed England captain Ben Stokes and Joe Root but the hosts still piled on the runs against the West Indies at Lord's on Thursday. England were 293-6 at lunch on the second day of the first Test, a lead of 172 runs.

Root fell shortly before the interval for 68 when bowled by a classic delivery from Motie after the left-arm spinner had also removed Stokes for just four on his way to figures of 2-25 in nine overs. Earlier, Harry Brook gave his wicket away for exactly 50 following a fourth-wicket stand of 94 with Root.

England resumed on 189-3, already 68 runs ahead, after fast bowler Gus Atkinson had marked his Test debut with a spectacular return of 7-45 as West Indies collapsed to 121 all out in the first innings of this three-match series.

In the process the 26-year-old Surrey quickly eclipsed James Anderson in what is the record-breaking paceman's 188th and last Test before his England retirement. Root was 15 not out and Brook 25 not out, the Yorkshire duo walking out Thursday in sunny conditions ideal for batting.

With the ball not deviating greatly in the air or off the pitch, it was all the more important for the West Indies' pace attack to maintain an accurate line and length. England, however, scored briskly, with star batsman Root cover-driving Jayden Seales for a textbook four and Brook commandingly hooking Shamar Joseph for six.

Gatland wants more disciplined Wales in Australia Test

MELBOURNE: Wales coach Warren Gatland Thursday demanded more discipline in the second Test against Australia with a resurgent Wallabies expected to "go up another level" in Melbourne this weekend. Gatland's young Welsh team are on an eight-game losing streak after crashing 25-16 in the first Test at Sydney, with their job getting harder after experienced No. 8 Aaron Wainwright and winger Josh Hathaway were both ruled out injured.

Wainwright, who has 50 caps, was the best Wales performer last week but tore a hamstring in the dying stages, while Hathaway suffered an elbow injury. "This week, we've been going through our processes, building on what worked well and sharpening the areas that need improvement," said Gatland.

"We expect Australia to go up another level this weekend and we know we need to as well." Wales lost the breakdown battle and conceded 11 penalties in the first Test, six in their own half, and the New Zealander wants to see improvements. "We want to start well and make sure we are disciplined and accurate from the off. Then it's about keeping in the arm-wrestle for the duration," he said.

Wales are desperate for a win having last tasted a Test victory against minnows Georgia in the pool stages of the 2023 World Cup. They have not won a Test in Australia since 1969. Another defeat would edge them closer to the record run of 10 losses in 2002 and 2003 when another New Zealander, Steve Hansen, was the coach.

Veteran fullback Liam Williams and prop Gareth Thomas were both declared fit after suffering knocks in Sydney. With Wainwright out, Taine Plumtree will move to No. 8 with James Botham, grandson of England cricket great Ian Botham, coming into the starting line-up at blindside flanker and Tommy Reffell at openside.

Cameron Winnett was named at full-back after being overlooked for Sydney, with Williams moving to the wing alongside Rio Dyer.



LONDON: England's Chris Woakes (C) is watched by West Indies wicketkeeper Joshua Da Silva (L) as he plays a delivery from West Indies Gudakesh Motie (R) during the second day of the first Test cricket match between England and West Indies at Lord's Cricket Ground in London on July 11, 2024. — AFP

Brook's quickfire 55-ball fifty was the 25-year-old's 12th score of 50 or more in his 13 Tests. But Brook top-edged a simple catch to wicketkeeper Joshua Da Silva after trying to hook an Alzarri Joseph bounce from outside off stump, with England now 244-4.

West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite eventually brought on Motie for the 15th over of the day and the sixth ball of his spell spun sharply past Stokes'

inside edge bat as the left-handed batsman tried to hit legside before crashing into the stumps.

Root also fell to Motie, bowled by a delivery that spun past the right-hander's outside edge to end a 114-ball innings including seven fours. Thursday was also 'Red for Ruth Day' at Lord's—a fundraising drive for a cancer charity established in memory of Ruth Strauss, the late wife of former England captain Andrew Strauss. — AFP



MELBOURNE: Wales rugby union players go through stretching exercises during a training session in Melbourne on July 11, 2024, ahead of the second rugby union Test match against Australia on July 13. — AFP

Quiet resolve

Australia have their own injury worries with new captain Liam Wright out after just one Test in charge with a shoulder problem. Veteran prop James Slipper will don the armband in his 136th Test, with Charlie Cale elevated for a starting debut at No.8 and Rob Valetini pushed to blindside flanker to replace Wright.

It is the lone change to the starting side, although there are several new faces on the bench with Queensland Reds' hooker Josh Nasser, the son of former Wallaby Brendan Nasser, in line for a potential debut.

Coach Joe Schmidt, who took over from Eddie Jones this year, said it was frustrating losing Wright, but Slipper had "fantastic experience". "It's that quiet leadership that we'll need and the quiet resolve he brings to his work will hopefully ripple through the team," he said, adding that he was "pragmatic" about his winning start in Sydney. "Three tries to one looks good on paper and I loved the three tries we got which were all varied," he said. "But at the back end of the game I think we made 68 tackles in the last 10-12 minutes. "We

don't want to be tackling that long against a Welsh side that are coming in waves. We've got to get a little bit more pressure on the ball."

Australia (15-1)

Tom Wright; Andrew Kellaway, Josh Flook, Hunter Paisami, Filipo Daugunu; Noah Lolesio, Jake Gordon; Charlie Cale, Fraser McReight, Rob Valetini; Lukhan Salakaia-Loto, Jeremy Williams; Taniela Tupou, Matt Faessler, James Slipper (capt).

Replacements: Josh Nasser, Isaac Kailea, Allan Alaalatoa, Angus Blyth, Langi Gleeson, Nic White, Ben Donaldson, Dylan Pietsch.

Wales (15-1)

Cameron Winnett; Liam Williams, Owen Watkin, Mason Grady, Rio Dyer; Ben Thomas, Ellis Bevan; Taine Plumtree, Tommy Reffell, James Botham; Dafydd Jenkins, Christ Tshunza; Archie Griffin, Dewi Lake (capt), Gareth Thomas.

Replacements: Evan Lloyd, Kemsley Mathias, Harri O'Connor, Cory Hill, Mackenzie Martin, Kieran Hardy, Sam Costelow, Nick Tompkins. — AFP



Natacha Romano

Argentine woman raped, beaten by French players

MENDOZA: An Argentine woman accusing two French international rugby players of rape was savagely beaten by her assailants, her lawyer said Wednesday, during an encounter that the men claim was consensual.

Hugo Auradou, 20, and Oscar Jegou, 21, are waiting to be transferred to the city of Mendoza, where the assault allegedly took place and where they will be questioned by prosecutors. They have not been charged with a crime.

The men were arrested in Buenos Aires on Monday, two days after a Test match against Argentina, when investigators determined the alleged victim's injuries were consistent with her account of rape.

The woman's lawyer, Natacha Romano, told AFP on Wednesday her client had suffered "fierce" violence at the hands of her assailants, with injuries to her face, back, breasts, legs and ribs as well as various bite and scratch marks. She said the woman had gone with one of the men from a nightclub to a hotel room, where she alleges she was held against her will and abused for several hours.

"The violence was fierce," said Romano. "There is more than one crime to investigate." The woman claims to have been raped "at least six times" by one of the men and once by the other, according to the lawyer. She allegedly tried to escape several times.

Lawyer Rafael Cuneo Libarona, who represents the players, arrived in Mendoza on Wednesday and said "sexual relations" had been "consensual."

The alleged attack took place Saturday night at the Diplomatic Hotel in Mendoza, where France's players and staff were staying for a Test match as part of a South American tour.

"There are witnesses who saw her leave (the hotel), there are cameras that saw her leave, apparently no injuries are seen in the footage," Libarona—who is the brother of the country's justice minister Mariano Cuneo Libarona—told journalists.

'Blows to the head'

Romano told AFP that "the overwhelming proof that there was no consent is the victim's body" and the wounds it bears. If the men are charged, the lawyer added, she would ask the court to remand them in pre-trial custody. The charge, she added, should be "sexual assault with carnal access," the Argentine legal definition for rape, along with use of violence.

Mendoza prosecutor Daniela Chalor told LV10 radio on Tuesday there were "convincing elements" in the statement the woman made and that her injuries were compatible with her version of events, although they were not "necessarily exclusive" to sexual assault.

The French Rugby Federation (FFR) said the players have denied any coercion or violence, and stressed the importance of giving them an opportunity to make their case. "If the facts are true, they are incredibly serious," the federation's president Florian Grill told reporters in Argentina.

Grill later told AFP the players have "a quite different version" of events to that of the woman, with "a lot of inconsistencies." — AFP

Sports

Alcaraz, Djokovic close in on Wimbledon final blockbuster

Medvedev is looking to reach a seventh Grand Slam final

LONDON: Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz and seven-time winner Novak Djokovic can set-up a Wimbledon final blockbuster on Friday. However, standing in their way are Daniil Medvedev and Lorenzo Musetti, who has made the semi-final of a Grand Slam for the first time. AFP Sport looks at the two semi-finals:

Alcaraz, Medvedev in repeat show

Spanish world number three Alcaraz defeated Medvedev in straight sets in last year's semi-final at the All England Club before the Russian avenged that loss with an impressive last-four victory at the US Open. Alcaraz, 21, is bidding to reach his fourth Slam final before setting his sights on becoming only the sixth man to win the French Open and Wimbledon back-to-back. It has been an uneven Wimbledon for the Spaniard - he was pushed to five sets by Frances Tiafoe in the third round and then needed four sets to see off Ugo Humbert and Tommy Paul. Alcaraz holds a 4-2 head-to-head lead over Medvedev, a player he likened to "a wall, every ball bounces back".

Medvedev is looking to reach a seventh Grand Slam final. The fifth-ranked Russian, a former US Open champion, stunned top seed Jannik Sinner in five sets in the quarter-finals, gaining revenge for his defeat to the Italian in January's Australian Open final.

"It's tough to play against Carlos because you know whatever shot you hit, he can hit a winner from there," said Medvedev. Medvedev has hit 64 aces to Alcaraz's 52 so far. He has dropped served eight times while Alcaraz has seen his service games breached 16 times.

Djokovic faces Musetti in generation game

Djokovic has equalled Roger Federer's mark by reaching a 13th Wimbledon semi-final and is two wins from matching the Swiss star's record of eight singles titles at the All England Club. Victory on Friday would take him to a 10th final at the tournament.

At 37, Djokovic could also become the oldest champion of the modern era, an impressive achievement for a man who underwent knee surgery as recently as last month. This season he has lost his Australian Open and French Open titles and has yet to make a final on tour.

He was handed a free pass into Friday's last-four when Alex de Minaur withdrew from their scheduled quarter-final with a hip injury. The Serb has been in feisty mood at Wimbledon accusing fans of disrespecting him in his last-16 win over Holger Rune.

"If somebody steps over the line, I react," he said. Djokovic has a 5-1 winning record over Musetti, including a come-from-behind five-set victory at the French Open last month. That third-round match set the record for the latest finish at Roland Garros, with Djokovic completing victory at 3:07 in the morning.

Musetti, 22, also took Djokovic the distance in their first meeting at Roland Garros in 2021, when the Italian won the opening two sets of their last-16 tie before injury scuppered his hopes in the decider. "He's a legend everywhere, but especially here at Wimbledon," said Musetti.

"I expect a big fight. It's one of the toughest challenges. But I'm an ambitious guy and I like to be challenged." — AFP



WIMBLEDON: Spain's Carlos Alcaraz takes part in a training session on the Aorangi practice courts on the tenth day of the 2024 Wimbledon Championships at The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon. — AFP

Nunez, Uruguay players brawl in stands with fans

CHARLOTTE: Liverpool star Darwin Nunez and other Uruguay players were involved in a brawl with Colombian fans which erupted after their 1-0 Copa America semi-final defeat on Wednesday.

Uruguay striker Nunez unleashed a flurry of punches at Colombian supporters after jumping into the spectator seating at Charlotte's Bank of America Stadium following an ill-tempered loss to Colombia. Uruguay central defender Jose Maria Gimenez said players had leapt into the melee out of concern for the safety of family members and loved ones watching the game.

"This is a disaster. Our family was in danger. We had to go to the stands to take out our loved ones, with tiny newborn babies," the Atletico Madrid player said. "There was not a single police officer... I hope those who are organizing this are a little more careful with the families."

"Every game it's been happening because there

are people who don't know how to handle a couple of drinks." The overwhelming majority of the spectators in the crowd were supporting Colombia but there was no segregation between them and their Uruguayan counterparts.

Several Uruguay players climbed into the crowd, seemingly to protect fans, with Nunez prominent. The fighting continued for several minutes until police finally intervened. A group of around 80-100 Uruguayan fans remained in the stadium, on the pitch, long after the rest of the fans had left with Uruguay players returning to the field to meet them.

Ugly scenes also broke out on the field after the final whistle, with players and staff from both teams involved in a mass melee in the centre-circle following Colombia's victory. CONMEBOL, the South American football confederation which organizes the Copa America, issued a statement condemning the incidents.

"CONMEBOL strongly condemns any acts of violence that affects football. Our work is based on the conviction that soccer connects and unites us through its positive values. There is no place for intolerance and violence on and off the pitch. We invite everyone in the remaining days to pour all their passion into cheering on their national teams and having an unforgettable party." — AFP

Grease, sweat and tears for Turkey's Ottoman wrestlers

EDIRNE: Their torsos slick with oil and sweat, the fighters grapple and tussle for gold and glory, competing in a venerable Turkish sport dating back to the time of the Ottomans. Every July, scores of wrestlers flock to the Kirkinar tournament in the northwest of the country, a national and international attraction that gained UNESCO cultural recognition in 2010. For the winners of this brutal contest, Turkish sporting immortality beckons. For the losers, anguish and another year of training until they get their next shot. "This is our Olympic Games," said Murat Kalender, one of the dozens of contestants this year. With arms and abs as if hewn from stone, the 27-year-old warmed up in the shade of his van as he readied to take the field for the sixth year running. "Our ancestors fought here," he told AFP, "and carrying on their legacy doesn't come without sacrifice."

Turkish oil wrestling is gruelling, and has grief woven into its illustrious history. Legend has it that Edirne, capital of the Ottoman Empire until the fall of Constantinople, has hosted the Kirkinar tournament each year since 1357. The story goes that two soldiers who were brothers wrestled each other to the death - thus the festival was born. Today, the fights may not be to the death, but the equipment worn by a "Pehlivan" - meaning brave warrior in Persian - has not changed much.

Despite the prohibitive expense, olive oil is the only lubricant allowed, and the slickness makes balance as important as brute force in the fight. The only item of clothing the wrestlers wear is leather trousers made of buffalo hide, studded and already slicked up to the britches, and weighing a whopping 10 kilogrammes (22 pounds). With no fly to help the competitors slip into their trousers, visitors to Kirkinar can be treated to the sight of the wrestlers contorting themselves to put on their gear - naked. "A belt would give the opponent something to grab hold of," said Melih Ozturk, a baby-faced 18-year-old, as he strapped the pants with cords just below the knees ahead of his bout.

No grip

In the blazing heat of the Turkish summer, the fighters lined up to face their sparring partners, the sun reflecting off the sheen of oil on their foreheads. The aim is to overwhelm an opponent by using his strength and weight against him, to force him to the ground and pin him on his back. Key to any successful bout is giving your rival as little purchase as possible. The fighters slapped and pushed and pulled as they tried to gain a grip on their opponent's neck, shoulders or legs before delivering the coup de grace. Each

pair fought under the watchful eye of a referee clad in blue and gold, white towels at the ready to hand to the wrestlers should they request it. Should they feel their bodies are not slippery enough, each competitor can also ask for extra oil. By the end of a bout, the wrestlers' skins had turned red from the constant grappling, their eyes heavy-lidded with grease.

At the highest level, a match can last close to an hour. "A great fight is when two opponents give it their all," said Hakan Orhan, one of the tournament's 120 referees. A former wrestler himself, Orhan turned to umpiring "so as not to cut ties with the sport" in which he now trains his son. "I intervene in case of an improper position, or when the wrestlers become uncontrollable and violent because they're stuck," Orhan said. But these are rare cases as mutual respect is paramount. The winner takes pains to congratulate his opponent, kissing the hand of older competitors out of deference.



EDIRNE: Wrestlers with their bodies covered with olive oil compete during the 663rd edition of the annual Historic Kirkinar Oil Wrestling championship, in Edirne, northwestern Turkey. — AFP

At the top of the 14 classes of Pehlivan wrestlers are the Baspehlivans, who make a living from their craft and who train all year round. "Everyone wants to be a champion here," said Hamza Ozkaradeniz, a 32-year-old Baspehlivan who has been wrestling for 20 years, but never before at Kirkinar. "But we're all dreaming of the golden belt," the tournament's top prize, which comes with a bonus of 550,000 Turkish lira (\$17,000) - more than 30 times the minimum wage.

This year's winner was Yusuf Can Zeybek for the second year running, who claimed the famous prize in 52 minutes. Another win next year and eternal glory will be his: whoever triumphs at Kirkinar three times in a row earns the right to keep the gold belt for life, a feat last achieved in 1997. — AFP



ENVIGADO: Colombian football fans react after the 2024 Copa America semi-final football match between Uruguay and Colombia at a park in Envigado, Antioquia province, Colombia on July 10, 2024. — AFP

Warholm, Ingebrigtsen headline Diamond League meeting

MONACO: Norwegian world record holders Karsten Warholm and Jakob Ingebrigtsen will headline Friday's Diamond League meet in Monaco in the absence of American sprinter Noah Lyles, a late withdrawal from a stellar line-up.

After two world records in Paris last week, Monaco is the penultimate meet before the Paris Olympics, the perfect opportunity for athletes to finetune preparations for the Games. Lyles, however, will not be there. The reigning world 100m and 200m champion and star of the Netflix series "Sprint" was meant to be running the longer sprint, but said Wednesday he had opted to remain at his training camp in Florida for extra work as he builds towards the Olympics.

"My coach, my entire team and I are very pleased with what we were able to achieve at the US Olympic Trials in Eugene, however, in order to put myself in the best possible position to succeed in Paris, we have decided to spend an extra

week at our training base in Florida before traveling to Europe," Lyles said.

In his absence, US teammate Courtney Lindsey and Botswana's prodigious talent Letsile Tebogo will be favorites. The men's 400m hurdles will see world and Olympic champion Warholm put through his paces in a strong line-up including American Rai Benjamin and Brazilian Alison Dos Santos - the three fastest men in history in the event.

Dos Santos won at the Paris meet, while Warholm claimed victory in Oslo. "The time can be improved, but we're on the right path to continue to work towards the next competitions," Dos Santos said after victory in the French capital.

"We are definitely working on maximizing my best abilities. The only thing that is keeping me away from doing well at the Olympics is getting enough rest. We've put in all the work, now we need to be patient to see the results coming through."

Ingebrigtsen will race the 1,500m, but perhaps the most mouth-watering middle-distance event will be the 800m. The two-lap race in Paris produced one of the most memorable ever run, producing the third, fourth and fifth fastest times of all time.

Two-lap clash

Algeria's Djamel Sedjati won in 1min 41.56sec ahead of Kenyan Emmanuel Wanyonyi and France's

Gabriel Tual. Sedjati and Tual will once again line up in Monaco, on a track known to be quick in the often balmy weather that accompanies the meet.

"I've prepared very well this season: I'm preparing for the Olympics. I'm very calm and, God willing, it'll be the gold medal," Sedjati said. "I'm following my coach's advice. I'm confident and up until now, all my training has paid off."

European champion Tual, who smashed the French record with 1min 41.61sec, said he was "over the moon" with his result in Paris. "It's crazy! In training you feel when you're capable of good times. I was saying to myself 1min 42sec, but to to run 1min 41.6, I can't even believe it," he said.

"We all know the reputation of this meeting and what the athletes achieve here: I am coming to give it my all and chase a big time. I can't wait to compete against the best. The form since the Europeans is still there, I want to confirm it!" Joining the stellar 800m field is Canadian Marco Arop, the world champion and twice a winner in Monaco.

Other stand-outs include British sprinter Dina Asher-Smith in the women's 100m and American three-time world champion Grant Holloway in the 110m hurdles. "I'm looking forward to racing in Monaco, on a track where I have some very fond memories," said Holloway, who has a best of 12.99sec at Stade Louis II. — AFP



PARIS: Kenya's Faith Kipyegon reacts after winning and beating the world record in the women's 1,500m during the "Meeting de Paris" Diamond League athletics meeting at the Charlety Stadium in Paris. — AFP

Super-sub Watkins sends England past Netherlands and into Euro 2024 final

A great goal, then it's over, and that is difficult to accept: Koeman



DORTMUND: England's forward #19 Ollie Watkins (R) shoots and scores his team's second goal during the UEFA Euro 2024 semi-final football match between the Netherlands and England at the BVB Stadion in Dortmund. — AFP

DORTMUND: Ollie Watkins struck a stunning injury-time winner as England beat the Netherlands 2-1 on Wednesday to set up a Euro 2024 final showdown with Spain in Berlin. It was an incredible finish to an evening that began badly for England, as Xavi Simons gave the Netherlands an early lead in the semi-final in Dortmund.

However, England were soon level through a Harry Kane penalty following a contentious VAR call by German referee Felix Zwayer, and the match looked set for extra time until Watkins struck. On for Kane, Watkins received a pass from fellow substitute Cole Palmer with his back to goal in the first minute of stoppage time, turned and fired low into the far corner to leave the Netherlands bewildered.

"I'm lost for words really," said Watkins, the Aston Villa striker. "I don't think I've hit a ball that sweet before, and obviously in such a special moment." It has rarely been a convincing campaign from Gareth Southgate's England side, but they are through to their second consecutive European Championship final as they dream of finally winning a first major trophy since 1966.

To do that they will surely have to perform better than at any point so far in Germany as they face an outstanding Spain team, who beat France 2-1 on Tuesday. "We play the team who've been the best team in the tournament and we have a day less to prepare so it's a huge task. But we're still here and we're fighting," Southgate said.

The Netherlands had been hoping to repeat their triumph at the last Euros in Germany, in 1988, but their current side lacks anyone with the star quality of Marco van Basten or Ruud Gullit. A victory for them would have seen this Euros conclude with the same final as the 2010 World Cup. Instead they now go home.

"I am disappointed about the final result in a match which started really good for us," said their coach, Ronald Koeman. "A great goal, and then it's over, and that is difficult to accept." England had got to this stage despite not winning any of their last four matches in 90 minutes, and having been taken to extra time by Slovakia and Switzerland.

That might have given the Dutch an edge physically, after the Oranje shrugged off finishing third

in their group to brush aside Romania and see off Turkey. England welcomed back Marc Guehi in defence after suspension, while Koeman opted to start Donyell Malen in attack on the ground where he plays club football for Borussia Dortmund.

The Westfalenstadion is a special place for the Dutch, as the scene of their 2-0 win over Brazil, with goals by Johan Neeskens and Johan Cruyff, that took them through to the 1974 World Cup final.

Contentious penalty

They went ahead here after just seven minutes thanks to a brilliant effort by Simons, who robbed Declan Rice 35 metres out and advanced before sending a rasping drive beyond Jordan Pickford. The Dutch players ran off to celebrate with their fans behind that goal, as England found themselves trailing for the third game running.

Just like against the Swiss in the quarter-finals, however, they reacted swiftly. Kane forced a save from Bart Verbruggen and moments later sent a volley over the bar, and was caught by Denzel Dumfries on the follow-through. It seemed totally

innocuous but Zwayer was summoned to review the images and gave a penalty.

Kane, whose missed spot-kick against France cost England dear in the 2022 World Cup, made no mistake, slotting low into the corner. It settled into an open and entertaining game, with Dumfries clearing off the line from Phil Foden and then crashing a header off the bar from a Simons corner. Foden responded by curling a superb shot off the post.

England's midfielders were being given too much time on the ball, and Koeman used an injury to Memphis Depay to reinforce the centre, replacing the forward with Joey Veerman. Wout Weghorst replaced Malen at half-time, but the game became more cagey as the minutes went on.

Pickford denied Virgil van Dijk on 65 minutes and the Netherlands began to take control as England's leading players tired. England had the ball in the net on 79 minutes when Bukayo Saka turned in Kyle Walker's cutback, but the latter was just offside and the flag came up. Southgate then decided to remove Kane and Foden, with Watkins and Palmer entering the fray to devastating effect. — AFP

Cherono handed a seven-year ban for doping

PARIS: Kenyan marathon runner Lawrence Cherono has been handed a seven-year ban for breaching doping rules, the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) announced Wednesday. The 35-year-old runner, who won the Boston and Chicago marathons in 2019, provided an out-of-competition urine sample in May 2022 which revealed the presence of the prohibited substance trimetazidine.

"The AIU has banned Lawrence Cherono (Kenya) for 7 years from 16 July, 2022 for presence/use of a prohibited substance (trimetazidine), tampering or attempted tampering with any part of doping control," the AIU said in a statement. Cherono's ban has been backdated to July 2022, when his provisional suspension began, meaning the Kenyan will be unable to compete until 2029.

The positive test earned the runner a four-year ban, plus an additional four years for "submitting misleading, forged/falsified information", the AIU indicated. The total eight-year ban was reduced by one year due to Cherono's "early admission and acceptance of (the) sanction".

Kenya and its long-distance runners have been the source of a large number of doping cases in recent years. In April 2023, the AIU denounced large-scale doping in the country. Trimetazidine is a blood flow booster known commonly as TMZ and was also detected in Russian skater Kamila Valieva during the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) came under pressure in April after it was revealed 23 Chinese swimmers tested positive for trimetazidine ahead of the Tokyo Olympics in 2021. WADA's decision on the matter was that the swimmers were allowed to compete after accepting China's findings that they had ingested it unwittingly from food during a meet in late 2020 and early 2021. — AFP

Colombia defeat Uruguay to reach Copa America final

CHARLOTTE: Ten-man Colombia defeated Uruguay 1-0 to reach the final of the Copa America for the first time in 23 years after an ill-tempered semi-final on Wednesday. A 39th-minute Jefferson Lerma header sealed victory for the Colombians, who will now face holders Argentina in Sunday's final in Miami.

It was an anarchic semi-final played in front of a packed and passionate crowd which ended with scuffles on the field and fighting in the stands, including several players who had climbed in among supporters amid the flying punches.

Colombia, despite having Daniel Munoz sent off just before the interval and facing plenty of Uruguay pressure, hung on for a famous victory to the delight of their massive following of fans. The win was the 28th game without defeat for Colombia, setting a new record for the team.

The downtown streets of the North Carolina city were packed with partying fans in bright yellow Colombia jerseys hours before the kick-off. Not surprisingly in such an atmosphere, Colombia started strongly with their livewire Liverpool winger Luis Diaz doing well to wriggle some space for a cross on the left, finding Daniel Munoz at the back post but the full-back's header was off target.

Uruguay were, as always, a threat on the counter-attack and their Liverpool star, Darwin Nunez, was close to finishing off one break when Rodrigo Bentancur found him with a clever pass but the forward poked his shot wide.

Nunez had another opening when Maximiliano Araujo played him clear in the inside-right channel but the striker rushed his shot, blasting high and wide. At the other end, Colombia forced a turnover which led to James Rodriguez curling in a cross from the right but Jhon Cordoba's header was off target.

Lerma breakthrough

The breakthrough came in the 39th minute when Lerma rose majestically above Jose Maria Gimenez and powerfully headed home Rodriguez's corner. It was the sixth assist of the tournament for Rodriguez with the



CHARLOTTE: Uruguay's goalkeeper #01 Sergio Rochet eyes the ball as Colombia's midfielder #15 Mateus Uribe and Uruguay's defender #02 Jose Maria Gimenez vie for the ball during the Conmebol 2024 Copa America tournament semi-final football match between Uruguay and Colombia at Bank of America Stadium, in Charlotte, North Carolina. — AFP

former Real Madrid midfielder beating the record for most assists in a single Copa, which was set by Lionel Messi in 2021. Colombia looked to make the most of their momentum with Richard Rios forcing a save out of Uruguay keeper Sergio Rochet, after being played in by Munoz.

But having been so influential down the right in the opening half, Munoz lost his head completely, just before the break, picking up a second yellow card, after landing an elbow on Manuel Ugarte. It was a moment of madness which left Colombia to defend their lead with just 10 men for the entire second half.

Colombia coach Nestor Lorenzo took off Rodriguez, who was also on a yellow card, in the 62nd minute as Uruguay gradually began to turn their numerical advantage into real pressure. Nicolas de la Cruz threatened

with a low drive before substitute Luis Suarez clipped the outside of the post with a drive from the edge of the box after good work from Federico Valverde.

Valverde, the Real Madrid midfielder, then went close himself with a low drive as Colombia's back-line continued to ride their luck. Giveaway from Uruguay keeper and fell to Mateus Uribe, who despite time and space placed his shot wide of the post.

In stoppage time Uruguay had a great chance to force penalties when Nunez laid the ball off to substitute Giorgian de Arrascaeta on the edge of the box but he leaned back and put his shot over the bar. There was still time for Uribe to waste another chance to make sure of the win, this time hitting the bar in the final minute, but he will be forgiven his wastefulness by the delirious Colombian supporters. — AFP