

R₊
RIDE SAFE

BOOK YOUR RIDE NOW

DOWNLOAD THE APP NOW

@ridesafe.app

3 Kuwait sets new electricity load record of 17,360 MW



5 'I'm not going anywhere', US president Biden insists



12 Wedding party resumes for son of Asia's richest man



14 Krejčíková wins Wimbledon for second Grand Slam singles title



Brutal massacre in Gaza

Kuwait condemns deadly attacks • Dozens killed as Zionists hit displacement camp



GAZA: Palestinians pray by the bodies of relatives killed during a Zionist airstrike which hit a makeshift prayer hall at Al-Shati refugee camp west of Gaza City. — AFP

GAZA: Hamas-run Gaza's health ministry said dozens were killed Saturday as Zionists bombed a displacement camp in an area where military said it targeted Hamas military chief Mohammed Deif. It is the latest mass-casualty incident in the Al-Mawasi area, where many Palestinians had fled, and came as international mediators pushed on with efforts to halt the nine-month war.

A statement from the Gaza health ministry said there were more than "71 martyrs" and 289 people wounded in what it called a "brutal massacre by the occupation", a reference to Zionists, at Al-Mawasi camp. The military said it had targeted Deif and Rafa Salama, a brigade commander, calling them "two of the masterminds of the October 7 massacre" which sparked the Gaza war. "The area that was struck is an open area, surrounded by trees, several buildings and sheds. It was not a tent complex, but an operational compound," it said.

A Hamas statement called the claim that Deif had been targeted "false allegations" intended "to cover up the magnitude of the horrific massacre". AFPTV footage showed sirens wailing and smoke rising in the distance as men used blankets to collect vic-

tims. Some were clearly beyond help and lay dead on the road. "What did we do?" a woman screamed in the street. "What did we do? We were just sitting near the beach."

Zionist entity in May had told Palestinians in the Rafah area to move to a designated humanitarian area in Al-Mawasi on the coast as troops moved in to the southern city of Rafah near the Egyptian border. There has been widespread global outrage over the war's civilian toll. The office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the leader "issued a standing order to eliminate senior Hamas officials at the beginning of the war".

The office added that Netanyahu had discussed the strike with security and military officials and would hold more meetings "to discuss the next developments and steps". In Zionist entity, demonstrators were again expected to rally later Saturday demanding new elections and a deal to free hostages still held by Hamas in Gaza. Gathering by the tens of thousands at times, protesters have stepped up their actions against the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Continued on Page 6

Suspect nabbed over bodies in 2 suitcases



LONDON: UK police on Saturday arrested a man after two suitcases believed to contain the remains of two men were dumped on a famous bridge. The suitcases were discovered Wednesday after police got a report of a man behaving suspiciously on the Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol, southwest England. "Detectives have arrested a man in connection with an investigation into the discovery of human remains on Clifton Suspension Bridge," said Metropolitan Police.

The 24-year-old suspect was detained at a major train station in Bristol and will be taken to London for questioning later on Saturday. "Police are not looking for anyone else in connection with the incident," they said. The London-based force took over the investigation after evidence suggested that the wanted man had travelled to Bristol from the UK capital earlier on Wednesday.

While searching a flat in west London, officers found more human remains. Police believe that they are connected to the human remains found in Bristol, and that there are two male victims, both known to the arrested man. Clifton Suspension Bridge, designed by the pioneering engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, is one of the oldest surviving suspension bridges in the world. Opened in 1864, the bridge over the Avon Gorge is one of Bristol's top tourist attractions and a symbol of the city. —AFP

WIPO honors Kuwaiti inventor Aboerjaib

VIENNA: Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Daren Tang honored the Kuwaiti visionary inventor Sarah Aboerjaib, whose ScansX won the 2024 WIPO health award. At a celebration held in Geneva on the fringes of the 65th WIPO Assembly, Tang presented the WIPO awards to nine winners of this year's awards, including Eng Aboerjaib.

Congratulating the winners, he re-

affirmed WIPO's support for them to optimize the IP commercialization system and expand market access for their innovations. Twenty-five of the 667 inventors who vied for the 2024 WIPO Awards from 107 countries had been shortlisted, and nine of them were proclaimed winners.

The function gathered representatives of WIPO member states and several ambassadors, including Kuwait Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Geneva Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen, according to a statement from the Permanent Mission of Kuwait to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

Continued on Page 6



Kuwaiti inventor Sarah Aboerjaib receives the 2024 WIPO health award. — KUNA

Iranian president-elect ready for 'constructive dialogue' with Europe

TEHRAN: Iran's president-elect Masoud Pezeshkian said he looks forward to improved relations with European nations, even though he accused them of reneging on commitments to mitigate the impact of US sanctions. Pezeshkian won a runoff election against ultraconservative former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili last week.

The 69-year-old has called for "constructive relations" with Western countries to "get Iran out of its isolation", and favors reviving the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and global powers. The United States unilaterally withdrew from the accord in 2018, reimposing sanctions, which led Iran to gradually reduce its commitment to the terms of the deal. The agreement aimed to curb nuclear activity, which Tehran maintains is for peaceful purposes.

In an article published late Friday in the English-language Tehran Times newspaper, Pezeshkian said that after the US pullout from the 2015 deal, European nations committed to trying to salvage it and mitigate the impact of US sanctions.

Continued on Page 6



TEHRAN: A man holds up a poster of Iran's newly-elected president Masoud Pezeshkian. — AFP

Russia could target Europe if US deploys missiles: Kremlin

MOSCOW: The Kremlin on Saturday warned that the deployment of US missiles in Germany could make European capitals targets for Russian missiles in a repeat of Cold War-style confrontation. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov spoke of a "paradox" in which "Europe is a target for our missiles, our country is a target for US missiles in Europe". "We have enough capacity to contain these missiles but the potential victims are the capitals of

these countries," he said, speaking to Russian state television channel Russia 1. Peskov also hinted that such a confrontation could undermine Europe as a whole—in the same way that the Cold War ended with the Soviet Union's collapse.

"Europe is coming apart. Europe is not living its best moment. In a different configuration, a repeat of history is inevitable," he said. The White House announced on Wednesday during a NATO summit that it would periodically station long-range weapons including Tomahawk cruise missiles in Germany from 2026 as a deterrent. "Exercising these advanced capabilities will demonstrate the United States' commitment to NATO and its contributions to European integrated deterrence," the White House said.

Continued on Page 6



Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov



9 780202 223841

Cooperation needed to tackle issues in T2 construction: Minister

Constant delays mar \$4.34bn airport terminal under construction for 7 years



KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr Noura Al-Mashaan meets the contractor and administrative officials of the T2 airport terminal project. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr Noura Al-Mashaan seems to have made the new passenger terminal building project (T2) one of her top priorities since her appointment to Cabinet. The minister has made several statements to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) over the past few weeks, emphasizing the importance of "overcoming obstacles" facing the project, although she doesn't specify what they are. The statements were made after meetings with officials in sectors related to the project.

The emphasis in these statements has been that the ministry is determined to finish the project on time, although the ministry has not officially set a specific deadline. Construction hasn't progressed according to initial plans, with several delays to the original timeline set by the ministry. Critics have previously demanded clear communication from

the ministry on when it expects the project to be done, the latest of which a previous member of parliament who told a local Arabic newspaper that having a public deadline is not "a miracle".

The latest statement Mashaan made on Saturday was after a meeting she held with the contractor and administrative office of the project. According to a KUNA statement, the meeting aimed at to "affirming the need of accelerating implementing the project, in line with the timetable of the contract."

"The T2, when achieved in cooperation with concerned bodies, would contribute greatly to improving passengers' experience and accommodating expected increased number of travelers," the statement quotes the minister. "The new airport project comes to confirm commitments to developing the civil aviation sector as it plays a vital role in backing the country's economy."



The new airport passenger terminal project (T2).

Constant delays

The terminal, which has been under construction since 2017, was set to be ready for operation by the end of 2023. The project has been broken down to three phases, with the first including a passenger terminal, central station, and the connection to service tunnels. The second involves car parks, service buildings, and roads leading to the new passenger terminal. The third phase contains aircraft parking and taxiways. The \$4.34 billion terminal is expected to triple the capacity of Kuwait's airport to 25 million passengers a year.

In 2022, the public works ministry pushed the deadline to the third quarter of 2024, citing COVID-19 travel restrictions, which have made it impossible to bring in the labor needed for construction. In December 2023, the first phase of the project was at 72.64 percent complete, said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation to KUNA. The second phase of the

new (T2) had also reached 68.1 percent. Last May, a spokesperson with the ministry told local media that the project is expected to be finished sometime in 2025.

The same month, Limak Insaat, the Turkish company building the terminal, announced that work is nearing completion on the T2. "We are thrilled to support the development of Kuwait and realize the ambitious vision of HH the Amir of Kuwait. For us, Kuwait is a home-away-from-home, and our commitment to its social and economic growth is deep-rooted," said Ebru Ozdemir, Chair of the Board of Limak Holding, during an event attended by HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

"For the project to be sustainable and deliver economic benefits for the local economy and people, it's important for it to be managed by Kuwaitis," she added. Kuwaitization in the project's administrative roles is at 100 percent, officials have said.

Arab Parliament calls for unrestricted aid access to Gaza Strip

CAIRO: The Arab Parliament called on Saturday for allowing the entry of humanitarian aid into the besieged Gaza Strip in a rapid, safe, and unimpeded manner. This was announced in a statement issued at the closing session of the Parliament's third legislative term, warning against the terrifying repercussions of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Strip. It stressed the centrality of the Palestinian issue and the continuation of Arab efforts and international endeavors to support the issue.

It underlined the need for mobilizing international support for Palestinian brothers and an immediate halt to Zionist occupation and genocide and humanitarian crimes against Palestinian civilians. The statement lauded international and Arab efforts aiming to reach an immediate ceasefire and resolve the conflict in the region based on accredited international references. It called for granting Palestine a full UN membership, affirming support to Egyptian and Qatari efforts aiming to reach a permanent ceasefire and the return of those displaced to their homes as well as the entry of humanitarian aid into the Strip.

Moreover, it condemned the Zionist decisions to legitimize settlement outposts in the West Bank and impose taxes on churches and their institutions in Jerusalem. The statement also rejected the occupation's attempts to legitimize and approve the construction of more settlements in the West Bank to change the existing historical and legal situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The statement declined any attempts to forcibly displace Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and urged confronting displacement in all its forms, which constitutes a clear violation of international law. It called for enabling Gazans to return to their homes they left due to the aggression, condemning the massacres committed by the occupation on a daily basis in the Strip.

It called on the international community to continue putting pressure on the occupying entity to stop the aggression, ethnic cleansing, and war of genocide in the Gaza Strip. It demanded a complete withdrawal from the Strip and providing protection to defenseless civilians, in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions, relevant Security Council resolutions, international law, and international humanitarian law.

OIC denounces atrocities

Meanwhile, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) emphatically condemned the "horrible massacres" committed by the Zionist occupation in the Al-Mawasi area in western Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip earlier. In a press release, the OIC said today's massacres, which left scores of Palestinians, mostly women and children, dead or injured, reflect the unremitting genocides committed by the Zionist occupation against Palestinian civilians in blatant defiance of UN resolutions and International Court of Justice (ICJ) orders.

The Jeddah-based body echoed its earlier call on the international community to shoulder its due responsibilities for putting an end to the nine-month military aggressions and atrocities on the Gaza Strip. Palestinian health authorities said earlier in the day that 71 Palestinians were martyred and scores of others injured in a renewed massacre by occupation forces on Khan Yunis. — KUNA



Residency violators arrested in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh

KUWAIT: The Special Security Sector at the Interior Ministry, in cooperation with the General Directorate of Residency Affairs, launched a security inspection campaign on violators of the residency law and wanted persons in the Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh area in the presence of Assistant Undersecretary of for Special Security Affairs Major General Abdullah Al-Mulla and a number of security officers.

The campaign resulted in the arrest of several violators of the residency law and wanted persons, and they were referred to the competent authority to take the necessary legal measures and deport them from the country.

The General Directorate of Relations and Security Media said security campaigns are continuing throughout the country to arrest violators of the residency law and wanted persons, and calls on everyone to cooperate with security men in reporting violators and outlaws by calling the emergency phone number (112).

Kuwait had extended the deadline for illegal expatriates to readjust their legal status or leave

the country until June 30. The deadline was originally set to end on June 17. There are no official figures available on how many expats made use of the grace period. But an official was quoted last month saying that thousands of expatriates have benefited from the campaign.

The campaign, which was designed to address the age-old residency violations issue plaguing the country went on for three months. Expats who took advantage of the grace period given by the Interior Ministry could either leave Kuwait without facing penalties or adjust their legal status by fulfilling the necessary legal requirements.

KD 250,000 meth

Police are also continuing their crackdown on drug dealers. The General Administration for Drug Control was able to arrest a person who tried to smuggle 25 kilos of narcotic methamphetamine into the country hidden in an innovative way through a seaport. The drugs were valued at KD 250,000.

He was referred to the Public Prosecution to take the necessary legal measures against him.

In another incident, the Hawally Governorate Security Directorate has also arrested a resident of Arab nationality trying to hide a large amount of money of unknown origin. The man was caught while leaving a building in a state of confusion and tried to escape upon request of identification.



GAZA: Palestinians carry away the shrouded bodies of three children killed in Zionist bombing in Deir El-Balah in the central Gaza Strip.— AFP

Local

Electrical loads hit new record

Kuwait to use clean energy for electricity production, eyes restructuring pricing system: Minister

KUWAIT: As temperatures continue to rise, Kuwait's electrical load index has been setting new records. On Saturday, the country recorded a new high of 17,360 megawatts at 2 pm, the highest load recorded in the country's history. It hasn't been long since Kuwait saw its largest power consumption rate — Thursday's 17,120 megawatts was the highest load ever registered until Saturday. There's no indication that the electricity ministry is returning to programmed cuts. But long-term solutions to tackle the country's electricity crisis were discussed last week at the fifth session of the Arab Japanese Economic Forum held in Tokyo.

Kuwait's Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Housing Dr Mahmoud Bushehri highlighted the country's goals to increase the percentage of the total produced energy to 30 percent in the next decade. He said the use of renewable and clean energy in producing electricity will help protect the environmental system from pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Kuwait is also striving to upgrade infrastructure and technologies related to the electricity grids' security and management and energy storage stations, he pointed out. The minister added that Kuwait is also keen on localizing renewable energy technologies to create more high-value job opportunities for nationals.

Bushehri listed some of the measures Kuwait is already taking to increase the efficiency of electricity production. With a view to rationalizing electricity consumption, Kuwait started using smart electricity meters and AI technology. The country is also looking at restructuring the electricity pricing system in hopes of rationalizing consumption, he added.



TOKYO: Kuwait's Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Housing Dr Mahmoud Bushehri speaks at the Arab Japanese Economic Forum. — KUNA

Cooperation with Japan

He underlined the need for strengthening cooperation between Arab countries and Japan and removing all barriers to energy security and sustainability investments. He also called for encouraging private sectors in both sides to manage and operate advanced and smart energy systems and develop joint training initiatives. At the conclusion of the forum, Japan and Arab ministers agreed on enhancing their cooperation in industrial development, energy and economic security, high-quality infrastructure, digital transformation, low-carbon energy and energy saving and resources development.

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 gather-



The file photo shows the sun setting behind the high voltage transmission towers in Kuwait City, on June 19, 2024. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

ing, 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 energy, climate change, green products, water, waste management, hydrogen and ammonia, as well as in the field of new technologies, telecommunications, AI, and building resilient supply chains. — Agencies

Empowering Kuwaiti women could lower need for migrants

LONDON: More Kuwaiti women are working than any other Gulf country, according to a Kuwaiti researcher. The percentage of Kuwaiti female workers ranked first in the GCC member states, reaching 56.9 percent in 2023, Dr Lubna Al-Qadhi, head of Women Research and Studies Center at Kuwait University, said on Friday while taking part in a panel discussion on migration to the Gulf organized by the Gulf Research Center at Cambridge University.

Gender equity, Kadhi said, leads to decreasing the need for migrant workers. Kuwaiti females who are well educated constitute a valuable resource of sustainable economy, she said. She added that the retirement age of Kuwaiti women has increased from

50 to 53, with the aim of supporting women participating in the workforce.

According to statistics released by the government in 2023, 28 percent of women have leading roles in Kuwait. Kuwaiti women make up 58 percent of the total national workforce, with Kuwaiti women making up 60 percent of the total workforce in the public sector, and 48 percent in the private sector.

Women take up 47 percent of leadership and supervisory positions in the Ministry of Defense and 43 percent in the military engineering sector. In the central bank, 41 percent of leadership positions are held by women.

Kadhi said adopting "family-friendly" policies in the private sector could attract more married Kuwaiti women to work in the lucrative sector. She added that amending some laws that hinder women's participation in the workforce paves the way for establishing a labor market in which citizens take part in an optimal way to achieve sustainable development aligning with Kuwait 2035 Vision. The panel discussion was part of the activities of the fourteenth edition of the Gulf research forum. — Agencies

MoI: KD 500 fine for marine vessels without identification system

KUWAIT: As part of the Coast Guard's efforts to protect sea-goers and preserve their security and safety, the Ministry of Interior has announced it is obliging all marine vessels of all shapes, whether they are parked or mobile, to install an Automated Identification System (AIS). The AIS is a device that identifies ships when sailing with their name, position and speed for easy and safe sailing.

The device can be obtained from entities approved by the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA). Ac-

ording to a statement, sea-goers must put the AIS by registering and obtaining a permit from the Telecommunications Authority through their website. First, the user must create an account on the CITRA website and upload all the required documents. After approval by CITRA, the user will be sent a transaction number by phone and will be asked to follow additional instructions on the website. After completing the necessary steps and obtaining the final approval, the user must pay the fees at the CITRA location in Al-Hamra Tower. The license to purchase the system will be issued after payment within two working days and can be picked up at the CITRA offices at the Liberation Tower.

The General Directorate of the Coast Guard said users must turn on the AIS when sailing and while stopped. If the device is turned off for any purpose, the user will have to pay a fine of KD 500.

How AI is transforming the Arabian Gulf

By Sheikh Mohammed Ahmed Al-Sabah
AAIOT Chairman of the Board of Directors

The Arabian Gulf countries are known for their vast oil reserves and wealth, but they are also facing serious challenges such as climate change, water scarcity, and corruption. To address these issues and diversify their economies, they are investing in artificial intelligence (AI) and its applications in various sectors.

AI is the ability of machines to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, and decision-making. AI can help improve efficiency, productivity, and innovation, as well as reduce costs, emissions, and risks. AI can also enable new solutions and opportunities that were not possible before. In this article, we will review some examples of how AI is transforming the Arabian Gulf in different domains.

Oil and Gas

The oil and gas industry is one of the most important sectors in the Arabian Gulf as it contributes to the 48.3 percent of the world's proven oil reserves with 15 million barrels of oil extracted daily. However, it is also facing challenges such as declining production, increasing demand, and environmental impacts. AI can help optimize the exploration, extraction, refining, and distribution of oil and gas, as well as enhance safety and security.

For instance, AI can help analyze seismic data and identify potential reservoirs, as well as monitor and control the operations of wells, pipelines, and refineries. AI can also help detect and prevent leaks, spills, and accidents, as well as reduce flaring and greenhouse gas emissions. Some examples of AI projects in the oil and gas sector in the Arabian Gulf are:

Saudi Aramco, the world's largest oil company, has partnered with Google Cloud to deploy AI solutions for its operations, such as improving reservoir modeling, enhancing drilling performance, and optimizing energy consumption.

The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company



(ADNOC), the state-owned oil company of the UAE, has launched an AI platform called Panorama, which integrates data from across its value chain and provides real-time insights and recommendations for its operations, such as increasing production, reducing costs, and improving safety.

The Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), the national oil company of Kuwait, has collaborated with IBM to use AI and cloud computing to optimize its operations, such as enhancing reservoir management, increasing recovery rates, and reducing water injection.

Clean Energy

The Arabian Gulf countries are also investing in clean energy sources, such as solar, wind, and nuclear, to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels and mitigate their environmental impacts. AI can help integrate and manage these sources, as well as increase their efficiency and reliability. AI can help forecast the supply and demand of renewable energy, as well as optimize the grid and storage systems. AI can also help monitor and maintain the performance and condition of clean energy assets, as well as detect and prevent faults and failures. Some examples of AI projects in the clean energy sector in the Arabian Gulf are:

The UAE is building the world's largest solar park, the Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Solar Park, which will have a capacity of 5,000 megawatts by 2030. The park will use AI to optimize its operations, such as tracking the sun, adjusting the panels, and cleaning the dust.

Saudi Arabia is developing the world's first utility-scale wind farm, the Dumat Al Jandal Wind Farm, which will have a capacity of 400 megawatts by 2022. The farm will use AI to optimize its operations, such as predicting the wind speed and direction, controlling the turbines, and enhancing the power output.

Climate Change

The Arabian Gulf countries are highly vulnerable to climate change effects. AI can help predict and mitigate these impacts, offering early warning systems for disasters and supporting adaptation efforts. It plays a key role in conserving natural resources, promoting sustainable practices, and implementing projects specific to the region's climate challenges. Examples of AI projects in the Arabian Gulf related to climate change include:

The UAE has launched the UAE Climate Change Research Network, which is a platform that connects researchers and stakeholders to collaborate on AI and data-driven solutions for climate change, such as enhancing climate models, analyzing climate risks, and developing climate policies.

Saudi Arabia has initiated the Saudi Green Initiative, which is a plan that aims to reduce

carbon emissions and increase the green cover in the country, such as planting 10 billion trees, generating 50 percent of the electricity from renewables, and capturing 60 million tons of carbon by 2030. The initiative will use AI to monitor and evaluate its progress and impact.

Oman has established the Oman Environmental Data Network, which is a system that collects and analyzes data from various sources, such as satellites, sensors, and drones, to provide information and insights on environmental conditions and issues, such as air quality, water resources, and biodiversity.

Smart Cities

The Arabian Gulf nations are creating smart cities, using technology to improve the lives of residents and visitors. AI plays a vital role in enhancing features like mobility, connectivity, security, and governance. It improves transportation by optimizing routes, reducing congestion, and increasing safety. AI also aids communication by providing information and assistance, ensuring security and privacy, and supporting decision-making with data analysis. Some AI projects in the smart city domain in the Arabian Gulf include:

Dubai, the largest city in the UAE, has launched the Dubai Smart City Initiative, which is a vision to transform the city into the smartest and happiest city in the world, by implementing AI solutions in various sectors, such as health, education, tourism, and finance.

Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia, has initiated the Riyadh Smart City Program, which is a plan to transform the city into a smart and sustainable city, by implementing AI solutions in various sectors, such as energy, water, waste, and environment.

Water Desalination

The Arabian Gulf nations face water scarcity due to limited freshwater sources and high consumption. They depend on desalination, which removes salt from seawater. AI can enhance the desalination process and reduce environmental impacts. It optimizes plants by selecting the best technology, adjusting parameters, and increasing efficiency. AI monitors and maintains plants by detecting faults, scheduling repairs, and minimizing waste through energy recovery and water recycling. Examples of AI projects in water desalination in the Arabian Gulf include:

The UAE has built the world's largest reverse osmosis desalination plant, the Jebel Ali SWRO Plant, which has a capacity of 600,000 cubic meters per day. The plant uses AI to optimize its operations, such as controlling the pressure, temperature, and flow, and reducing the energy consumption and carbon footprint.

Saudi Arabia has developed the world's first solar-powered desalination plant, the Al Khafji

SWRO Plant, which has a capacity of 60,000 cubic meters per day. The plant uses AI to optimize its operations, such as maximizing solar power, minimizing battery usage, and enhancing water quality.

Oman has created the world's first integrated water desalination and agriculture project, the Sahara Forest Project, which uses seawater and solar energy to produce fresh water, food, and energy. The project uses AI to optimize its operations, such as regulating the greenhouse climate, irrigating the crops, and managing the saltwater ponds.

Fighting Corruption

The Arabian Gulf countries are actively addressing corruption, defined as the misuse of power for personal gain. Corruption poses a threat to the economic development, social justice, and political stability of these nations. AI emerges as a potent tool in the fight against corruption, championing transparency and accountability. For instance, AI can detect and prevent corruption by analyzing data, identifying anomalies, and promptly alerting authorities. It also aids in the investigation and prosecution of corruption, involving the collection of evidence, source verification, and support for legal cases. Additionally, AI plays a role in monitoring and evaluating anti-corruption initiatives, measuring performance, assessing impact, and providing valuable feedback. Notable AI projects combating corruption in the Arabian Gulf include:

In the UAE, the government utilizes AI algorithms to audit financial records, detecting irregularities and potential corruption cases. Al Mersad, developed by the Abu Dhabi Accountability Authority, enhances the speed and accuracy of the auditing process. These automated audits contribute significantly to ensuring transparency and accountability in public finances.

In Qatar, although not directly related to AI, the use of blockchain technology ensures transparency in land ownership records. This measure effectively prevents fraudulent land transactions, thereby mitigating corruption risks.

In conclusion, AI is transforming the Arabian Gulf in various ways, from oil and gas to water desalination. AI can help the Arabian Gulf countries overcome their challenges and achieve their goals, as well as create new possibilities and opportunities for their future. However, AI also poses some risks and challenges, such as ethical, social, and legal implications, that need to be addressed and regulated. Therefore, the Arabian Gulf countries need to adopt a balanced and responsible approach to AI development and deployment, that considers the benefits and costs, the opportunities and threats, and the values and principles of their societies. By doing so, they can harness the power of AI to enhance their well-being, prosperity, and sustainability.

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

MADRID: Noha Almea' presents her invention at the IE Venture Day Madrid held by IE University. — KUNA photos



Sarah Aboerjaib speaks at the event.

Kuwaiti inventors shine in Spain

Three young Kuwaitis showcase innovations in health sector at international event



Director General of the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity Neda Al-Dihani (right) is seen during the event.



Kuwaiti delegates participating in the event pose for a photo.

MADRID: Kuwaiti inventors showcased their talents and innovative ideas at the annual IE Venture Day Madrid held by IE University in the Spanish capital. "Kuwait is full of innovative talents, especially among women who show tremendous energy and great passion to continue innovation for the advancement of man and society," said Director General of the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity Neda Al-Dihani.

The international event designed to foster an entrepreneurial spirit connects startups, investors, corporations, and thought leaders from a range of sectors. The event is open to IE students and alumni, as well as any individuals from local and international communities that are interested in the startup ecosystem.

"The time has come for Kuwait and Kuwaiti inventors to get out of the Middle East and expand towards European countries where major investments in the medical field are located," said Paris de l'Etraz, Managing Director Venture Lab, IE Business School.

WIPO award

Three Kuwaitis participated in the forum after being selected by an evaluation committee at IE University from among 40 Kuwaiti peers who participated in a program organized by the Sabah

Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity in cooperation with the university to promote innovation and technological progress in the healthcare sector. Sarah Aboerjaib, Noha Almea' and Mohamed Al-Shammari, presented their innovations to specialists and investors in Spain.

Aboerjaib was also awarded the 2024 WIPO health award this week at a celebration held in Geneva on Friday on the fringes of the 65th WIPO Assemblies. Aboerjaib's ScansX, founded in 2023, stands at the cutting edge of brain injury diagnosis and medical technology innovation. Its mission is to transform and enhance diagnostic procedures through our state-of-the-art technology, making them safer, more efficient, and more accessible. Aboerjaib invented a portable medical device that uses deep learning and infrared techniques to provide a quick and accurate diagnosis of brain injuries and internal bleeding. The ScansX team aims to drive forward pioneering vision and revolutionize medical diagnostics in the Middle East and globally.

Supporting talents

The second participant, Almea', presented her project (Spray), which includes two portable devices for the immediate detection and elimination

of radioactive contamination to ensure the safety of medical operations. Almea' got two patents for the devices through the support of the center. Her innovation solves the problems facing hospital workers and reduces their exposure to nuclear radiation contamination during manual cleaning, as it reduces the waiting times for patients who sometimes get their examinations cancelled due to nuclear contamination at hospital labs.

The third participant, Al-Shammari, presented smart glasses for deaf students, which work to convert the teacher's voice into instant translation that is displayed on the lenses of the glasses with augmented virtual reality technology. The glasses, he said, support 120 languages and dialects.

Dihani stressed that the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, which is part of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, is always seeking to be a destination for students, young innovators.

He highlighted the center's cooperation with prestigious institutions and universities, such as the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University, which trained 100 Kuwaiti teachers last November. Dihani said the program will hold a second edition to train 200 teachers later this year. — KUNA



Mohamed Al-Shammari is seen during his presentation.

KRCS continues aid distribution in south Lebanon

BEIRUT: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) continued on Friday its distribution of relief aid to people in southern Lebanon, affected by the Zionist occupation's military aggression since October 7, 2023.

In a statement to KUNA, relief coordinator for the Lebanese Red Cross Yousef Boutros said that the KRCS is continuing its relief aid distribution to the Lebanese in cities and villages in the south whose security had been threatened in the last three months by Zionist occupation attacks. In coordination with KRCS, the Lebanese Red Cross' aid included food and cleaning supplies for over 2,000 Lebanese families since May, added Boutros. The KRCS' aid, Boutros stated, was distributed to towns and villages in a five-kilometer

radius from the shared border between Lebanon and occupied Palestine. Moreover, the KRCS' relief and contributions extend to its permanent "loaf project," aiding and supplying food to thousands of Syrian and Lebanese families and refugees over the years.

Hezbollah has traded almost daily fire with Zionist forces in support of ally Hamas since the beginning of the current war in Gaza.

Zionist fire since October has killed more than 500 people, mostly fighters but also including more than 90 civilians, according to an AFP tally. On the Zionist side, at least 29 people have been killed, the majority of them soldiers, according to the authorities. The violence, largely restricted to the border area, has raised fears of all-out conflict between the foes, which last went to war in the summer of 2006.

The current KRCS aid campaign to the affected people of southern Lebanon began in early May, and continued in June to support the residents of the south in their villages amid the difficult security conditions and their increasing need for basic materials. — Agencies



SHOUBA: People receive aid from Kuwait Red Crescent Society personnel in southern Lebanon. — KUNA



Scan & Subscribe KD 20 a year

For Individuals Only



Scan Now

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

Tel: 24833199 Ext: 220



Malala calls for Pakistan to stop deporting undocumented Afghans

Houston residents 'in hell' after Beryl cuts power for millions

Page 6

Page 7



DETROIT, US: People cheer as US President Joe Biden speaks during a campaign event at Renaissance High School in Detroit, Michigan, on July 12, 2024. — AFP

'I'm not going anywhere': Biden

19 US members of Congress say Biden should drop out

DETROIT: Seeking to revive his struggling reelection campaign, President Joe Biden held a rare rally in Detroit on Friday, telling a cheering crowd he wasn't going to leave the race and warning that Republican Donald Trump poses a serious threat. Biden, 81, is trying to shift the conversation from his mental sharpness and a growing number of Democratic defections to the impact of another Trump presidency, as he tries to reboot his campaign after a shaky debate performance on June 27. "I am running and we're going to win," he said to a crowd that carried "Motown is Joetown" signs and chanted: "Don't you quit." "I'm the nominee," he said. "I'm not going anywhere."

Pointing to the press area in the gym, Biden said: "They've been hammering me," to which the crowd boomed. "Guess what, Donald Trump has gotten a free pass," he added. "Hopefully with age comes a little wisdom," Biden said, in a defiant and sometimes gleeful performance. "Here's what I know - I know how to tell the truth, I know right from wrong ... and I know Americans want a president, not a dictator."

While union and religious leaders attended, Michigan's governor Gretchen Whitmer and its Democratic senators, Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters, did

not. Earlier on Friday, Biden made a surprise stop at a restaurant in a Detroit suburb, where he told diners he planned to "finish the job," and said: "I promise you... I'm okay." Biden got a boost on Friday when two prominent Democrats - Representative James Clyburn and California Governor Gavin Newsom - said he should stay in the race. But there were signs that his support was weakening elsewhere, as two more lawmakers called on him to drop out.

"It is time to move forward. With a new leader," Representative Mike Levin, from California, said in a statement. Levin, like many others who have called on Biden to leave the race, faces a competitive reelection battle of his own this year. Since the debate, at least 19 lawmakers have urged Biden to step aside so the party can pick another candidate, as have some donors, Hollywood stars, activist groups and news outlets. Biden retains support from key figures in the party, however, less than five months from the Nov 5 election.

"I'm riding with Biden no matter which direction he goes," Clyburn said on NBC's "Today" program. Newsom likewise said he was sticking with Biden in an interview excerpt released by CBS. Clyburn, 83, is a respected voice among Black Americans whose support

is essential to Biden's 2024 campaign, while Newsom, 56, is one of several younger governors who are widely seen as the future of the party. While Biden courted Michigan voters, Trump challenged him on Friday to take a cognitive test, writing on Truth Social: "I will go with him, and take one also. For the first time we'll be a team, and do it for the good of the Country."

Crucial calls

Democrats are worried that Biden's low approval ratings and growing concerns that he is too old for the job could cause them to lose seats in the House of Representatives and Senate, leaving them with no grip on power in Washington should Trump win the White House. As he worked to stem further defections, Biden held separate phone calls with groups of Hispanic, Asian and Democratic lawmakers, according to aides. While the Hispanic group's top two leaders have endorsed Biden, some other members have not stated their positions. Democratic officeholders, donors and activists are trying to determine whether Biden is their best bet to defeat Trump and serve another four-year term in the White House.

"I directly expressed the full breadth of insight,

heartfelt perspectives and conclusions about the path forward," Jeffries wrote in a letter to colleagues. Thursday's closely-watched press conference provided fodder for Biden supporters and doubters alike.

At one point, Biden referred to his vice president, Kamala Harris, as "Vice President Trump." Hours earlier he introduced Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as "President Putin" at the NATO summit, drawing gasps from those in the room.

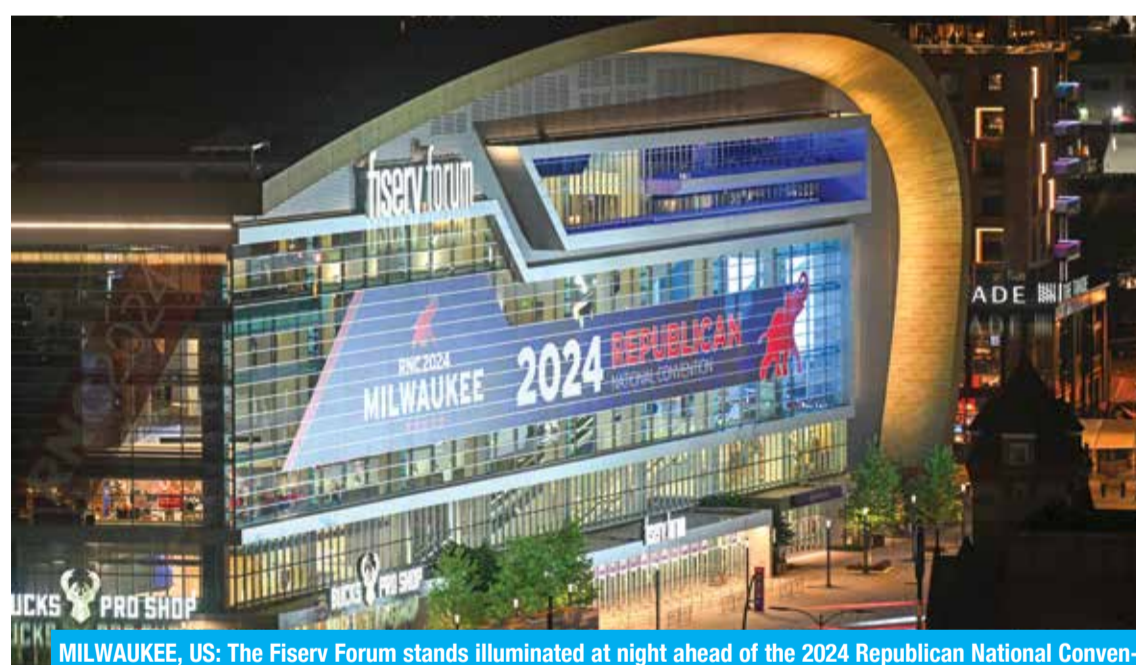
He also delivered detailed assessments of global issues that served as a reminder of his decades of experience on the world stage. With most US voters firmly divided into ideological camps, opinion polls show the race remains close. An NPR/PBS poll released on Friday found Biden leading Trump 50 percent to 48 percent, a slight increase from his position before the June 27 debate.

But some analysts have warned that Biden is losing ground in the handful of competitive states that will determine the outcome of the election. "If current trends continue, Trump could rack up one of the most decisive presidential victories since 2008," Democratic strategist Doug Sosnik wrote in the New York Times. — Reuters

8 people killed in Somalia prison breakout attempt

MOGADISHU: Eight people were killed in Somalia's capital Mogadishu on Saturday after gunfire broke out between security forces and some prisoners who had acquired weapons and were trying to escape, state media and the prisons service said. The firefight broke out in the capital's main prison, located in the city's south near the port. During the operation five prisoners and three soldiers were killed while 21 people, majority of them inmates, were injured, Abdiqani Mohamed Qalaf, spokesperson for the prison service said on Facebook. He blamed "a violent group" among the prisoners for the attack. No prisoners had escaped and an investigation into how the attack occurred will be conducted, he added.

"Somalia's prison forces concluded an operation in which prisoners fought inside the cell. Prisoners who tried to fight were shot dead," Somalia National TV said in a post on their Facebook account. It said the inmates who died were members of the Islamist group Al-Shabaab who had been sentenced to death. Two security personnel at the prison, who asked not to be named for fear of retribution, told Reuters grenades and guns had been smuggled into the cell and the inmates had used them to start the firefight. — Reuters



MILWAUKEE, US: The Fiserv Forum stands illuminated at night ahead of the 2024 Republican National Convention on July 12, 2024 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The convention will take place from July 15th to the 18th. -- AFP

Republicans to anoint Trump at party convention

MILWAUKEE: Donald Trump will next week receive the Republicans' official blessing to run for president—the first ever convicted felon to be a nominee for one of the two major US parties. The 78-year-old billionaire will be the star of the show as Milwaukee rolls out the red carpet for the Republican National Convention (RNC), transforming the Wisconsin city into a fortress to welcome 50,000 attendees.

Despite a year in which he was convicted of 34 campaign finance felonies and fined a fortune in fraud and sexual assault lawsuits, convention-goers will find Trump in good spirits as his opponent flounders.

Trump has seen his poll lead expand since President Joe Biden's disastrous TV debate performance last month ushered in an existential crisis for the Democratic Party. The Trump campaign is even talking up its chances in Democrat strongholds like Minnesota and Virginia, potentially forcing Biden funds and manpower away from defending the Democrat "blue wall" in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

"It's no coincidence the convention will lay out President Trump's vision to restore America in Wisconsin—ground-zero on the road back to the White House," RNC chairman Michael Whatley and co-chairman Lara Trump (Donald's daughter-in-law) said in a statement. Some 2,429 "delegates"—a mix of politicians and

grassroots activists—will vote for the candidate who won their state's nominating contest earlier this year. And in almost every part of America, that's Trump.

It will be the first convention over which the former president has total control, after the 2016 edition was hampered by party divisions and his second appearance in 2020 was reined in by the Covid-19 pandemic. The RNC has released a schedule for a convention very much in the former president's image, with themes for each day playing on his "Make America Great Again" rallying cry. The four-day celebration of all things Trump opens on Monday with a focus on the economy called "Make America Wealthy Once Again" before shifting to crime on Tuesday to "Make America Safe Once Again." Wednesday, labeled "Make America Strong Once Again," will zero in on foreign policy and how "America has become a global laughing stock."

Trump formally accepts the nomination on Thursday in a speech that will be followed on television by millions, closing the convention by ushering in "a new golden age for America," according to the campaign. As ever, there are formal sessions for party business and events hosted by groups such as the Heritage Foundation, sponsor of the radical right-wing "Project 2025" blueprint to reshape the federal government.

Delegates will vote to approve the Republican Party platform that reflects Trump's hardline stance on immigration while softening its approach on some social issues like abortion and LGBT rights.

Pundits have also been interested in the roles given to defeated rivals such as Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and former UN ambassador Nikki Haley. Haley announced earlier this week she had not been invited but DeSantis is getting a speaking slot on the main stage, Politico reported. — AFP

Haiti church takes in hundreds fleeing gang violence

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Over a year and a half since Haiti's rampant gang violence upended her life, Philomene Dayiti longs for nothing more than leaving the Port-au-Prince church where she has taken refuge with hundreds of others and returning home. But with the country in the early days of a political transition and a gang-fighting international security mission just hitting the ground, it's uncertain how long the 65-year-old—like hundreds of thousands of other displaced Haitians—still has to wait. "The only thing I'm asking for: I'd like to go home, find a place to rest. I can't stay here indefinitely," she told AFP recently at the crowded International Primitive Church.

Dayiti used to live in Bas-Delmas, a dangerous neighborhood in the capital's sprawling metropolitan area, and eked out a living selling various goods on the street. When clashes between gangs broke out, she left her home and took shelter in the church, located on Delmas 19 just outside the capital. Some 800 people now reside in a makeshift camp in the church's courtyard, surrounded by personal belongings hanging on walls or clotheslines. Gangs had been steadily gaining ground in crisis-racked Haiti—with some estimates putting their control as high as 80 percent of Port-au-Prince—but the violence spiked in late February. In coordinated attacks, armed gangs struck sites around the capital and called for the resignation of Haiti's unelected prime minister, Ariel Henry. He eventually agreed to step down and hand executive power to a transitional council, which has since named an interim prime minister and government. But the ongoing violence has taken a major toll, with the UN's migration agency saying almost 600,000 people in Haiti have been displaced, a 60 percent increase since March. — AFP



PORT-AU-PRINCE: Police forces take part in an operation against powerful gangs in the city center near the National Palace in Port-au-Prince. -- AFP

SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket faces a rare failure

WASHINGTON: SpaceX's highly reliable Falcon 9 rocket has experienced a rare failure that means the latest batch of the company's Starlink satellites won't make it into orbit, the company said Friday, as regulators opened an investigation.

The rocket, a prolific launch vehicle that propels both satellites and astronauts into orbit, blasted off from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California on Thursday night, with the first stage performing well and executing its impressive yet now routine dromedary landing. But the second stage developed a liquid oxygen leak, SpaceX said in a statement, leaving it unable to complete a planned second burn. Though it deployed the 20 Starlink internet satellites it was carrying, they entered an eccentric orbit with a low point of 135 km (83 miles), roughly half of what it needed to be. — AFP

International

Houston residents 'in hell' after Beryl cuts power for millions

Hurricane still wreaks havoc, flooding roads and damaging power poles

HOUSTON, US: Josh Vance stands in the air-conditioned entrance of Sunnyside Community Center in Houston, Texas, one of the designated "cooling centers" open to the public after Hurricane Beryl knocked out power during a potent heat wave. "Dealing with the heat at home, it's terrible. Honestly, we're suffering," he said.

Vance is among one million customers still without electricity, four days after the storm blew through the city. Though the state's prominent oil and gas industry weathered the storm, Beryl still flooded neighborhoods and roads, uprooted trees and damaged power poles and transmission lines.

By the time the hurricane dissipated, seven people in Texas were dead and two million customers—most of them in Houston—were without power, with half still waiting for it to be restored by Friday, according to poweroutage.us.

While grid operators work to reconnect power, hundreds gather in cooling centers or wait in their cars to pick up ice, water and fresh food. Vance, 43, lives



HOUSTON: Menifée Lucy, 60, sits on her front porch for air in the Kashmere Gardens neighborhood in Houston, Texas. — AFP

in Houston with his two children and pet cat, but has spent much of the past week sheltering in the cooling center to escape temperatures which have peaked over 90 degrees Fahrenheit (33 degrees Celsius).

"You'd be amazed how much we're so acclimated to [electricity], and without the power, it's living in hell," he said.

The United States has two major power grids: one for the eastern part of the country and another for the west. Each grid connects to different power sources, so if one state is having problems generating power, it can be redirected from other parts.

However, Texas is the only state with its own autonomous power grid, which has led to regular issues. In February 2021, a prolonged cold storm caused the grid to collapse due to demand for heating. Natural gas lines also faced problems. Dozens of residents froze to death.

In Houston, the electrical grid is administered by the utility company CenterPoint. Both elected officials and citizens have asked why the company has been so slow to restore power when Beryl was only a Category 1 hurricane, the lowest designation on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale.

"They underestimated the impact of the

storm... it would appear that they were not as prepared as they should have been," Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick said at a press conference Thursday, where he announced an investigation into the power company's response. "I understand how frustrating it is to be without power, especially in this heat," CenterPoint CEO Jason Wells told the Houston Chronicle.

Wells highlighted the fact that the company was able to restore power to 1.1 million customers within 48 hours of the storm ending. The progress, however, offers little consolation for those without electricity, like Maria Dionisio, who was also at the cooling center.

"There is nothing to eat, everything that was in the refrigerator is ruined," Dionisio said.

While Houston residents continue to recover, some dread an even more powerful storm this season. "I'm praying to God there's not [a hurricane] right behind this one, because if there is, we're in trouble," Vance said. — AFP

French PM eyes rebuilding political force

PARIS: France's prime minister on Saturday was elected leader of his party's National Assembly lawmakers as politicians from all sides jockeyed for position to form the next government. Gabriel Attal was the only candidate in the vote by the Renaissance party parliamentary group, which he plans to use as the base from which to rebuild the political force that got roundly beaten in a snap election called by President Emmanuel Macron.

Of the 98 Renaissance deputies registered to vote, 84 backed Attal, who will start in his role next week. As Attal and other ministers eye a future outside government, deep cracks have appeared between the 35-year-old premier and his former mentor Macron. Macron did not get any mention in Attal's message to Renaissance deputies outlining his leadership bid, with observers saying that the prime minister blames the president for calling the vote, which he said took the party to the brink of "extinction".

Sunday's election runoff left the National Assembly without any overall majority, but a broad alliance—called New Popular Front (NFP)—of Socialists, Communists, Greens and the hard-left France Unbowed (LFI) won the most seats, with 193 in the 577-strong lower chamber. Macron's allies came second with 164 seats and the far-right National Rally (RN) third at 143.

Macron, who still has nearly three years in office, lashed out at Attal and others in a closed-door meeting Friday, saying his political friends had made a "disastrous spectacle" of themselves since the snap election. Participants at the meeting—attended notably by Attal, his rival Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin and former prime minister Elisabeth Borne—told AFP that Macron had urged his allies to give priority "to the nation rather than to premature ambition". — AFP

Kenya watchdog probes police link to dumped bodies

NAIROBI: Kenya's police watchdog said it is investigating whether there is any police involvement in the gruesome discovery of mutilated bodies dumped in a Nairobi rubbish tip.

The Independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA) is also looking into claims of abductions and unlawful arrests of demonstrators who went missing after widespread anti-government protests.

Police initially said the severely mutilated bodies of six women tied up in plastic bags were found on Friday dumped a garbage site in an abandoned quarry in Mukuru, in the south of the capital. The IPOA said in a statement later that the remains of at least nine people had been recovered, seven of them female, and called for swift investigations to identify them.

"The bodies, wrapped in bags and secured by nylon ropes, had visible marks of torture and mutilation," it said, noting that the dumpsite was less than 100 meters (yards) from a police station. Kenyan police are under sharp scrutiny after dozens of people were killed during the demonstrations last month, with rights group accusing officers of using excessive force. National police chief Japhet Koome, the target of much public anger over the protest deaths, has resigned after less than two years in the post, Kenya's presidency announced Friday.

He is the latest head to roll as President William Ruto scrambles to contain the worst crisis of his rule, triggered by deeply unpopular proposed tax hikes. Crowds that gathered on Friday at the site where the bodies were found were chanting "Ruto must go", the slogan of the wave of protests led by young Gen-Z Kenyans. Kenyan police are feared and face frequent allegations of extrajudicial killings but are seldom convicted.

Images on local television showed people using ropes to heave sacks containing the human remains from rubbish-strewn water in the quar-



NAIROBI: Onlookers gather at the dumpsite where six bodies were found in the landfill in Mukuru slum, Nairobi, on July 12, 2024. — AFP

ry dumpsite. "As the police investigations unfold, IPOA is keenly independently undertaking preliminary inquiries to establish whether there was any police involvement in the deaths, or failure to act to prevent them," the agency said.

The Directorate of Criminal Investigations said preliminary investigations suggested all the victims had been killed in the same manner, without elaborating. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions also highlighted the location of the bodies so close to a police station and said was "deeply concerned" about the discoveries "which point to a grave violation of human rights".

It has directed the police to submit the results of their inquiry within 21 days, and also urged state agencies including the IPOA to expedite their investigations into reports of enforced disappearances and deaths allegedly committed by police. The Ken-

yan Human Rights Commission, a non-governmental organization, said it was also urging a "comprehensive investigation" to determine the cause of the deaths and identify those responsible.

"The perpetrators must be held accountable," it said in a post Friday on X. "Kenya Kwanza regime, led by William Ruto, must take accountability for this heinous crime."

Kenyan police are often accused by rights groups of using excessive force and carrying out unlawful killings, especially in poor neighborhoods. They have also allegedly run hit squads targeting people such as rights activists and lawyers investigating alleged abuses by police.

There have been few examples of police being held to account, although Ruto has pledged in the past to put an end to violence and illegal practices by law enforcement officers. — AFP

Brutal massacre in Gaza...

Continued from Page 1

In May, a fire killed 45 people at a tent city in Al-Mawasi. Military said it had targeted and killed two senior Hamas militants in northwest Rafah in the strike which sparked the blaze, but added its munitions alone could not have caused the fire. In another incident around the same time, a Gaza civil defense official said an airstrike killed 21 people at a displacement camp west of Rafah. Zionist army rejected the allegations, saying it "did not strike" the designated humanitarian area in Al-Mawasi. In late June, the International Committee of the Red Cross said 22 people were killed by shelling that damaged its Gaza office, which is surrounded by hundreds of displaced people who sought shelter there.

Zionist military spokesman said there was "no indication" of an airstrike in the Al-Mawasi humanitarian area at that time. The war started with October 7 attack. Zionists responded with a military offensive that has killed at least 38,443 people in Gaza, also mostly civilians, according to a toll from the Gaza health ministry issued Saturday afternoon. The war has left the vast majority of Gazans displaced and short of life-saving assistance in a territory where much of the infrastructure has been destroyed.

UN chief Antonio Guterres appealed to donor governments on Friday to resume funding the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, warning there was no alternative to UNRWA as a conduit for aid to Gazans despite longstanding opposition to the agency. "Just when we thought it couldn't get any worse in Gaza - somehow, appallingly, civilians are being pushed into ever deeper circles of hell," he said.

UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini said later that the agency now had enough funds to operate through September. Zionists and Hamas have engaged in months of indirect

talks via Qatari, US and Egyptian mediators to reach a still elusive truce and hostage release deal. Talks took place in Doha on Wednesday, while Zionist entity said it was sending a delegation to Cairo on Thursday evening for further negotiations. Netanyahu continues to insist that any deal must allow Zionist entity to meet all its war aims - destroying Hamas as well as bringing home all the hostages.

US President Joe Biden has outlined what he called a Zionist plan for a six-week truce in which hostages held in Gaza would be freed in exchange for Palestinians in Zionist prisons. A second phase would see talks on a full end to the war. On Thursday, he said: "That framework is now agreed on by both Zionists and Hamas. 'There are still gaps to close, but we're making progress, the trend is positive, and I'm determined to get this deal done and bring an end to this war, which should end now.'"

Biden again pressed Zionists for a "day-after" plan for Gaza and spoke of diplomatic efforts to persuade Arab states to help with security. Hamas has proposed an independent and non-partisan government for both post-war Gaza and the occupied West Bank, said Hossam Badran, a member of the group's political bureau. Badran's remarks came after Netanyahu - whose critics have accused him of prolonging the war - demanded that Zionists retain control of the Philadelphia corridor, Gaza territory along the border with Egypt.

Meanwhile, Kuwait on Saturday denounced, in the strongest terms, the massacres committed by Zionist occupation forces against the Palestinians, along with deliberate attacks on relief teams, the last of which was airstrikes on a refugee camp in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza Strip. In a press release, the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry underlined that Kuwait considers that as the clear-cut criminal aggressions by occupation forces. The ministry echoed Kuwait's earlier calls on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to provide protection to the Palestinian people and demand occupation forces to comply with relevant international resolutions. — Agencies

tion where they discussed lowering the risk of "possible escalation". German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has hailed the US decision despite criticism from members of his Social Democrats.

The decision marks a return of US cruise missiles to Germany after a 20-year absence. Defending the decision, Scholz told reporters at the NATO summit that it was "something of deterrence and it's securing peace, and it is a necessary and important decision at the right time." German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius told broadcaster Deutschlandfunk that the deployment decision addressed a "very serious gap" in the country's capabilities. — AFP

WIPO honors Kuwaiti inventor...

Continued from Page 1

Ambassador Al-Hayen congratulated Eng Aboerjajb for being the first Arab inventor to win the celebrated award since its launch in 2022. Aboerjajb's ScansX, founded in 2023, stands at the cutting edge of brain injury diagnosis and medical technology innovation. Its mission is to transform and enhance diagnostic procedures through our state-of-the-art technology, making them safer, more efficient, and more accessible.

ScansX is a dedicated team with expertise aiming to drive forward pioneering vision and revolutionize medical diagnostics in the Middle East and globally. The other eight winners are AETECH - Climate Tech (Republic of Korea); Farmer Lifeline Technologies - Climate Tech (Kenya); Solar; HealInno Tech - Health

Iranian president-elect ready for...

Continued from Page 1

"European countries have reneged on all these commitments," Pezeshkian wrote. "Despite these missteps, I look forward to engaging in constructive dialogue with European countries to set our relations on the right path, based on principles of mutual respect and equal footing."

He said the two sides could explore "numerous areas of cooperation" if the Europeans "set aside self-arrogated moral supremacy coupled with manufactured crises that have plagued our relations for so long." European Union spokeswoman Nabila Massrali had earlier congratulated Pezeshkian on his election, saying the 27-member bloc was "ready to engage with the new government in line with EU policy of critical engagement". The death of ultra-conservative president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash necessitated the July 6 election, which was not due until 2025.

In the runoff, Pezeshkian secured about 54 percent of the vote against Jalili's roughly 44 percent, with a turnout of just under half of Iran's 61 million electorate. Pezeshkian is a heart surgeon whose only previous government experience was as health minister about two decades ago. He is considered a "reformist" in

(China); Laboratorios (Argentina); Metically - Health (Thailand); PONS Teknoloji (Turkey); Qnami - Advanced Technology (Switzerland); and Vivo Surgical (Singapore).

The WIPO Global Awards are dedicated to SMEs and startups from a wide range of industrial sectors that make smart use of intellectual property for commercialization of products and services while also bringing a positive contribution to society through their innovation and creativity. The Global Awards program takes root in WIPO's mission to ensure a world where intellectual property rights support innovation and creativity from anywhere, for the good of everyone.

These independent, jury-selected awards recognize and support those whose skills contribute to progress and improve people's lives. Winners receive a personalized mentorship program to help them use IP for business growth, along with exclusive support and sponsorship to facilitate their access to funding and business opportunities. — KUNA

Iran, and was the only candidate from that camp allowed to stand in the election, for which all contenders were approved by Iran's Guardian Council.

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has the final say on all major policy issues in the country. Under the hard-won 2015 deal, Iran agreed to freeze its nuclear program in return for the lifting of the crippling international sanctions. After the US withdrawal and reimposition of sanctions, Iran gradually began reneging on its own commitments to the agreement.

"The United States also needs to recognize the reality and understand, once and for all, that Iran does not—and will not—respond to pressure," said Pezeshkian, who is to be sworn in on July 30. The parties to the 2015 deal with Iran saw it as the best way to stop the Islamic republic from building a nuclear bomb—a goal Tehran has always denied. European Union members France and Germany were also party to the deal, along with Britain, China and Russia. The European nations tried to salvage it, but Iran accused them of perceived inaction.

Under the late president Raisi, Iran sought improved relations with China and Russia while mending ties with Arab neighbors, chiefly Saudi Arabia, to avert deeper isolation. In his article, Pezeshkian described Russia as a "valued strategic ally" and said he looked forward "to collaborating more extensively" with China. — AFP

Russia could target Europe if US...

Continued from Page 1

The Kremlin has already criticized the move, accusing Washington of taking a step towards a new Cold War and of directly participating in the conflict in Ukraine. Russia's defense ministry on Friday said that Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov held a telephone call with his US counterpart Lloyd Aus-

International

Malala calls for Pakistan to stop deporting undocumented Afghans

Nobel laureate urges immediate ceasefire in Gaza

LONDON: Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai called for Pakistan to stop deporting undocumented Afghans, saying she was especially concerned about the "dark future" awaiting women and girls sent back. "It is deeply concerning that Pakistan is forcing Afghan refugees based in Pakistan back into Afghanistan, and I'm deeply concerned about the women and girls", the activist, who was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 2014, told AFP in an interview on Friday.

Despite extending leave for Afghan refugees with permits to stay in Pakistan for another year, Islamabad this week said it would remove illegal migrants. More than 600,000 Afghans have fled Pakistan since Islamabad last year ordered undocumented migrants to leave or face arrest.

Human rights monitors have warned that some sent to Afghanistan faced persecution by the Taliban, who came into power in 2021 and have imposed an austere form of Islam, barring girls from higher education and excluding women and girls from areas of public life.

"A lot of these girls in Pakistan were studying, they were in school, these women were doing work", said Malala, 27, who grew up in Pakistan's Swat valley. She had to move to the UK after she was shot, aged just 15, for resisting the Pakistan Taliban's then-ban on girls' education in her hometown.

"I hope that Pakistan reverses its policy and that they protect girls and women especially because of the dark future that they would be witnessing in Afghanistan", she added. Speaking to AFP on her birthday, recognized by the UN as Malala Day, the activist launched into the challenges facing the only country in the world where girls over 12 are barred from school.

"I cannot believe that I'm witnessing a time when girls have been banned from their education for more than three years", she said, adding that while the situation was "shocking", she "admired the resilience of the Afghan activists." The Malala Fund is campaigning for the UN to formally broaden their definition of crimes against humanity to include "gender apartheid" – a phrase the UN has used to describe the situation in Afghanistan. Earlier this month, the UN and Taliban sat down for talks in Doha for the first time since the latter came to power but without women in attendance.

Malala said the Doha talks made a "compromise on the future of women and girls", calling for a "principled engagement" with the Taliban. "World leaders need to realize that when they sit down with the Taliban... and they're excluding women and girls, they are actually doing a Taliban favor," she said.

"I want to call out those countries as well – that includes Canada and France – who have a feminist foreign policy" to "condemn" conversations like the Doha talks, she added. Malala also called for an "urgent" ceasefire in the war in Gaza. "It is horrifying how many schools have been bombed in Gaza, even more recently the four schools", she added, referring to four schools that were hit by Zionist entity air strikes this week. According to the education ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip, 85 percent of educational facilities in the territory are out of service because of the war.

"It is deeply concerning because we know that children do not have a future when they're living under a war, when their schools and homes are destroyed", said Malala. The UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, which coordinates



LONDON: Pakistani Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai speaks during an interview in London on July 12, 2024. — AFP

nearly all aid to Gaza, said it used more than half its budget before the war to fund education. Some countries like Australia and Germany have however resumed funding when evidence could not be found to support Zionist entity claims.

"When it comes to humanitarian support, all countries should be making no compromise. They

should make sure that all the immediate and urgent needs of people are provided, and UNRWA is an example of that", Malala said of countries resuming funding for the group.

"I do hope that all countries are providing aid and support because it's about those innocent people and civilians who need to be protected". — AFP

Italian police free 33 Indian laborers from 'slavery'

ROME: Italian police said on Saturday they had freed 33 Indian farm laborers from slave-like working conditions in the northern Verona province and seized almost half a million euros (\$545,300) from their two alleged abusers. Labor exploitation is in the spotlight in Italy following an accident in June

in which an Indian fruit picker died after his arm was severed by machinery.

In the latest case, police said the alleged gang-masters, also from India, brought fellow nationals to Italy on seasonal work permits, asking them to pay 17,000 euros each and promising them a better future. The migrants were given farm jobs, working seven days a week and 10-12 hours a day for just 4 euros per hour, which was entirely doctored from them until they settled all their debts, police said, describing the migrants' treatment as "slavery". Some were asked to continue working for free to pay an additional 13,000 euros for a permanent work permit "which, in reality, would have never been given

to them," the police statement said.

The alleged abusers were charged with crimes connected to slavery and labor exploitation, while the victims will be offered protection, work opportunities and legal residency papers, the police said. Like other European nations, Italy has growing labor shortages often filled via immigration, particularly in lower paid jobs, and has a migrant work visa system that has faced cases of fraud.

The country also has a problem with labor law violations. According to 2021 data from national statistics office Istat, about 11 percent of Italian workers were employed illegally, rising to more than 23 percent in agriculture. — Reuters

27 dead, 15 missing as Indonesia ends landslide search

JAKARTA: Indonesian rescuers said Saturday they had ended the search for more than a dozen missing people after a landslide near an illegal gold mine killed at least 27. The landslide hit a remote village in Bone Balango district on the central island of Sulawesi a week ago following heavy rain.

With the search effort called off and 15 people still missing, the toll could rise further, according to rescue officials. "The search and rescue carried out the operation for seven days according to the standard operating procedure. Today is the last day," local search and rescue agency head Heriyanto, who goes by one name, told AFP.

"If there are signs of the missing victims with valid and accurate evidence and based on the request of the Bone Balango government, we will conduct an evacuation operation."

He said the agency had consulted the families of the missing before ending the search. Hundreds of police officers and soldiers were deployed as part of the rescue effort, which was hampered by poor weather and damage to nearby bridges that forced rescuers to travel by foot. A search and rescue official previously said that some victims were miners while others were



Members of a rescue team carry a victim who died in a landslide at Tulabolo village in Bone Bolango Regency of the Gorontalo Province on July 9, 2024. — AFP

people who operated stalls near the mine.

Indonesia is prone to landslides during the rainy season between November and April, but July is usually dry and heavy rains are rare. In May, at least

15 people died after landslides and flooding in South Sulawesi province swept away dozens of houses and damaged roads. A landslide in the same province a month before killed 20 people. — AFP

Nepal recovers first body from buses swept off by landslide

BHARATPUR, Nepal: Nepali rescue teams on Saturday recovered the first body from around 50 people missing after monsoon rains triggered a landslide that swept two buses off a highway and into a river.

The force of Friday's landslide in central Chitwan district pushed the vehicles over concrete crash barriers and down a steep embankment, at least 30 meters (100 feet) from the road. "One body has been found about 55 kilometers (35 miles) from the accident site," police spokesman Kumar Neupane told AFP. District official Khimananda Bhusal told AFP that roughly 50 people remained unaccounted for, revising down the number of missing from the 63 reported by authorities on Friday. "It is hard to confirm the total number because we don't know if the buses stopped to add or remove passengers along the way," he said. Dozens of rescuers spent hours struggling to comb the raging Trishuli river with rafts, sensor equipment and dive teams to find any trace of the passengers or the vehicles. Fierce currents made worse by this week's torrential downpours have hampered their efforts so far. "We will employ all our abilities for search and rescue despite the water levels, current and the water's muddiness," Chitwan district chief Indra Dev Yadav told AFP.

The accident happened before dawn on Friday along the Narayanghat-Mugling highway, around 100 kilometers (60 miles) west of Kathmandu. One bus was heading from the capital to Gaur in Rautahat district in southern Nepal, and the other was en route to Kathmandu from southern Birgunj. A



SIMALTAR: Members of Nepal's Armed Police Force (APF) search for survivors in the Trishuli River at the site of a landslide following heavy rainfall in Simaltar on July 13, 2024. — AFP

driver was killed in a separate accident on the same road after a boulder hit his bus. He died as he was being treated at a hospital. Deadly crashes are common in the Himalayan republic because of poorly constructed roads, badly maintained vehicles and reckless driving.

Nearly 2,400 people lost their lives on Nepal's roads in the 12 months to April, according to government figures. Twelve people were killed and 24 injured in an accident in January when a bus heading to Kath-

mandu from Nepalgunj fell into a river.

Road travel becomes deadlier during the annual monsoon season as rains trigger landslides and floods across the mountainous country. Monsoon rains across South Asia from June to September offer respite from the summer heat and are crucial to replenishing water supplies, but also bring widespread death and destruction. The rainfall is hard to forecast and varies considerably, but scientists say climate change is making the monsoon stronger and more erratic. — AFP

News in Brief

Two Russian warships in China

MOSCOW: Two Russian warships have arrived in the southern Chinese port city of Zhanjiang to take part in joint naval exercises, the Russian defense ministry said Saturday. China and Russia have greatly reinforced ties since the start of the Russian offensive in Ukraine that began in February 2022. Their common goal is also to reduce the role of the United States and the West on the international stage. "A detachment of vessels from the Pacific fleet will take part in the joint naval exercise—Interaction Maritime 2024," the ministry announced on Telegram, posting a video of their arrival. — AFP

Cambodia military copter missing

PHNOM PENH: A Cambodian military helicopter has gone missing following an "accident" in bad weather in the southwest of the country, its defense ministry said on Saturday. The ministry said in a Facebook post that the chopper went missing in the rugged Cardamom Mountains, which are cloaked in dense rainforest. "A helicopter has lost contact with the headquarters of the air force... during a training," it said. "The accident happened due to bad weather," it added. The ministry did not say when the chopper went missing, what model it was, or how many people were on board. — AFP

Three dead in Japan landslide

TOKYO: Three people were found dead at the site of landslide in western Japan after heavy rain hit the region, a local official said Saturday. Rescue workers had been searching three people—a man in his 90s, a woman in her 80s, and a man in his 40s—who were living in a wooden house that collapsed after the landslide in Matsuyama, Ehime prefecture. The landslide occurred early Friday morning as the weather agency warned of heavy rain in western Japan, with officials calling on people to be on high alert for landslides and flooding in low-lying areas. — AFP

Maldives climate minister freed

MALE: A former Maldives climate change minister detained last month on allegations she performed "black magic" on the country's president was released Saturday, police said. Fathimath Shammaz Ali Saleem was arrested along with her sister and another person last month in the capital Male and stood down from her post shortly afterwards. Local media reported she was accused of performing "black magic" on President Mohamed Muizzu to win favor from his new administration. Police had asked for an extension of her detention twice, but on Saturday they had no reason to hold her any longer—although the case was still ongoing. — AFP

7 dead in Vietnam landslide

HANOI: At least seven people were found dead in northern Vietnam after a landslide triggered by heavy rain buried the van they were travelling in, state media reports said on Saturday. Northern Vietnam has entered its rainy season, with heavy downpours and flooding making travel along mountain roads treacherous. The landslide hit the 16-seater van around 4 am local time (2100 GMT) as it drove through Bac Me district in Ha Giang province, state media said. Rescuers had recovered seven bodies, including a boy. — AFP

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2024

Mixed profits at major US banks

Citigroup, JPMorgan and Wells Fargo report gains

NEW YORK: Wall Street banks reported a healthier pipeline for deals and a jump in investment banking activity in quarterly earnings on Friday, but also cited some headwinds and reasons for caution.

The results by three major US banks kicked off the second-quarter earnings season. Deal flow has been improving from a drought after the pandemic. Merger and acquisition volumes hit \$1.6 trillion globally in the first half of the year, up 20 percent from a year earlier, Dealogic data showed. Equity capital market volumes climbed 10 percent during the same period.

Citigroup reported a 60 percent jump in investment banking revenue to \$853 million. At JPMorgan, investment banking fees grew 50 percent, compared with a low base, but were higher than the company's earlier prediction of a 25 percent to 30 percent increase. At Wells Fargo, investment banking revenue surged 38 percent to \$430 million.

Wells Fargo shares were down 6 percent at midday on Friday as the bank missed analysts' estimates for interest income. Citi shares were down 1.5 percent on investor worries about expenses and market share. JPMorgan shares were down 0.3 percent on some concern about costs and provisions.

Citi's chief financial officer, Mark Mason, told reporters on a call after the earnings that the pipeline of announced deals was looking strong, which would play out at the end of the year and in 2025. "There are a number of factors that come into play, including the broader regulatory environment, including elections, including how the rate environment and inflation continues to

evolve," Mason said. "But the important thing is we are well positioned as we look at announced deals."

"We are seeing some good momentum," he added. The US is heading toward the Nov 5 presidential election and the interest rate cycle could also affect the outlook. JPM's CFO, Jeremy Barnum, said on a conference call that dialogue on M&A was "robust" but was still muted in terms of actual deals.

He noted that initial public offerings could have been expected to be higher, adding that equity market strength had been driven by a few stocks, while other areas in the market that would typically drive IPOs had been more muted, such as mid-cap technology. Wells Fargo CFO Mike Santomassimo said on a call that the bank has seen good activity across the investment grade desk, capital markets and the leverage finance business. In a report from Tuesday, analysts at credit rating agency Moody's said US banks were expected to show significant improvements in some investment banking revenue sources after industry improvements in debt issuance and M&A, although IPOs were slightly lower than a year earlier.

Investment banks Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley are set to report quarterly results next week.

Goldman's earnings are expected to more than double versus the second quarter of 2023, when they dropped to a three-year low. Goldman will likely benefit from a revival in deals, combined with fewer write-downs for its consumer business. Morgan Stanley's EPS is expected to climb 33 percent, lifted by rising activity in mergers, acquisitions and capital markets. — Reuters



NEW YORK: The JPMorgan Chase & Co world headquarters in New York City. — AFP

Day laborers seek falling jobs pre-dawn in Shanghai suburb

SHANGHAI: A dozen men crowded around an employment agent early in the morning in suburban Shanghai, waving their identification cards as they scrambled to secure a 12-hour shift at a warehouse.

"We need people who are strong," the agent told the group, warning them that temperatures were high inside the warehouse due to the summer weather. The men were some of the thousands of domestic migrant workers in the Chinese metropolis eking out a living day by day, and competing for dwindling jobs at factories and construction sites in a slowing economy. China's top political brass—including President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang—are gathering next week for a key meeting, with the country's economic woes at the top of the agenda.

Outside the employment agency, 34-year-old Shen Peng from northern China's Shaanxi province said he had been looking for work for 10 days with no luck. "I want a factory job," he told AFP, saying he had so far only been offered hard physical labor for low pay. Shen, a single father and former restaurant cook, is his family's sole breadwinner.

"(My child's) mother fell ill and passed away, so that's something I owe my child... I must at least find something with a higher income," Shen told AFP. Recently returned to Shanghai after three years at home in Shaanxi, Shen is paying 40 yuan (\$5.50) a night for a small room with air conditioning at a boarding house, and counts himself lucky compared to others who pay less for shared rooms equipped with only a fan.

The current dearth of employment opportunities starkly contrasts with Shen's experience when he came to Shanghai for the first time in 2017. Back then, there were plenty of jobs to choose from and he worked at

a factory owned by Taiwan-based Quanta Computer, earning up to 8,000 yuan a month with accommodation and meals provided by his employer.

Now, he says hiring agents fill coveted factory roles more selectively. "In the past, there were no limits, as long as you knew the 26 letters of the English alphabet," he told AFP, adding that hiring agents were now even refusing people who appeared overweight for fear they would be unfit for the job.

Shen Chungping, an Anhui native with no relation to Shen Peng, had better luck at the employment agency on Tuesday. He was selected for a temporary restaurant dishwasher role paying 112 yuan a day. Landing the job was a great relief to Shen Chungping, who was unable to find work in May and June. "I'm short, and I don't have much education, I only went to middle school so now I'm taking whatever job I can," he told AFP. "I've done everything, delivering parcels, security guard jobs, delivering take out, I've done it all," Shen Chungping said. "This year, there are more people (seeking jobs), and they can't find jobs," he told AFP.

Outside an unassuming residential compound near the employment agency, around a hundred people were gathered at an informal roadside labour exchange before dawn on Tuesday. Many stood holding shovels, waiting for employers to pick them for construction work. Workers who had been there since as early as 3 am stood chatting with familiar faces between bites of fried bread sold at a nearby breakfast stall. "It's a little bit worse this year compared to last year. Shanghai's development has reached a limit," Shao Tongfang from Anhui province, who was waiting for a job, told AFP. Shao said he had been seeking his fortune in the wealthy Chinese city for 20 years.

He plans to return to farming in his hometown "in a few years, when I can't stay in this place any longer". "I can't do it in my hometown," said Mei Buqin, another laborer from Anhui, when asked why he chose to seek work in Shanghai. As the sun rose, one of the luckier jobseekers told AFP he was heading off to work. Smiling, the man jumped on the back of a scooter driven by his new employer and they drove off into the city. — AFP

Turkey puts its best foot forward to charm China investors

ANKARA: Turkey plans to draw on its geographical position and an EU customs deal to entice Chinese investors keen to access European markets tariff-free, as it recently just did with carmaker BYD. The Chinese electric vehicle giant signed a billion-dollar deal with Ankara on Monday to open a plant in western Turkey, promising to create 5,000 jobs, a move that will help it dodge new EU tariffs. The country, at the crossroads between Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia, is in talks with other Chinese companies, Turkey's Industry and Technology Minister Mehmet Fatih Kacir said this week. "We want to transform Turkey into a production centre for the next generation of vehicles," Kacir told private broadcaster Haberturk. The minister emphasized his country's selling points, including being part of the EU's customs union and having trade agreements with 28 countries.

"Chinese producers want rapid access to international markets," he said. "Investing in Turkey offers them that." The EU recently slapped additional provisional tariffs of up to 38 percent on Chinese EVs following an investigation that concluded state subsidies meant they were unfairly undermining European rivals.

But Ankara struck a customs deal with the EU in 1995 that enables the free flow between them of a number of goods, notably cars. Turkey became one of the leading centers of the world's automobile industry starting in the 1970s, when major carmakers including Fiat and Renault opened plants there—with others like Ford, Toyota and Hyundai following.

BYD's Turkish base will allow the Chinese EV specialist to bypass EU tariffs upped by Brussels in July, and enter European markets. Under new regulations on investment incentives, BYD will be able to circumvent a new 40 percent tariff that Turkey originally imposed on electric vehicle imports. Manufacturers investing in the country will be exempt. At least five other Chinese carmakers are now considering opening plants in Turkey, state-owned news agency Anadolu reported. Turkish manufacturer TOGG and Chinese firm Farasis have also partnered up to produce EV batteries in Turkey.

Turkish officials have held numerous meetings with Chinese industrialists in the last year, the industry ministry said. Turkey's foreign affairs minister Hakan Fidan visited China in June to seal a new bilateral deal, calling the countries "drivers of Asian wealth."

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has previously deplored China's policy in Xinjiang, calling it "genocide" in 2009. But Ankara has since toned down its rhetoric—and Fidan in June reiterated the state's "total support for China's territorial integrity." Former diplomat Gulru Gezer says that while it is important, China's treatment of the Uyghurs, who speak a Turkic language, is not the only issue on Beijing and Ankara's mutual agenda—and it shouldn't hamper their relations. "Fidan's visit supported this," she said. "The fact that Beijing let Fidan go into Xinjiang, talk to the population, were positive steps." —AFP



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb (second left) speaks with International Monetary Fund (IMF) Mission Chief for Pakistan Nathan Porter (second right) during a meeting in Islamabad. — AFP

Pakistan pledges \$7bn IMF aid deal will be its last

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund has agreed to loan Pakistan \$7 billion to bolster its faltering economy, with Islamabad pledging Saturday it would be the last time it relied on relief from the Washington-based lender. The South Asian nation agreed to the deal—its 24th IMF payout since 1958 -- in exchange for unpopular reforms, including widening its chronically low tax base.

Pakistan last year came to the brink of default as the economy shriveled amid political chaos following catastrophic 2022 monsoon floods and decades of mismanagement, as well as a global economic downturn. It was saved by last-minute loans from friendly countries, as well as an IMF rescue package, but its finances remain in dire straits, with high inflation and staggering public debts.

"This program should be considered the last program," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif told ministers and revenue officials in Islamabad. "We should tax those who are not being taxed."

Islamabad wrangled for months with IMF officials to unlock the new loan announced Friday, which will be paid out over three years subject to approval by the organization's Executive Board. It came on condition of far-reaching reforms including hiking household bills to remedy a permanently crisis-stricken energy sector and uplifting pitiful tax takings.

In a nation of over 240 million people and where most jobs are in the informal sector, only 5.2 million filed income tax returns in 2022. During the 2024-25 fiscal year that started at the beginning of July, the government aims to raise nearly \$46 billion in taxes, a 40 percent increase from the previous year.

More unusual methods have seen the tax authority block 210,000 SIM cards of mobile users who have not filed tax returns in a bid to widen the revenue bracket. Under the deal "revenue collections will be supported by simpler and fairer direct and indirect taxation including by bringing net income from the retail, export, and agriculture sectors properly into the tax system", IMF Pakistan Mission Chief Nathan Porter said in a statement. Islamabad also aims to reduce its fiscal deficit by 1.5 percent to 5.9 percent in the coming year, heeding another key IMF demand. The IMF said the loan and its conditions should allow Pakistan to "cement macroeconomic stability and create conditions for stronger, more inclusive and resilient growth". But Pakistan's public debt remains huge at \$242 billion, and servicing it will still swallow up half of the government's income in 2024, according to the IMF. Analysts have criticized Islamabad's measures as surface-level reforms aimed at courting the IMF without addressing underlying problems. "It is hard to not see old patterns in this new IMF deal," said Ali Hasanain, associate professor of economics at the Lahore University of Management Sciences. —AFP



SHANGHAI: People looking for employment gather at an informal roadside labor exchange in Shanghai. — AFP

Emerging market capital inflows rose in 2023: IMF

WASHINGTON: The International Monetary Fund on Friday said gross capital inflows into emerging markets excluding China last year rose to \$110 billion or 0.6 percent of their economic output, the highest level since 2018. The findings, part of the IMF's External Sector Report on currencies, capital flows and financial imbalances, show some resilience among emerging markets despite sharply higher US interest rates that have drawn funds into dollar assets. The IMF said in the report that emerging markets

have seen a decline in the more volatile net portfolio inflows, but net inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI) has been more stable.

"This is partly because of stronger fundamentals," the IMF said in a blog posting accompanying the report. "Indeed, many countries are now benefiting from more robust fiscal, monetary and financial policy frameworks, as well as more effective implementation of policies and tools. At the same time, the report said that China saw net capital outflows over the 2022-2023 period, including net negative FDI inflows. "Some of this may reflect multinational firms repatriating earnings. But it also may reflect shifting expectations about Chinese growth and geo-economic fragmentation," the IMF said.

Overall, global gross capital inflows declined to 4.4 percent of global GDP, or \$4.2 trillion, in the 2022-2023 period, from 5.8 percent of global GDP, or \$4.5

trillion, in 2017-2019. The IMF said this partly reflects a retrenchment of capital flows, with foreigners buying fewer local assets and residents buying fewer assets abroad. But the US benefited strongly from the shifts, accounting for 41 percent of global gross inflows during the 2022-2023 period, nearly double its 23 percent share in 2017-2019. The US share of global gross outflows also increased, to 21 percent from 14 percent during the same periods. This may reflect increased financial fragmentation, but it also may reflect an unwinding of some tax and regulatory strategies by large multinational corporations.

The report also showed that the US dollar's real effective exchange rate was overvalued relative to US GDP by a median of 5.8 percent in 2023. The euro was undervalued by 1.7 percent, the yen was overvalued by 1.7 percent and the yuan was overvalued by 0.7 percent, the report showed. — Reuters

Business

Burgan Bank celebrates graduation of 30 employees from its top training programs

Bank underlines its steadfast commitment to human capital development strategy

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank recently celebrated 30 of its most aspiring employees across different professional levels for completing two of the bank's most notable training programs: "Entelaqah program" alongside the "Investment and Wealth Management program". The graduation ceremony was held at the Bank's head office in the presence of Burgan's top management. The Bank's continued efforts to develop tailored training programs for its employees and its commitment to celebrating the achievements of its driven and aspiring graduates is a testament to Burgan's determination to invest in its human capital and advance Kuwait's pool of professional talents.

In light of the graduation ceremony, Fatma Ahmad, Acting Senior Manager – Learning and Development at Burgan Bank, stated: "We are very proud of our talented staff members for graduating from two of Burgan's prestigious training programs. Our graduates exhibited an unmatched commitment to the Burgan spirit of dedication, ownership, and eagerness for knowledge throughout the training programs, which adds to our longstanding confidence that each of our graduates will play vital roles in positively impacting their teams and relaying the true essence of the Burgan experience to their peers as well as customers."

She added: "In line with the Burgan's culture of excellence and continuous learning and as part of our dedicated human capital development strategy, we continue to devote our resources to developing our wide range of tailored training programs that ca-



Fatma Ahmad, Acting Senior Manager Learning and Development at Burgan Bank.

ter to the evolving needs of our teams and the market. By constantly developing and upgrading our training programs to include the latest trends and technologies, we guarantee that our employees remain on a steady path of professional and personal growth and that Burgan Bank retains its market-leading position."

Among the 30 graduates, 15 completed the Entelaqah program, designed to match fresh graduates with the needs and pace of today's dynamic banking market and prepare them for entry-level positions across the Bank's retail branches. Meanwhile, 15 were enrolled in the advanced Investment and Wealth Management program, tailored to equip the more qualified employees with the latest financial investment and wealth management knowledge and trends. Despite the



The Entelaqah program graduates.

notable dedication of all 30 graduates, two graduates, Mr. Faisal Al Rashed from the Investment and Wealth Management program and Manar Al-Shayea from the Entelaqah program, were recognized for their outstanding achievements and exemplary adoption of the Burgan values.

It serves to note that, as a certified Great Place to Work, Burgan Bank remains one of the most committed institutions to offering its employees across all departments and grades numerous opportunities for growth and development, which stems from its mission to become

an employer of choice and lead with innovation. The Bank also acknowledges the variations in individual learning preferences and accordingly develops a range of different learning materials that its staff can consume through various channels and at a convenient pace.

EU to push at COP29 for follow-up on deal to curb fossil fuels

BRUSSELS: The European Union will pressure other countries at this year's COP29 climate summit to follow through on their pledge to transition away from fossil fuels, a draft of the bloc's negotiating position seen by Reuters showed. This year's United Nations climate summit in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November, is set to focus on finance, with large economies like the 27-country EU under pressure to agree to commit more money to help poorer nations cope with climate change.

The draft seen by Reuters, which could change before EU countries finalize it in October, said the bloc hoped to reach a deal at COP29 on a new global target for climate funding. However, it showed Brussels will also have other demands - including that countries significantly step up their efforts to cut emissions by following through on the deal struck at last year's COP28 summit in Dubai to "transition away from fossil fuels".

All countries should work on new national climate pledges "aligned with the 1.5°C target and the energy transition goals that were agreed in Dubai, notably transitioning away from fossil fuels, while tripling renewable energy capacity and doubling annual energy efficiency gains by 2030", the draft said. Countries face an early 2025 deadline to submit new national climate pledges to the UN.

Preparatory UN climate talks last month yielded little progress on how countries would act on their agreement to move away from fossil fuels - with European nations and climate-vulnerable island states saying major oil and gas producers had blocked attempts to discuss this. The EU is currently the world's biggest contributor of climate finance. Brussels has said it plans to continue this support - but has argued bigger funding contributions must be paired with stronger actions by other countries to cut the CO2 emissions causing climate change. The EU is also set to push at COP29 for other major economies, like China, to contribute towards the UN climate finance goal, the document showed. — Reuters

China exports rise in June but imports slump

BEIJING: China's exports rose sharply in June while imports declined unexpectedly, official figures showed Friday, in further evidence that the world's second-largest economy is charting an uneven recovery. The customs department said overseas sales of products and services overseas surged 8.6 percent on-year, up from 7.6 percent in May and better than the eight percent forecast in a survey of analysts by Bloomberg.

Exports have historically served as an important economic engine in China, having a direct impact on employment for thousands of companies. June's reading marked a third consecutive rise, after a year-on-year decline in March. However, imports unexpect-

edly dropped 2.3 percent, the data showed, reversing May's 1.8 percent growth and much worse than the 2.5 percent expected.

"This reflects the economic condition in China, with weak domestic demand and strong production capacity relying on exports," Zhiwei Zhang, President and Chief Economist at Pinpoint Asset Management, said in a note. "The sustainability of strong exports is a major risk for China's economy in the second half of the year," he added.

Officials are grappling with a real estate debt crisis, weakening consumption, an ageing population and geopolitical tensions overseas. And the latest figures come ahead of a key meeting of leaders in Beijing next week, with all eyes on how they might kickstart lackluster growth.

That meeting will kick off the same day that China is expected to release its economic growth figures for the second quarter. Economists at Goldman Sachs also said that "with healthy ex-China



LIANYUNGANG, China: Cranes load and unload shipping containers at a port in Lianyungang, in eastern China's Jiangsu province on July 12, 2024. — AFP

demand and Chinese products extremely competitive, exports are likely to stay strong in coming months".

But they warned of "downside risks to exports in 2025 and 2026"

if former US president Donald Trump is re-elected in November and slaps "large tariffs on all imports of Chinese goods, as he has suggested in recent months". — AFP

India probe says Apple policies hurt developers

NEW DELHI: An investigation by India's antitrust body has found that Apple exploited its dominant position in the market for app stores on its iOS operating system, engaging "in abusive conduct and practices", a confidential report seen by Reuters showed. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has been investigating Apple Inc since 2021 for possibly abusing its dominant position in the apps market by forcing developers to use its proprietary in-app purchase system.

Apple has denied wrongdoing saying it was a small player in India where phones that use Google's Android system are dominant. The CCI's investigations unit, in its 142-page report which is not public but was seen by Reuters, said Apple wields "significant influence" over how digital products and services reach consumers, especially through its iOS platform and App Store.

"Apple App Store is an unavoidable trading partner for app developers, and resultantly, app developers have no choice but to adhere to Apple's unfair terms, including the mandatory use of Apple's proprietary billing and payment system,"

the CCI unit said in the June 24 report. "From the perspective of app developers, Apple iOS ecosystem is indispensable."

Apple and the CCI did not respond to requests for comment. The Indian investigation report comes as Apple faces increased antitrust scrutiny in other regions. In June, European Union antitrust regulators said Apple breached the bloc's tech rules, which could result in a hefty fine for the iPhone maker. The company also faces an investigation into new fees imposed on app developers.

In January, in response to a new EU law called the Digital Markets Act, Apple outlined plans to allow software developers to distribute their apps to users in the European Union outside of Apple's own App Store. The CCI report is the most critical stage of the Indian investigation and it will now be reviewed by the watchdog's senior officials.

Apple and other parties will be allowed to respond before a final decision is reached, which could include monetary fines as well as directives to change business practices.

The Indian case was first filed by a little-known, non-profit group called "Together We Fight Society" which argued Apple's in-app fee of up to 30 percent hurts competition by raising costs for app developers and customers. Later, a group of Indian startups, Alliance of Digital India Foundation, and Tinder-owner Match filed similar cases at the CCI against Apple, which were all heard together. The CCI investigation team said in its report that no third-party payment

processor was being permitted by Apple to provide the services for in-app purchases.

It added that in most cases the apps are also not being allowed to include any external links that direct customers to other purchasing mechanisms, violating Indian competition laws. Apple's iOS powered about 3.5 percent of 690 million smartphones in India as of mid-2024, with the rest using Android, according to Counterpoint Research, though it adds Apple's smartphone base in the country has become five times larger in the last five years.

In its submissions to the CCI, Apple argued its market share in India is an "insignificant" 0-5 percent, while Google commands 90-100 percent. The company also argued that the in-app payment system allowed it to maintain and develop the safety of its App Store. But the CCI said, "App stores are OS (operating system) specific and Apple's App store is the sole App store available for reaching iOS users."

"The payment policy of Apple adversely affects the app developers, users and other payment processors," it said. The CCI report showed it considered comments from many companies including Microsoft, Uber and Amazon during its Apple investigation.

Google too has faced CCI's heat for its in-app payments mechanism. In October 2022, the CCI imposed a \$113 million fine on Google and said it must allow the use of third-party billing and stop forcing developers to use its in-app payment system. Google has challenged the decision. — Reuters

Yen rally triggers rumor of Japan forex intervention

TOKYO: A surge in the yen triggered speculation among analysts on Friday that Japanese authorities may have again intervened in forex markets to prop up the ailing currency. In New York, the dollar shed more than two percent against the Japanese unit, which has been on a downwards slide for months and in late June hit its weakest value since 1986.

The sharp move came after data showed the US consumer price index (CPI) -- a key gauge of

inflation—came in lower than anticipated in June. "I haven't had any confirmation, and we don't in these things, but we strongly suspect the hand of the Bank of Japan there," Ray Attrill at National Australia Bank said.

The "outsized move" makes it "fairly inconceivable that it hasn't had a helping hand", he added on Friday's "NAB Morning Call" podcast. Between late April and late May, Japan's finance ministry spent 9.79 trillion yen (\$61 billion) to prop up the yen—the first time it had done so since October 2022.

The ministry releases data on forex interventions at the end of each month.

Japan's top currency diplomat Masato Kanda told reporters late Thursday that authorities "are not in a position to comment on whether they intervened in the market", according to

public broadcaster NHK. "Objectively speaking, there have been quite rapid fluctuations, which has affected people's lives," Kanda said. The Japanese currency has cratered from around 115 per dollar before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

The plunge is due in part to the Bank of Japan's policy of maintaining ultra-low interest rates to support the economy, while other central banks have hiked theirs. Charu Chanana, head of FX strategy at Saxo Markets, told AFP that "the pronounced move in the yen appears to be coming on the back of combined impact from US inflation and intervention by Japanese authorities". "There seems to be a new playbook for Japanese interventions, coming in along with supportive fundamentals, making the strength in yen somewhat more durable," Chanana said. — AFP



TOKYO: An electronic board displays the Nikkei average closing price at 41,190.68 down 1,033 yen, the biggest drop this year, on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo on July 12, 2024. — AFP

Business

Modi departs from privatization plans, to overhaul state-run firms

Privatization faces challenges after reduced electoral majority: Report

NEW DELHI: India plans to overhaul more than 200 state-run firms to make them more profitable, signaling a departure from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aggressive privatization program that has struggled to take off, government sources said.

The program to privatize a major portion of India's lumbering \$600 billion state sector announced in 2021, had slowed ahead of the general election in April-May and now faces more resistance after Modi lost his majority in parliament and had to rely on coalition allies to return to office.

Expected to be unveiled as part of the annual budget on July 23 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the new plans include selling large parcels of underutilized land owned by these companies and monetization of other assets, said two officials who are aware of the policy. Some aspects are yet to be fine-tuned, they added.

The aim is to raise \$24 billion in the current April-March fiscal year and re-invest the funds in the companies, while setting five-year performance and production targets for each company, instead of short-term targets. The plans to overhaul state firms have not been reported previously.

The officials declined to be identified as they were not authorized to speak on confidential deliberations. The finance ministry did not respond to requests for comment. In an interim budget presented before the election, the government did not provide any figures on stake sales for the first time in more than a decade.

"The government is shifting focus from indiscriminate asset sales to enhancing intrinsic value of state-owned companies," said one of the officials. Among other plans, the government intends to introduce succession planning in majority-owned companies alongside a proposal to train 230,000 managers across firms to prepare them for senior roles, the officials said.

Currently, the government appoints top executives in state-owned companies. The government

is likely to implement a plan that includes training of managers, professional recruitment to company boards and incentives for high performance from the 2025/26 fiscal year, with the expectation that increased autonomy would make companies more competitive. The 2021 announcement to sell most state-run companies included two banks, one insurance company and firms in steel, energy and pharmaceutical sectors besides closure of loss-making companies.

But India has been able to only complete the sale of debt-ridden Air India to the Tata Group, while rolling back plans to sell some others. Only a 3.5 percent stake in LIC has been sold besides shares in few other companies. Hardeep Puri, India's oil minister, said last week a plan to sell state-owned Bharat Petroleum Corp was no longer on the table as the company was making almost as much profit in a year as the price it was to be sold for.

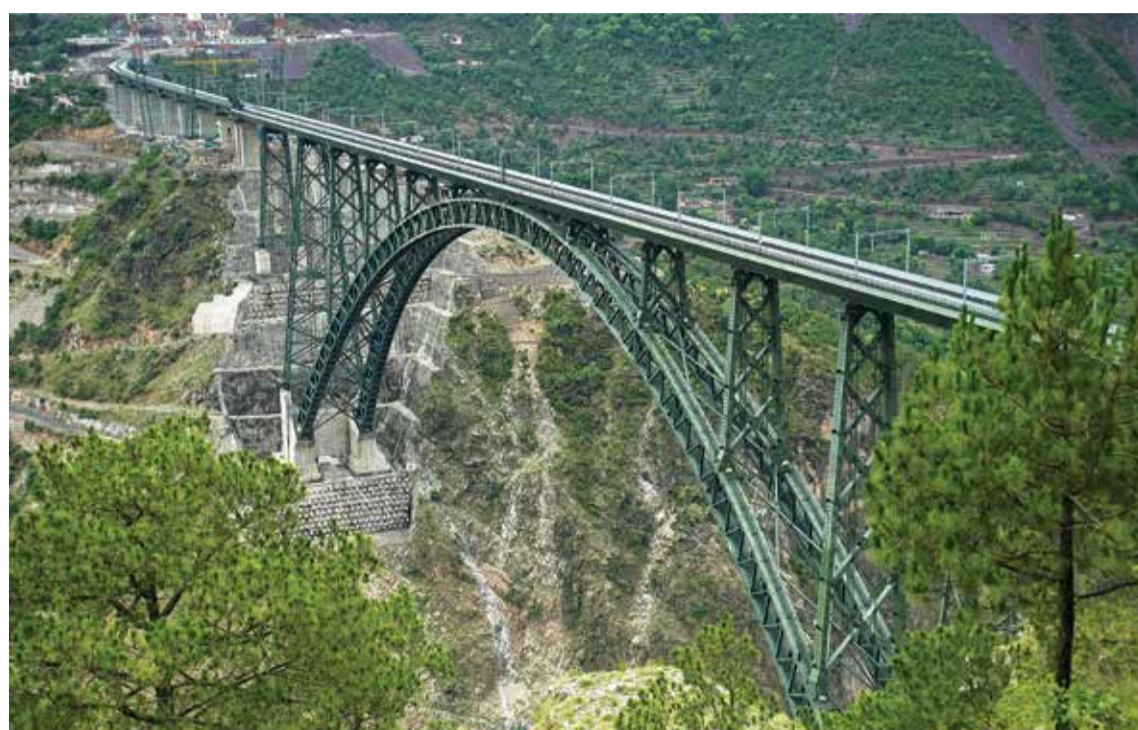
Sunil Sinha, chief economist at India Ratings, the local arm of Fitch ratings agency, said the sale of government companies, marred by allegations of "selling family silver" at a cheaper price, would be difficult to push after Modi's reduced majority in parliament.

"This (privatization) can actually snowball into a political slugfest...recouping it may become very difficult and they may have to pay a political price for it."

Despite hurdles in privatization and stake sales, the overall market valuation of state-run firms has more than doubled in the past one year on hopes of reforms in the sector.

The BSE PSU index, which tracks state-owned companies, has surged over 100 percent in the last one year, outperforming the benchmark BSE Index's 22 percent rise. "We find the valuations of many PSU stocks to be quite bizarre, when compared with their fundamentals," Sanjeev Prasad of Kotak Institutional Equities said in a note.

"Some of these companies will require extraordinary assumptions and a massive turnaround in their



A general view of Chenab bridge, the world's highest rail arch bridge in Reasi, Jammu and Kashmir on July 6, 2024. — AFP

operations (and financials) to justify their current market caps." But the government views the market's response as a mark of investor confidence, said a senior official at the NMDC, India's state-run iron ore company. Looking ahead, the government expects its reforms would translate into higher profits and, subsequently, increased returns for the state, the official said.

State firms were expected to pay substantially higher dividends to the government, compared to earlier estimates of 480 billion rupees (\$5.8 billion) in 2024/25, said the second government source.

Analysts however said India risked missing the opportunity to cash in on the booming valuations of state companies. The government could raise about 11.5 trillion rupees (\$137.75 billion) at current market capitalization by selling minority stakes in state-owned companies, while maintaining 51 percent stake, CareEdge Ratings said in a note last week.

"The conclusion of the election season, combined with stock market hovering around all-time highs, provides a perfect opportunity to advance some significant divestment initiatives," said Rajani Sinha, chief economist, CareEdge Ratings. — Reuters

PPP benefits and limitations

By Hassan Abdulrahim

In the first section of this guide, we have addressed some important issues concerning public-private partnership (PPP) as an approach to infrastructure development, namely we have introduced the concept of PPP, discussed both economic and social infrastructures, cleared up the confusion regarding the notions of PPP and privatization, and finally we have highlighted the difference between PPP and traditional infrastructure procurement (TIP).

In this section we go further by showing the benefits and limitations of PPPs.

Benefits and limitations of PPPs

PPP have several benefits for both the public and private sectors. At the same time, PPPs suffer from a number of limitations, which we, at Visionary Consulting Co, believe they can be, to a great extent, mitigated. PPPs have benefits for both public and private sectors, however, they are not free of challenges. Benefits Attracting Private Capital: Due to budget constraints, many projects fail to qualify as a government priority using TIP approach. Capitalizing on private capital, local or international, might make it possible to implement such projects using the PPP model.

In fact, one of the primary reasons governments are increasingly considering the PPP approach is to attract private capital. PPP is viewed as a viable means to finance projects that would not otherwise be feasible due to fiscal limitations. PPP projects are however not free, as the private sector needs a return out of its investment through either availability payments (government-pays PPPs), fees charged to the user of the services (user-pays PPPs) or the development of additional revenues that can be generated from the public asset such as renting shops, hotels, car parks and so on in an airport project. Consequently, using a PPP structure would provide a sort of financial relief for the government.

Realization of efficiency gains

PPP in most infrastructure projects can offer significant efficiency gains compared to TIPs. The gains accrue from allocating to the private sector those risks that are better handled by them than the public sector, such as those associated with construction costs. In fact, a key motivation for employing a PPP model is the realization of efficiency gains through improved project delivery, operation, and management as well as access to technology. The goal is to improve the quality of a public service delivery by taking advantage of private sector efficiency, resources, and expertise.

Long-term solutions

The creation of long-term solutions for the provision of public infrastructure through tackling issues such as inferior construction quality and inadequate maintenance. Certainly, being responsible for operating an asset for twenty years, the private sector will make sure that the asset is built properly. On the other hand, as the private partner's payment (by the public partner) is under risk of nonpayment or deduction should the asset fail to meet performance standards, then this private partner needs to ensure that sufficient resources to asset main-

tenance are allocated. Further, PPP models create incentives to reduce the life-cycle costs of assets. For instance, in a highway project, let's assume that there are two options to build the road.

With the first option, construction will be cheaper initially, but maintenance costs would be higher over the long-term. The second option might be more expensive in terms of construction but will have lower maintenance costs over the long run. In a PPP project, the private partner will select the second option, because it integrates maintenance cost implications into the overall project design and will be the cheapest alternative over the lifetime of the asset.

Risk transfer

This is a fundamental benefit, to the public partner, of the PPP model which relates to the transfer of risk to the private sector. By transferring risk to the private sector, government finances are protected against the potential cost overruns that are often significant in public infrastructure projects. Indeed, risk sharing is a crucial element in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects. Ideally, each risk is borne by the party best equipped to manage it. The private sector often takes on construction and operation risk due to their expertise in these areas. Conversely, the public sector might retain risks like changes in law or unexpected social impacts. Sharing revenue risk is also common, where both public and private partners see financial benefits if the project exceeds expectations, and share the burden if it underperforms. This collaborative approach to risk allocation helps ensure a successful PPP project.

Limitations PPP suitability

PPP are not suitable for all types of projects, even in countries where PPPs have been promoted actively. Only a limited share of public projects has been pursued through these models. Due to their long-term nature, normally PPPs are not suitable in sectors with rapid changes, e.g. information technology, while they work better when there is a long-term and predictable need for infrastructure services. Therefore, the main question is whether we need the infrastructure to be operational for the next say 20 or 30 years, if the answer to this question is yes, then PPP might be the solution. Furthermore, certain projects in sensitive sites that are linked to national security, for instance, are not usually considered as a suitable PPP projects.

PPP complexity

The structural complexity of PPP projects can create high transaction costs. The project must be large enough to justify such high procurement costs. Consequently, some countries only consider a PPP model for projects with budgets above a certain threshold. Lack of Local Capacity: Lack of capacity of local companies to deliver these types of projects as they might not be sufficiently equipped to manage the risks related to a PPP project.

Political concerns

PPP can be sensitive from a political point of view. The public might feel that the government is being too generous with specific private sponsors. Further, the establishment of PPPs might entail the introduction of the "User-pay Principle" which can create public discontent. Certainly, strong political support is critical for the success of a PPP project.

Inflexibility

PPP structures might be relatively inflexible and poor at accommodating changes. For instance, it might be costly for the public entity to modify project specifications once the project has been awarded.

Note: Hassan Abdulrahim is senior instructor, Economics & Finance, at Canadian College Kuwait and Deputy CEO, Visionary Consulting Company

Wall St Week Ahead

US rate cuts loom as investors look beyond Big Tech

NEW YORK: Looming US interest rate cuts are presenting investors with a tough choice: stick with the Big Tech stocks that have driven returns for more than a year or turn to less-loved areas of the market that could benefit from easing monetary policy.

Owning massive tech and growth companies such as Nvidia, Microsoft and Amazon has been a hugely profitable strategy for investors since early 2023, even as the stocks' market dominance has drawn comparisons to the dot-com bubble of the late 1990s. That calculus may start to change following Thursday's surprisingly cool inflation report, which solidified expectations for a near-term rate cut by the Federal Reserve. Lower rates are seen as beneficial to many corners of the market whose performance has lagged this year, including small-caps, real estate and economically sensitive areas such as industrials.

Market action at the end of the week showed a nascent shift may have already begun. The tech-heavy Nasdaq suffered its biggest drop of the year on Thursday while the small-cap Russell had its best day of 2024. The Nasdaq 100 has gained about 21 percent this year while the Russell 2000 is up just 6 percent.

Also on Thursday, the equal-weight S&P 500 -- a proxy for the average stock in the benchmark index -- had its biggest relative gain since 2020 over the S&P 500, which is more heavily influenced by the largest tech and growth stocks. That chipped away at the huge advantage for the S&P 500, which remains up about 18 percent in 2024 against a 6.7 percent gain for the equal-weight index.

"The trade got too one-sided and we're seeing some reversal of this," said Walter Todd, chief investment officer at Greenwood Capital. Small caps and the equal-weight S&P 500 extended their gains on Friday even as tech stocks rebounded.

Investors cautioned that the moves could be a snap-back after the disparity in performance between tech and other market sectors reached extremes. Further, recent periods of market broadening have been short-lived: for example, small caps surged at the end of 2023, when investors believed

India's Congress asks Modi to tax billionaires more

NEW DELHI: India's main opposition Congress party asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday to impose an additional tax on the country's billionaires to generate funds for stretched public services like education and health. The annual budget will be presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on July 23 at a time of deepening income inequality and high unemployment despite India's world-beating economic growth of nearly 8 percent and booming stock markets.

Jairam Ramesh, senior Congress party leader, said in a post on X that a 2 percent tax on the wealth of India's estimated 167 billionaires could raise as much as 1.5 trillion rupees (\$18 billion) or about 0.5 percent of gross domestic product. "This could pay for schools, hospitals, renewable energy, and many more

rate cuts were imminent, only to lag in the following months. Still, there are reasons for optimism about the broadening trade. Fed fund futures on Friday were pricing in nearly 90 percent odds of a 25 basis point rate cut at the central bank's September meeting, according to CME FedWatch.

Smaller companies, including biotech firms that are heavily dependent on credit are among those that stand to benefit most from lower rates, said Matthew McAleer, president and director of private wealth at Cumberland Advisors. Industrial companies, which can rely on debt for capital intensive projects, also could be winners, McAleer said.

Equity valuations across the market could also become more attractive if bond yields continue falling as traders price in lower rates. Lower yields mean bonds offer less competition to equities while stock valuations improve in many analysts' models. The benchmark 10-year Treasury yield, which moves inversely to prices, was last around 4.2 percent, down some 50 basis points below April highs. The S&P 500 was recently trading at 21.4 times forward earnings, compared to a historical average of 15.7, according to LSEG Datastream.

"If we can start to stall (near 4 percent) ... I think you're going to see better breadth across multiple areas in the equity market," McAleer said.

Many are skeptical that investors will stay away from shares of megacap companies, which are expected to be more resilient in uncertain economic environments. Big Tech could be an appealing destination if the US economy starts to weaken more than expected after months of elevated interest rates, said Chuck Carlson, chief executive officer at Horizon Investment Services. Megacap tech stocks are also at the center of the artificial intelligence theme that has been exciting investors this year, said Rick Meckler, partner at Cherry Lane Investments.

"You could see ... a broadening of stock buying," Meckler said. "But I think as long as the AI thesis is dominating the market, it's going to be difficult for these stocks to drop significantly." Any sustained move away from megacaps could spell trouble due to their heavy weightings in indexes.

The S&P 500's year-to-date gains have been concentrated in stocks like Nvidia and Microsoft, and analysts have warned that any weakness in them could hurt the major indexes. If large cap tech stocks keep falling, "at some point, that will cause the entire market to decline," Matthew Maley, chief market strategist at Miller Tabak, said in a note on Friday. — Reuters



KOLKATA, India: A vegetable vendor waits for customers at a local market in Kolkata. — AFP

essential investments," he said, urging the government to tax the super-rich more.

Wealth concentrated in the hands of the richest 1 percent of India's population is at its greatest level for six decades and its percentage share of national income exceeds that of countries including Brazil and the United States, research group the World Inequality Lab reported earlier this year. — Reuters

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2024



US actor Alec Baldwin and his wife Hilaria Baldwin embrace during his trial.



Special prosecutor Kari Morrissey speaks to the press after US actor Alec Baldwin's trial on involuntary manslaughter was dismissed by a judge.



US actor Stephen Baldwin and his sister Elizabeth Keuchler react during actor Alec Baldwin's trial.

Judge tosses Alec Baldwin manslaughter case over withheld evidence

Alec Baldwin's trial for involuntary manslaughter collapsed in spectacular fashion Friday as a judge found key evidence over a fatal shooting on the set of "Rust" had been withheld from the defense, and dismissed the case. Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer, presiding over the trial in Santa Fe, New Mexico, said bullets potentially linked to the death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins that could have been favorable to Baldwin's case had not been shared with his lawyers by police and prosecutors.

The Hollywood A-listers immediately burst into tears, as the case -- which could have seen him sentenced to 18 months in prison if found guilty -- was abruptly tossed out in sensational scenes. "The state's willful withholding of this information was intentional and deliberate. If this conduct does not rise to the level of bad faith, it certainly comes so near to bad faith as to show signs of scorching prejudice," said Marlowe Sommer.

"The court concludes that this conduct is highly prejudicial to the defendant." Baldwin was holding a gun in the



US actor Alec Baldwin hugs his attorney Alex Spiro at the conclusion of his trial on involuntary manslaughter at Santa Fe County District Court in Santa Fe, New Mexico. —AFP photos

direction of Hutchins during a rehearsal in October 2021 when the weapon fired, killing Hutchins and wounding the film's director.

The movie's armorer Hannah Gutierrez, who loaded the fatal weapon, is already serving 18 months in prison for involuntary manslaughter. Baldwin was

facing the same charge. Prosecutors claim he ignored basic gun safety laws and acted recklessly on set.

Baldwin's celebrity lawyer Alex Spiro argued the actor had no responsibility for checking the weapon's deadly contents and did not know it contained live rounds. But the defense's case also rested heavily on discrediting the police investigation. And Spiro on Thursday introduced evidence that live bullets potentially linked to the shooting had been handed to police, but not disclosed to Baldwin's lawyers.

'Buried'

The bullets were handed into police by a "Good Samaritan" earlier this year, more than two years after the "Rust" tragedy. The "Good Samaritan" was a former police officer and a family friend of Gutierrez, the armorer. He told police the bullets matched the rounds that killed Hutchins.

Spiro accused police of having "buried" evidence by not filing it under the "Rust" case, depriving the defense of a chance to see it. "Which was a perfect

plan," he told the court. Crime scene technician Marissa Poppell, under questioning from Spiro, said she had catalogued the bullets, but had been told not to file them under the "Rust" case. Special prosecutor Kari Morrissey scrambled to respond, telling the court she had never seen or heard of the bullets before this week.

But when it emerged that Morrissey had been present for discussions in which it was decided not to submit the bullets into the "Rust" case file, Morrissey voluntarily called herself as a witness in a last-ditch attempt to salvage the state's case.

She claimed the allegedly "buried" bullets did not match the live rounds on the set of "Rust," and had been stored in a different state, Arizona, up to the day of the tragic shooting. Marlowe Sommer was not convinced and dismissed the case, prompting the emotional scenes among Baldwin and his family.

'Dumbfounded'

Baldwin is highly unlikely to see the inside of a criminal court again over the

shooting, legal experts said, though he could still face civil suits. "As far as the criminal proceedings, it's over. They can't refile," said Los Angeles lawyer Tre Lovell.

"It's been dismissed with prejudice. To try to do it again would be double jeopardy. You can't do that." University of Richmond law professor Carl Tobias agreed that "on the criminal side, I think it's done." "The prosecutors could try to somehow mount an extraordinary appeal. But I don't think any appellate court is going to agree with the prosecutor," he said.

The withheld evidence could benefit Gutierrez, the film's armorer who has already launched an appeal, and David Halls, the movie's first assistant director who took a plea deal and admitted negligence. Christopher Melcher, a Los Angeles-based attorney, told AFP he was "dumbfounded" by the case's sudden collapse. "The case unfolded as quickly as I've ever seen a case... It was just absolutely amazing to watch." —AFP

In South Africa, Madiba shirts keep Mandela's legacy alive

In his workshop stocked with piles of fabric and sewing machines, Sonwabile Ndamase is proud that the Madiba shirts he designed for Nelson Mandela 30 years ago endure as a legacy of South Africa's first democratically elected leader. Worn untucked and without a jacket, the loose Madiba shirts remain a favorite among South African politicians, making a statement 10 years after Mandela's death.

Madiba is the clan name by which Mandela is known in South Africa. Ndamase's clients include South Africa's current president, Cyril Ramaphosa, as well as his predecessors, Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma. The country's political and business elite — including ministers, government spokesmen and local politicians — regularly place orders.

Even former US president Bill Clinton and boxing great Mike Tyson have a Madiba shirt. "Anybody who wants to live a Mandela legacy or who wants to live Mandela ethos in life, guess what they are doing? They will go and pick up Madiba shirts," Ndamase told AFP.

The jovial 64-year-old designer recalls when he was contacted by Winnie Mandela soon after the apartheid government released her husband from prison in 1990. Having spent 27 years in jail, the hero of the fight against white-minority rule and South Africa's soon-to-be president needed new clothes. Ndamase met Mandela in his home Johannesburg's Soweto. "He started to tell me that he wanted something that could look conservative enough for him to go and address the captains of industry and... then also to address the masses without hav-



A general view of some of the latest designs of Sonwabile Ndamase.

ing to change," he said.

Mandela wanted a style that would make him stand out among other statesmen and did not require a tie. The self-taught designer came up with the loose-fitting, casual-but-smart silk shirts with bold patterns that are associated with Mandela even after his death in 2013 at the age of 95.

The shirts often feature oriental-style patterns. Some boast deep colors such as burgundy, dark grey and royal blue, with playful designs; others are of cooler, tan hues, depicting elements from nature like leaves or twigs. All are recognizable as the signature Mandela look. It is a style that Ndamase, who suffered a mild stroke in March 2024, is passing on to a new generation of garment-makers.

A legacy collection

The jocular designer — whose perfect impersonation of Mandela is a testament to their time spent together — is taking his know-how to New York in September when he will host a masterclass for young designers. On the same trip, he will showcase his Vukani brand's new collection at an event for celebrity and elite buyers that will pay tribute to the 30 years of democracy since South Africa's first all-race election in 1994. The collection takes on a more casual, loungewear aesthetic, a breakaway from his usual style, Ndamase said. The occasion will feature in a documentary by a US-based filmmaker about his career.

Sporting a grey goatee, Ndamase laughs off the many other designers who claim to have pioneered the Madiba shirt or sell versions resembling his own, which today cost around 1,800 rand (\$90) apiece. Once described by the late Winnie Mandela as "part of the furniture", he says never wanted to use the Mandela name commercial purposes. "I dressed one generation to another," he said. "The relationship I had was a family relationship." Born in the Mdantsane township on the southeastern coast, Ndamase still spends time behind the sewing machine in his Johannesburg workshop. "It's a dream come true," he said, squinting at shirt he is working on. "It's a legacy collection," he said, pointing to a T-shirt from the new range that is emblazoned "BE THE LEGACY" and features a famous silhouette of Nelson and Winnie Mandela walking free in 1990. —AFP



Sonwabile Ndamase, who used to design and style for the late former President of South Africa Nelson Mandela and the designer of the original Madiba shirt, shows some of his latest designs in his studio.



A still frame obtained in December 1981 from the musical comedy live-action film adaptation of "Popeye," shows US actor Robin Williams (left) playing Popeye, and US actress Shelley Duvall playing Olive on the set of the film shot in Malta. —AFP photos

'The Shining' actor Shelley Duvall dies aged 75

Shelley Duvall, the versatile actor known for her role in "The Shining" and working relationship with director Robert Altman, died Thursday aged 75. Citing her partner Dan Gilroy, The Hollywood Reporter said Duvall died in her sleep at her home in Blanco, Texas following complications of diabetes. Born July 7, 1949 in Fort Worth, Texas, Duvall was discovered by Altman -- the maverick filmmaker known for his rich characters, sharp social criticism and keen satire -- who cast her in 1970's dark comedy "Brewster McCloud."

The saucer-eyed actor developed a broad repertoire, breaking through with 1975's "Nashville," and going on to portray memorable and eccentric characters that earned her a smattering of awards including at Cannes for her role in the acclaimed 1977 drama "3 Women." Her career was defined by her work with Altman, who she said she kept working with because "he offers me damn good roles." "None of them have been alike," she told The New York Times in 1977. "He has a great confidence in me, and a trust and respect for me, and he doesn't put any restrictions on me or intimidate me, and I love him."

'Annie Hall'

But it was her role in the film adaptation of Stephen King's "The Shining" that would become one of her highest profile roles, as she played opposite Jack Nicholson. Director Stanley Kubrick put her through the ringer to perform the part of Wendy Torrance in the horror classic that sees a writer husband descend into homicidal madness and terrorize his wife and young son. Duvall told People in 1981 the 13-month job was grueling, and that Kubrick had her "crying 12 hours a day

for weeks on end." "I will never give that much again. If you want to get into pain and call it art, go ahead, but not with me."

In one famous scene Nicholson's character tortures Duvall's with a baseball bat, which reportedly took 127 takes to satisfy Kubrick. Duvall also made a cameo in 1977's "Annie Hall" by Woody Allen, and played opposite Robin Williams in Altman's 1980 live-action rendition of "Popeye." Later in the 1980s she made her way into children's programming. Gilroy -- a musician who was part of the Breakfast Club and had dated Madonna -- was her longtime partner after the pair met on the 1990 Disney Channel Movie "Mother Goose Rock 'n' Rhyme." "My dear, sweet, wonderful life partner and friend left us. Too much suffering lately, now she's free. Fly away, beautiful Shelley," The Hollywood Reporter quoted Gilroy as saying. —AFP



US actress Shelley Duvall received Best actress Prize for the film "3 Women" by Robert Altman, 27 May 1977 during the Cannes International Film Festival.



Billionaire tycoon and Chairman of Reliance Industries Mukesh Ambani poses for photos before the wedding ceremony of his son Anant Ambani (left) and Radhika Merchant in Mumbai on July 12, 2024.—AFP photos



Anant Ambani son of billionaire tycoon and Chairman of Reliance Industries Mukesh Ambani (unseen) with his fiancée Radhika Merchant pose for a picture during their Sangeet Ceremony in Mumbai.



Anant Ambani (left), son of billionaire tycoon and Chairman of Reliance Industries Mukesh Ambani, and his mother Nita Ambani (right) arrive for his wedding ceremony in Mumbai on July 12, 2024.

WEDDING PARTY RESUMES FOR SON OF ASIA'S RICHEST MAN



Bollywood actors Sidharth Malhotra and his wife Kiara Advani pose for photos.



Bollywood actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan (right) poses with her daughter Aaradhya.



Bollywood actor Ranbir Kapoor (left) with his wife and actress Alia Bhatt



Billionaire tycoon and Chairman of Reliance Industries Mukesh Ambani (center) with his daughter Isha Ambani (second right), son Akash Ambani (left), daughter-in-law Shloka Mehta (second left), and son-in-law Anand Piramal pose for photos during the wedding ceremony of Anant Ambani and his fiancée Radhika Merchant in Mumbai on July 12, 2024.—AFP photos

“Great wedding!” China’s ambassador to India Xu Feihong wrote on social media platform X along with footage of the couple from inside the venue.

“Best wishes to the new couple and double happiness!” This weekend’s celebrations end Sunday with a reception party and cap months of extravagant pre-wedding parties.

Earlier events this year included a party at the Ambanis’ ancestral home where a purpose-built Hindu temple was unveiled, and private performances by R&B star Rihanna

and Canada’s Justin Bieber.

Guests at that gala included Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and former US president Donald Trump’s daughter Ivanka, along with a who’s who of India’s sporting and entertainment worlds.

In June, the couple embarked on a four-day Mediterranean cruise along with 1,200 guests, with singer Katy Perry performing at a masquerade ball at a French chateau in Cannes.

The Backstreet Boys, US rapper Pitbull and Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli also provided entertainment.



Bollywood actress Rekha



Britain's Former Prime Minister Tony Blair (left) with his wife Cherie Blair.



Bollywood playback singer Asha Bhosle



Bollywood actress Vidya Balan



Bollywood actress Juhi Chawla



Bollywood actress Disha Patani



Indian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas and her husband American singer-songwriter and actor Nick Jonas



Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan with his wife Gauri Khan



Bollywood actor Hrithik Roshan



Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt (second right) poses with his wife Maanyata (second left) and their children Iqra (left) and Shahaan.



Indian actor Rajinikanth (left) and his family members pose for photos.



Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan



Bollywood actor Arjun Kapoor



Bollywood actors Amitabh Bachchan (third left), Jaya Bachchan (second left), Shweta Bachchan (center) her daughter Navya Nanda Naveli (left), her son Agastya Nanda (third right), Nikhil Nanda (Shweta's husband) (second right) and Abhishek Bachchan pose for photos as they arrive to attend the wedding ceremony of Anant Ambani.



FIFA president Gianni Infantino (third right) poses with wife Leena Al Ashqar (second right) and others.



Chief Executive Officer of Serum Institute of India Adar Poonawalla (second left), his wife Natasha Poonawalla (right) and their children.

\$123 billion fortune

Anant's father Mukesh is chairman of Reliance Industries, a family-founded conglomerate that has grown into India's biggest company by market cap. The patriarch is the world's 11th richest person with a fortune of more than \$123 billion, according to Forbes, and is no stranger to making a statement when it comes to family marriages. He held the most expensive wedding in India to date for his daughter in 2018, which reportedly cost \$100 million and saw US singer Beyonce perform.

The family's lucrative interests include retail partnerships with Armani and other luxury brands, more than 40 percent of India's mobile phone market and an Indian Premier League cricket team.

His 27-floor family home Antilia is one of Mumbai's most prominent landmarks, reportedly costing more than \$1 billion to build and with a permanent staff of 600 servants. Merchant is the daughter of well-known pharmaceutical moguls. —AFP



Bollywood actress Madhuri Dixit



Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor



Indian music composer and singer AR Rahman (right) poses with his wife



Bollywood actor Sanjay Kapoor and his wife



Indian cricket players Ishan Kishan (left), Krunal Pandya (second left) with his wife and Hardik Pandya (right).



Indian cricket player Yuzvendra Chahal (left) poses with his wife Dhanashree Verma



Former Indian cricketer Gautam Gambhir (left) poses for photos with his wife Natasha Jain.



Indian cricket player Jasprit Bumrah (right) poses with his wife Sanjana Ganesan



Indian cricket player Suryakumar Yadav (right) poses with his wife Devisha Shetty



Bollywood actor Riteish Deshmukh with his wife and actress Genelia D'Souza (left)



Indian actor Ram Charan poses with his wife Upasana Kamineni



Bollywood actor Salman Khan



Bollywood actor Rajkumar Rao with his wife Patralekha



Indo-Canadian rapper Amritpal Singh Dhillon aka AP Dhillon.



Indian cricket player KL Rahul (left) poses with wife and actress Athiwa Shetty



Former Indian cricket player Mahendra Singh Dhoni with his wife Sakshi Singh.



Bollywood actor Vicky Kaushal (right) with his wife and actress Katrina Kaif



Hollywood actor John Cena



Bollywood actress Ananya Panday



Bollywood film producer, director Karan Johar



Bollywood actor Anil Kapoor

Sports

All Blacks claim series 2-0

Barrett inspires New Zealand fightback

AUCKLAND: Beauden Barrett came off the bench to inspire a New Zealand fightback Saturday as the All Blacks came from behind in the second half to beat England 24-17 and claim the series 2-0 in Auckland. Wing Mark Tele'a scored two tries, one each half, and Damian McKenzie slotted four penalties as the All Blacks survived a scare for the second week in a row as they kept their 30-year unbeaten record at Eden Park intact.

Just like in the 16-15 first Test win at Dunedin, New Zealand had to wrestle back the lead after half-time from Steve Borthwick's spirited young England side. "Hugely proud of the boys to hold on and win the arm wrestle and finish off a good performance," said New Zealand captain Scott Barrett. "Test matches certainly challenge your character and we had to dig deep there, right till the last minute."

England's Borthwick was full of praise for his new-look side who pushed the All Blacks all the way in both Tests "Immense effort and rightly proud. Team is progressing and we still have work to do but we have taken a step forward," said Borthwick. "You can't buy experience. We are a young side. They have around 300 caps more than us." Fly-half Marcus Smith had an outstanding first half as he led the visitors to a 14-13 half-time lead.

Two pin-point cross-field kicks freed tries for wings Tommy Freeman and Immanuel Feyi-Waboso and Smith also made a try-saving interception. "For me it was just the small moments. Eden Park is a historic place and we had the belief we could do something special," Smith told Sky Sports. "It was probably the small moments - a touch at the breakdown, a few wrong decisions on the edges from myself - that

turned the tie in the All Blacks' favour. "On another day we get the result here or the result last week."

'We found a way'

After a breathless opening spell, the All Blacks took the lead when Tele'a caught the England defence napping from a ruck to dart over. All Blacks fly-half Damian McKenzie landed the conversion, but England hit back and began to dominate possession and territory. Smith kicked wide into the arms of Feyi-Waboso, who stepped inside the defense for a converted try.

New Zealand should have had a second try when Tele'a broke away, but Smith intercepted the final pass to Stephen Perofeta on the England tryline. McKenzie landed a penalty, but Smith quickly took the kick-off to pin the All Blacks deep in their own half, where they stayed for the next 15 minutes. McKenzie stroked over another penalty, but England led at half-time after Freeman leapt over Tele'a to haul in Smith's kick and touch down.

The England number 10 successfully converted from the touchline. England started the second-half camped in the All Blacks half and Smith extended the lead to 17-13 with a penalty. "They boxed us in the corner and we couldn't get out," said New Zealand coach Scott Robertson. "That's not All Black standard, but we still found a way." With half an hour left, scrum-half Cortez Ratima came on to make his All Blacks debut for a dazed Finlay Christie but it was the introduction of Beauden Barrett that swung the momentum back to New Zealand.

The twice world player of the year showed his class and experience, relieving the pressure with



AUCKLAND: England's Freddie Steward (2nd left) and New Zealand's Beauden Barrett (2nd right) chase a loose ball during the second Test rugby match between New Zealand and England at Eden Park in Auckland on July 13, 2024. — AFP

calm handling, line-breaking runs and tactical kicking. He created the try that restored the lead for New Zealand when he scythed through a gap to put Tele'a over. McKenzie missed the conversion, but land-

ed two more penalties. "I think we're a significantly better team than we when we started," said England captain Jamie George. "There's hugely exciting times ahead for this English team." — AFP



MELBOURNE: Australia's Filipo Daugunu scores a try during the second Test rugby union match between Australia and Wales at AAMI Park in Melbourne on July 13, 2024. — AFP

Resurgent Australia pile more misery on Wales with a win

MELBOURNE: A resurgent Wallabies earned their first back-to-back Test wins since 2021 on Saturday with a hard-fought 36-28 victory over Wales, who extended their horror run to nine straight defeats. Filipo Daugunu scored twice with Jake Gordon and Allan Alaalatoa also crossing on a wet and cold Melbourne night to back up their 25-16 triumph in Sydney a week ago. They took a 23-14 lead into the break and withstood intense second-half pressure and a series of handling errors to seal the series 2-0 and give new coach Joe Schmidt the second win of his tenure.

"It was tough, bit of relief at the end there," said Wallabies skipper James Slipper. "It was scrappy from us for sure, it wasn't our best game, but we got the result. There's plenty to work on though. "They are gritty, they hang in there, they played our kicking game really well tonight," he added. Defeat piled more pain on Warren Gatland's team which is now one loss away from equalling Wales' all-time record of 10 consecutive defeats, which came in 2002 and 2003 under another New Zealander, Steve Hansen.

They have slumped to 11th in the world rankings, below Fiji and Italy. Despite clawing back from 17-0 down after 25 minutes, they paid the price for conceding too many penalties and again lost the breakdown battle, sorely missing injured workhorse No.8 Aaron Wainwright. "We never gave up, we had a never-say-die attitude," said Wales captain Dewi Lake. "But obviously we are a young team and we don't have enough experience really at Test level. What matters is results and we are not giving ourselves those at the moment."

Tense finale

Taine Plumtree assumed Wainwright's role in the back row with James Botham, grandson of England cricket great Ian Botham, starting at blindside flanker and Tommy Reffell at openside. But they were immediately exposed as Australia scored inside seven minutes with a move that started from their own try line. Under pressure, wing Andrew Kellaway sidestepped the Welsh defense then collected his own chip before offloading to a charging Fraser McReight who powered up the field and found Daugunu to finish.

With the rain hammering down, they kept the pressure on with Lolesio making it 10-0 off the tee with a penalty. Daugunu made a try-saving tackle on Botham as Wales warmed to the task, but it was Australia who scored once more against the run of play. Scrum-half Gordon sent up a box kick and a handling error from fullback Cam Winnett allowed him to collect it and weave past two defenders to the try line. Undeterred, a well-worked rolling maul from the lineout saw Lake muscle over to get Wales on the board after half-an-hour.

With Australia's Lukhan Salakaia-Loto in the sin-bin he repeated the feat soon afterwards. Both tries were converted to get Wales back in the game at 20-14 and an early converted try to veteran winger Liam Williams in the second-half put the Wallabies on notice. But the hosts proved they too could work a rolling maul, with Alaalatoa powering over. Daugunu got his second after a schoolboy error from Williams, who tried to keep the ball in play from a Wallabies kick, only to palm it perfectly to a charging Daugunu who surged to the line. It gave Australia a 33-21 lead, but they went to sleep and Wales winger Rio Dyer smashed over in the corner to set up a tense finale. — AFP

Barbora Krejčíková secures Wimbledon women's title

LONDON: Barbora Krejčíková of the Czech Republic defeated Italy's Jasmine Paolini to win the Wimbledon women's title on Saturday for her second Grand Slam singles triumph. Krejčíková, the 31st seed, won 6-2, 2-6, 6-4 to add the 2024 All England Club crown to her 2021 French Open victory. Her win comes 26 years after her mentor Jana Novotna, who died of cancer in 2017, claimed the Wimbledon title.

"Before she passed away, she told me to go and win a Slam. I did that in Paris in 2021 but I never dreamed of winning the same trophy that Jana did," said the 28-year-old Krejčíková, who secured the title in a nervy final service game on a third championship point. "It's unreal what just happened. The best day of my tennis career and the best day of my life." "I was just telling myself to be brave. It was such a difficult match, a great final, a great competition and I'm super happy to be standing here enjoying this moment." Krejčíková, who will return to the top 10 following her victory, came into Wimbledon after a testing season.

A back injury and illness meant she went winless on the tour from February until June. "I was injured and ill and didn't have a good start to the season and now I'm Wimbledon winner. How did that happen?" "I think nobody's going to believe I won Wimbledon. I still can't believe it. Two weeks ago (first

round) I had a very tough match, 7-5 in the third set and I wasn't in good shape." The result means seventh-seeded Paolini has lost two Grand Slam finals back-to-back after coming off second best to Iga Swiatek at the French Open last month.

"I'm a little bit sad but I try to keep smiling. I have to remember today is still a good day," said Paolini, who had never won a grass-court match in her career until last month. "I remember watching Wimbledon as a kid cheering for Roger Federer, so to be here now is crazy. It's been a beautiful two weeks." She added: "Barbora, you played unbelievable. You play such beautiful tennis. Congrats to you and your team." Krejčíková set the tone at the start of the match by breaking the Italian in the opening game and backing up the advantage with a hold to love.

Nervy conclusion

Paolini, the first Italian woman to reach a Wimbledon singles final, had to save two break points in the third game but she cracked under the strain again as the composed Czech stormed into a double-break ahead for 4-1. Krejčíková moved to three set points in the eighth game and only needed one as Paolini dumped a backhand return into the net. The nerve-wracked Italian managed to claim just four points on the Czech's serve in the 35-minute opener. Krejčíková hit 10 winners to the Italian's five. Paolini dashed off Centre Court for a bathroom break and returned re-energized. She had also dropped the first set in her marathon semi-final triumph over Donna Vekic and on Saturday she launched another second set fightback.

Breaks in the second and eighth games levelled the final after a set in which Krejčíková made 14 unforced errors to seven for her opponent, taking her



WIMBLEDON: Czech Republic's Barbora Krejčíková poses with the winner's trophy, the Venus Rosewater Dish, after winning against Italy's Jasmine Paolini during their women's singles final tennis match on the thirteenth day of the 2024 Wimbledon Championships on July 13, 2024. — AFP

double-fault count to a tournament-high of 33. The Czech managed just four winners in the set as she went spectacularly off the boil. However, momentum shifted dramatically back in her favor in the decider when Paolini double-faulted to surrender a break and fall 3-4 behind. Krejčíková held to love for 5-3 but endured a nervy conclusion, requiring three championship points and saving two break points in the 10th game to seal the title. — AFP

Pidcock pulls out of Tour de France over COVID

PAU: British rider Tom Pidcock pulled out of the Tour de France on Saturday suffering from a bout of COVID, his team Ineos Grenadiers announced. Cross-discipline maverick Pidcock is due to protect his mountain bike Olympic title at the 2024 Games which start in just two weeks. "A disappointed Tom Pidcock will not line up for stage 14 of the Tour de France today," Ineos said. "Tom is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and under advice from our medical team will now return home to recover."

The 24-year-old was pipped to the line on the stage-nine run over gravel roads in the champagne region. Pidcock entered Tour de France folklore in 2021 for his daredevil descent of the Galibier, before climbing doggedly through massed and hysterical crowds to an epic stage win at Alpe d'Huez. The Leeds native who learned his skills racing to get to school on time is also a cyclo-cross world title winner. Ineos staff have been wearing masks on the team bus this week. UAE's Juan Ayuso pulled out for the same reason on Friday. After the stage FDJ team chief Marc Madiot said he expected mask protocol to be implemented throughout the peloton soon. "Once you've got Covid in the house your chances are compromised," he said. — AFP

Van der Merwe equals try record as Scotland down US 42-7

WASHINGTON: Duhan van der Merwe scored a record-equalling 27th international try as Scotland romped past the United States 42-7 in the latest stop on their summer tour of North and South America on Friday. South African-born wing van der Merwe raced over for Scotland's opening try in a one-sided Test match at Audi Field in Washington DC. The 29-year-old's score saw him draw level with Stuart Hogg as Scotland's record try-scorer in international rugby.

However, despite Scotland's dominance, van der Merwe was unable to pull clear of Hogg at the top of the rankings. Instead, it was left to Ewan Ashman to snaffle the try-scoring glory, with the Canada-born hooker grabbing a first-half hat-trick. All of Ashman's first half points arose from driving mauls from the lineout as Scotland punished US indiscipline.

After van der Merwe's early try, Ashman rum-



TROYES: TotalEnergies team's French rider Anthony Turgis cycles to the finish line to win ahead of second-placed INEOS Grenadiers team's British rider Tom Pidcock (center) and third-placed Premier Tech team's Canadian rider Derek Gee (right) during the 9th stage of the 111th edition of the Tour de France cycling race in Troyes. — AFP

bled over for his first score in the 19th minute after Scotland opted for an attacking line-out, with fly-half Adam Hastings converting. Ashman's second score was almost a carbon copy, with the hooker once again driving over from a line-out after a US penalty, Hastings converting to make it 21-0. The US, meanwhile, finally got on the board soon afterwards once they forced a turnover after a Scotland scrum near their own line. The ball was transferred to center Tommaso Boni who barged over for a deserved score. Fly-half A.J. MacGinty added the conversion.

On the stroke of half-time though, Scottish forward pressure once again took its toll, with Ashman completing his hat-trick after dotting down from another driving maul to make it 28-7 at the break. An improved US defensive display in the second half stanchied the flow of Scottish points, but the tourists were nevertheless able to extend their lead through converted tries from scrum-half George Horne and No 8 Matt Fagerson. Friday's game was the second of Scotland's four-match tour of North and South America. The Scots face Chile in Santiago on July 20 before taking on Uruguay in Montevideo on July 27. — AFP



WASHINGTON: Scott Cummings #5 and Duhan van der Merwe #11 of Team Scotland compete with Conner Mooneyham #14 of Team United States for the ball during the second half at Audi Field on July 12, 2024 in Washington, DC. — AFP

Sports

Benjamin wins clash of titans

Sedjati, Hall set world leads in perfect fine-tuning for Paris Olympics

MONACO: Rai Benjamin claimed the spoils in a clash of the hurdling titans at Friday's Monaco Diamond League as Djamel Sedjati and Quincy Hall both set world leads in perfect fine-tuning for the Paris Olympics. Another stunning night of track and field in perfect conditions at the Stade Louis II saw Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen set a European record of 3min 26.73sec in the 1500m.

In the absence of double world sprint champion Noah Lyles, in-form Botswana Letsile Tebogo claimed an impressive victory in the men's 200m in 19.87 seconds while St Lucia's Julien Alfred won the women's 100m in 10.85sec. And Australian Jessica Hull backed up the recent good form she showed in last week's Paris Diamond League meet with a world record in the rarely-raced 2000m. The 400m hurdles featured a battle between the three fastest men in history, as Benjamin, Karsten Warholm and Brazilian Alison Dos Santos met for just the second time since the Norwegian won Olympic gold in Tokyo.

Paris will be 'madness'

Benjamin overhauled Warholm in the closing metres to win in 46.67sec. Dos Santos rounding out the podium. "Paris is going to be madness," said Benjamin. "I have to win there. I believe I can do it."

Warholm added: "Coming from training I am feeling fast, but other guys run fast, too." There was victory for Warholm's teammate Ingebrigtsen, however, perfectly led out by two pace-setters for a dominant win that sets him up nicely for his bid at an Olympic double in the 1,500 and 5,000m.

"I am excited about Paris. I feel strong, I will do my best and hopefully bring home the gold medals," said Ingebrigtsen. Algeria's world silver medallist Sedjati followed up on his stunning win in Paris last

week by going even faster for victory in the 800m.

Sedjati clocked a personal best of 1:41.46 for victory, a Diamond League record and new world leading time, and immediately set his sights on Kenyan David Rudisha's world record of 1:40.91 set when he won Olympic gold in London in 2012.

The Algerian bade his time on the shoulder of Canada's world champion Marco Arop and produced a devastating kick coming into the home straight.

"It's the fourth time I've run a world lead and the second time an Algerian record. I have worked really hard for that," said Sedjati. "Now I am thinking of the world record, I hope to run it at the Olympic Games. I have two more weeks to prepare it. I will focus on that and put in the necessary work so that I can achieve my goal."

'Step up my game'

Sedjati's performance was swiftly followed by American Quincy Hall's stunning 43.80sec in the men's 400m, also the fastest time of the year. Hall became just the 23rd athlete to dip under the 44sec-barrier, installing himself as the 13th fastest of all time over the one-lap race.

"I knew I could run fast," insisted Hall. "After the US trials I knew I needed to step up my game a little bit and that it would be enough to run this fast. "I feel like I have a lot more in my tank. I just need to start strong and then I can finish strong as well. Going to Paris, I do not feel like I have a target on my back." Hall's teammate Grant Holloway was another to underline his Olympic credentials, the three-time world champion winning the 110m hurdles in 13.01sec ahead of Italian European champion Lorenzo Ndele Simonelli.

Having bagged silver in the Covid-delayed To-



MONACO: (From left) Brazil's Alison Dos Santos, US' Rai Benjamin and US' Caleb Dean compete in the men's 400m hurdles event during the 'Wanda Diamond League' athletics meeting at the Louis II stadium in Monaco on July 12, 2024. - AFP

kyo Games, Holloway will head to Paris as red-hot favourite for an upgrade to gold. Then came Hull's world record, the 27-year-old clocking 5:19.70 in the 2000m. It smashed by 1.86sec the previous best set by Burundi's Francine Niyonsaba in 2021.

The feat came after Hull obliterated her person-

al best in the 1500m by more than five seconds as she finished second to Kenya's Faith Kipyegon in her own world record-setting run in Paris on Sunday. "I definitely felt Paris's race all week in the legs!" said Hull. "It is amazing to be called a world record holder now."—AFP

History 'fuels' Djokovic Wimbledon's title bid against Alcaraz

LONDON: Novak Djokovic believes the prospect of creating tennis history will provide the "fuel" he needs to defeat Carlos Alcaraz and clinch an eighth Wimbledon title and record 25th Grand Slam on Sunday. Just five weeks after undergoing surgery on his right knee, 37-year-old Djokovic can become the oldest Wimbledon champion of the modern era and avenge his heart-breaking five-set loss to the Spaniard in last year's final. "I'm aware of what's on the line. Any Grand Slam that I play, there's always history now on the line," said Djokovic. "I will try to use that as a fuel to play my best tennis." Djokovic will be playing in his 10th Wimbledon final and 37th at the 75 majors in which he has played. A 25th Grand Slam title would be an all-time record for men and women, snapping the mark of 24 he shares with Margaret Court. "It serves as a great motivation, but at the same time it's also a lot of pressure and expectations," added the Serb. "Every time I step out on the court now, even though I'm 37 and competing with the 21-year-olds, I still expect myself to win most of the matches, and people expect me to win 99% of the matches that I play."

Djokovic arrived at Wimbledon under a form and fitness cloud. The 22-year-old Italian Jannik Sinner took his Australian Open title and then his world number one ranking. Alcaraz succeeded him as French Open champion. Djokovic hadn't reached a final coming into the All England Club. When he played his first round match it was only 25 days after he had gone under the knife to repair a torn meniscus which had caused him to withdraw from Roland Garros.



WIMBLEDON: Serbia's Novak Djokovic imitates playing the violin with his racquet as he celebrates winning against Italy's Lorenzo Musetti during their men's singles semi-final tennis match on the twelfth day of the 2024 Wimbledon Championships on July 12, 2024. - AFP

'Not reckless'

"We agreed that we would not talk about my guaranteed Wimbledon participation until three, four days before the tournament starts," explained Djokovic. "I understand why people were thinking it's premature, it's maybe reckless, but I don't think it was, to be honest." Alcaraz, 16 years Djokovic's junior, is in his fourth Grand Slam final and is looking to add a second Wimbledon to his 2022 US Open breakthrough and French Open title from last month.

His win in the 2023 All England Club final snapped Djokovic's 34-match winning streak at the tournament. Alcaraz has endured an uneven tournament. On Friday, he defeated Daniil Medvedev in the semi-finals but only after having to come back from dropping the first set for the third time at the tournament. He is bidding to become only the sixth man to win the French Open and Wimbledon back-to-back. However, Djokovic has won their last two meetings - in the 2023 Cincinnati Open final and then in the semi-finals of the season-ending ATP Tour Finals. Alcaraz hopes to make it a super Sunday for Spain by winning the Wimbledon final before the country's national football team face England in the Euro 2024 final in Berlin. "Being a Spaniard, yeah, it would be a perfect Sunday," said Alcaraz. "It's going to be a really fun day for Spanish people watching my final, watching the Euros final."—AFP



Uruguay's Argentine coach Marcelo Bielsa

Coody maintains US PGA Tour ISCO Championship lead

WASHINGTON: Pierceson Coody fired a five-under-par 67 to hang on to a two-shot lead in the US PGA Tour ISCO Championship on another low-scoring day in Nicholasville, Kentucky, on Friday. Coody, who started the day with a three-shot cushion after a superb 61 on Thursday, had six birdies and a bogey in his five-under 67 at Keene Trace Golf Club.

His 16-under total of 128 put him two strokes clear of Belgian Matthis Besard, US veteran Chez Reavie and Rico Hoey of the Philippines. A raft of early starters were in the clubhouse on 13-under by the time Coody teed off. He teed off on 10 and regained the solo lead when he rolled in a 21-footer from the fringe for his third birdie of the day at the 17th. But he bogeyed the next after an errant tee shot led to a lost ball.

Coody, a three-time winner on the developmental Korn Ferry Tour who is seeking his first PGA Tour title, regained a share of the lead with a birdie at the fifth, and pulled away with an eight-foot birdie at the seventh and a five-foot birdie at the eighth. "It wasn't quite 61, but 67's still a really nice score," said Coody, who added that limiting the damage at 18 was crucial. "It's huge knowing that the scores are low, knowing that I needed to go get three, four, five birdies on the back nine to kind of get myself in the position I want to be—out in front in the golf tournament," he said.

Besard, who played collegiate golf in America before earning his DP World Tour card for this season, had nine birdies in his nine-under 63. He opened with back-to-back birdies, calling his unlikely 32-foot birdie at the second the highlight of the round. Besard was joined on

Top Paris Olympics organizer 'serene' in French turmoil

PARIS: Sat in his office at Paris Olympics headquarters, chief organizer Tony Estanguet says he is confident and "serene" despite the political maelstrom around him and the Games in France. Snap elections called by French President Emmanuel Macron in early June have overshadowed the build up to the Olympics and plunged the country into political uncertainty. The final round of the election last Sunday delivered a hung parliament with no clear majority, leading to doubts about whether key ministers will still be in their jobs when the Games open in less than a fortnight.

Estanguet told AFP that he is "relieved" the election was over despite an ongoing row between left-wing, centrist and far-right lawmakers as to who should form

Bielsa lashes out at Copa America organizers

CHARLOTTE: Uruguay coach Marcelo Bielsa lashed out at Copa America organizers, saying they were to blame for the brawl between his players and Colombian fans following their semi-final exit. Speaking ahead of Saturday's third-place playoff against Canada, Bielsa reacted angrily to the disciplinary proceedings opened by CONMEBOL following the violence which erupted after Uruguay's 1-0 defeat to Colombia on Wednesday.

Several Uruguay players, including Liverpool star Darwin Nunez, jumped into the stands and were seen fighting with Colombian fans after the game. Uruguay's players have said they were defending family members being attacked by Colombian supporters at the Bank of America Stadium. As many as a dozen Uruguayan players are reportedly under investigation by CONMEBOL following the incident - a fact that has incensed veteran coach Bielsa.

"The players reacted like any human being would have done," Bielsa said at a press conference on

Friday. "If you see your wife, mother, sister or baby being attacked, and no one is helping, what are they supposed to do? And they are going to punish the people who came to defend them?" Colombian and Uruguayan fans were not separated at all in Wednesday's game. The violence flared on the final whistle after Uruguay's defeat and continued for several minutes until police finally arrived.

Bielsa said blame for the incident should be pinned on tournament organizers for failing to ensure the safety of players' families. "There were mothers with babies in their arms, wives and sisters being attacked. The protection of the spectator has nothing to do with the football team or the federation. You know who is responsible for that," he said. "No one wanted to see a violent reaction. But the first thing to look at is what provoked the reaction. "Any sanctions should not be for the footballers, but for those who forced them to act the way they did. They had no choice."

Bielsa was also critical of other organizational aspects of the Copa America, which was held in the United States and expanded to 16 teams this year to include CONCACAF nations. The Uruguay coach said playing surfaces, many of which were comprised of grass overlaid on artificial turf, had been sub-standard. Bielsa added that training pitches provided during the tournament "were a disaster."—AFP

Monaco Diamond League: Stand-out events

MONACO: The Monaco Diamond League, the penultimate elite track and field meet before the start of the Paris Olympics, was once again the scene of some outstanding performances. After a frenetic meet in Paris last weekend, a host of athletes fine-tuned their preparations for the Summer Games in some style in perfect conditions in Monaco. AFP Sport looks at five events that stood out.

Men's 1,500m

Jakob Ingebrigtsen is back! After battling an Achilles injury over the winter, the Norwegian has returned to the track in top form. He was superbly led out by two pace-setters in Monaco and promptly improved his European record to 3:26.73, also a world lead and sixth fastest time ever. Only three men have ever run faster: Morocco's Hicham El Guerrouj, Bernard Lagat (when competing for Kenya and not the USA) and Kenya's Asbel Kiprop. "I feel amazing," said Ingebrigtsen, who now trains alongside his brothers after they split from their father in an ongoing case in which they alleged domestic abuse. "When you achieve great results, it is easier to be confident for future competitions. I am excited about Paris. I feel strong, I will do my best and hopefully bring home the gold medals."

Women's 100m

The question is whether St Lucia's Julien Alfred can mount a real challenge to her US and Jamaican rivals in the blue riband event, and on the back of her showing in Monaco, the answer must be yes. Alfred, who won the world indoor 60m title in Glasgow in March, looked totally comfortable with victory in 10.85 seconds, 0.14sec ahead of American Tamari Davis and Britain's Dina Asher-Smith. "I was specially prepared not to make a mistake and to just focus on myself and my own race," said Alfred. "I am getting better with each race, I run more relaxed as well. I feel confident. "I know that all I need to do is to trust my coach and to trust myself. The coach knows what is the best for me. "I will get back to practice and just focus for my preparations for the Paris Games."

Men's 400m hurdles

Rai Benjamin made it 3-4 in the head-to-head tally with Norwegian rival Karsten Warholm with victory forged from a strong finish off the 10th and final hurdle through to the finish line. Dubbed the clash of titans, with Brazil's Alison Dos Santos also competing for the first time since the trio filled the podium at the Tokyo Olympics, Benjamin clocked 46.67sec for the win. The pressure is now on Warholm. "Coming from the training I am feeling fast, but other guys run fast, too," conceded Warholm. "In the following weeks I will give my all to prepare as best as possible for the rest of the season."—AFP

a new government. "It was an important period for the country that we have completely respected," he said of the voting. "The good news is that we didn't suffer any delays and weren't affected."

After over six years in his job, the triple gold medal-winning canoeist is quick to dodge questions on what should happen now in parliament, but he does hint that continuity would be helpful. "We owe this government a lot for what has been done for the last two years to succeed," he said, before adding: "It's true that sometimes it's good to make things easy, but I have to emphasize that it's not up to me to decide."

Making things easy, Estanguet admits, has not been part of the vision for Paris 2024, which runs from July 26 to August 11. The organizing committee has opted for an unprecedented and wildly ambitious opening ceremony which will shun the usual format of a parade and fireworks at the athletics stadium. Instead, it will take place on the river Seine, with 6,000-7,000 athletes set to sail through the City of Light on a flotilla of boats in front of a crowd of up to nearly half a million spectators.—AFP

Spain v England: A rare rivalry

Euro 2024 final: European giants face off

BERLIN: Spain and England meet in the Euro 2024 final in Berlin on Sunday in what will be a rare encounter between the nations at a major tournament. AFP Sport looks back at their most notable past clashes:

First competitive clash

The first competitive meeting of Spain and England came at the 1950 World Cup in Brazil, at which they were drawn together in the same group. Both teams had won their opening match at the tournament, with England defeating Chile 2-0 at the Maracana and Spain beating the United States 3-1. However, while Spain then got the better of Chile, England suffered one of their most humiliating ever defeats, losing 1-0 to the USA. The clash between Spain and England in Rio de Janeiro on July 2 was therefore crucial, with the latter having to win. Spain came out on top 1-0 thanks to a goal by legendary forward Telmo Zarra. England went out, while Spain advanced to the four-team final round in which they drew with eventual champions Uruguay before losing 6-1 to Brazil and 3-1 to Sweden.

WCup hopes end at Spain 82

England beat Spain in a home-and-away quarter-final to qualify for the final tournament of Euro 1968, and the sides also met at the 1980 Euros, from which both went out in the group stage. Their next competitive encounter came at the 1982 World Cup, when they found themselves together in the second group stage, in a three-team pool alongside West Germany. The Germans had drawn with England and beaten Spain, results which meant the host nation were already eliminated from their own competition before taking on Ron Greenwood's English side in Madrid. The match ended in a 0-0 draw, an outcome which meant England were knocked out without losing a game. West Germany progressed to the semi-finals and were eventually defeated in the final by Italy.

Pearce's penalty at Euro 96

Meetings between the nations may have been rare, but their quarter-final match-up at Euro 96 led to one of the most iconic moments in English football history. The game

at Wembley ended 0-0 after extra time, meaning a penalty shoot-out. Fernando Hierro blasted Spain's first kick off the bar. England converted four out of four, with Stuart Pearce—who had missed in their 1990 World Cup semi-final shoot-out loss to West Germany—among their scorers. David Seaman's save from Miguel Angel Nadal, uncle of tennis star Rafael, allowed England to win the shoot-out 4-2 and advance to the semis, where this time they lost on penalties to Germany with current manager Gareth Southgate missing the decisive kick.

Friendly controversy

A 1-0 Spain victory over England in a friendly at the Santiago Bernabeu in November 2004 was overshadowed by racist abuse directed at several visiting players. Asier del Horno's early goal gave Spain the win despite Raul having a penalty saved,

but it was an unsavoury night. Ashley Cole and Shaun Wright-Phillips were the targets of "clear racist chanting" according



BLANKENHAIN: England's goalkeeper #13 Aaron Ramsdale attends an MD-1 training session at the team's base camp in Blankenhain, on July 13, 2024, on the eve of their UEFA Euro 2024 final football match against Spain. — AFP

to the BBC's report on the night. England's Wayne Rooney was also substituted before half-time to avoid a red card after he clashed with several Spain players.

England win Nations League clash

Sunday's final will be the first meeting of the teams since late 2018, when they came together in the group stage of the inaugural UEFA Nations League. Spain won 2-1 at Wembley in September, but England gained revenge with a 3-2 success in the return in Seville just over a month later. Raheem Sterling scored a brace either side of a Marcus Rashford goal as England led 3-0 at half-time.

How can England beat Spain in Euro 2024 final?

BERLIN: England began Euro 2024 as one of the pre-tournament favorites but now go into Sunday's final as underdogs as Spain have been the standout team at the tournament. La Roja have made Euros history by winning all six of their games en route to Berlin, knocking out hosts Germany and France along the way. AFP Sport looks at how England can raise their game to end a 58-year wait to win a major tournament.

Strike early

England have relied on late goals to sneak past Slovakia, Switzerland and the Netherlands to reach a second consecutive Euros final. However, they needed extra-time to beat Slovakia and went all the way to penalties against the Swiss in the quarter-finals. Southgate has also expressed his concern at having a day less to recover from their semi-final. For all the resilience England have shown, chasing the game against Spain is a different beast. The Spanish racked up 500 passes in the semi-final win over France to play out the second half by holding onto their 2-1 lead. With some of England's top players already showing signs of fatigue, a fast start is needed to dent Spanish confidence.

Beat the press

Spain's pressing game has been one of the keys to their success in Germany. No side has forced more turnovers within 40 meters of the opposition goal, two of which have led to goals. One of England's problems early in the tournament was failing to take risks in passing forward, even against perceived weaker opposition. In Berlin they have to be brave to get through the first wave of Spanish pressure and into the spaces where they can do damage going forward.

Feed Foden and Bellingham

Southgate has stuck by starting both Jude Bellingham and Phil Foden all tournament despite both starring in the same role for their clubs last season as advanced midfielders. The England boss finally got some reward in the semi-final with the Dutch, against a more offensive-minded side, Foden and Bellingham found the space to spark a labored attack into life. Foden's Manchester City teammate Rodri has looked supreme all tournament in the Spanish midfield. But with Fabian Ruiz and Dani Olmo pushing forward, Rodri is the sole holding midfielder which should leave gaps for Bellingham and Foden to exploit if given the service.

Harness experience

Despite Spain's much greater pedigree in winning major tournaments, it is England who have the edge in big game experience. Eight of Southgate's squad played in the defeat on penalties to Italy at the Euro 2020 final and England also boast seven Champions League winners to Spain's six. "Quarter-finals, semi-finals, we've managed a lot of those games now," said Southgate on learning from the final three years ago. "You're definitely much better prepared because every experience you go through, you learn from. You're improving all the time." England must lean on that knowhow to get over the line, even if it does mean resorting to the dark arts. Germany took a roughhouse approach to stopping Spain's two wing starlets Lamine Yamal and Nico Williams in the quarter-final and it largely worked. Few in England will care about how the job is done as long as they are parading the trophy around central London on Monday.

Use the bench

Ollie Watkins' stoppage time strike to beat the Netherlands in the semi-final rewarded Southgate's bold call to send on the Aston Villa striker for Harry Kane 10 minutes from time. Too often during this tournament and his tenure in charge, Southgate has been too slow to turn to his bench to influence the game. In both the 2018 World Cup semi-final against Croatia and Euro 2020 final, England squandered an early lead by slowly losing control of the game. Cole Palmer, Ivan Toney and Kobbie Mainoo have also made big impacts as substitutes earlier in the tournament. Blessed with arguably the deepest squad at the Euros, Southgate must use it earlier than he has done so far, even if it means sacrificing one of his star names. — AFP

Kane out to crown England legacy with Euros glory

BERLIN: Harry Kane's move to Germany has not yet yielded the trophies he craved, but in Berlin on Sunday the England captain could quench his craving for silverware in style by winning Euro 2024. Kane's strike to bring England level in a dramatic semi-final victory over the Netherlands was his 406th goal for clubs and country. Yet, he is approaching his 31st birthday without a single trophy to his name.

Kane transferred his prolific Premier League form to the Bundesliga with ease last season, scoring 44 times in 45 appearances since joining Bayern Munich from Tottenham for a fee of £82 million.

Yet it still did not result in collective success as Bayer Leverkusen did not taste defeat once in winning a domestic league and cup double, while Bayern bowed out to eventual winners Real Madrid in the Champions League semi-finals.

Kane came off towards the end of the decisive second leg against Madrid with a back injury that hampered the end of his club campaign and rolled into the Euros. He was unusually the target of stinging criticism from former England strikers Gary Lineker and Alan Shearer for his labored performances early in the tournament which were symptomatic of a highly-fancied side that failed to shine.

The Three Lions won just one of their opening five matches in Germany in 90 minutes and have needed late goals to come from behind in each of the three knockout rounds against Slovakia, Switzerland and the Dutch. "We've had to show unbelievable character, resilience, physical strength, mental strength—we've shown it all



BLANKENHAIN: England's forward #09 Harry Kane signs autographs as he leaves the media centre at the team's base camp, the Weimarer Land golf resort ahead of the UEFA Euro 2024 final football match between Spain and England. — AFP photos

but there is still one more to go," said Kane. "It's been a tough journey but it's one more. Ninety minutes, 120 minutes, whatever it takes."

'Positive influence' After Kane hobbled off against the Netherlands 10 minutes from time, it was his replacement Ollie Watkins who smashed

in a stoppage-time winner to send England to a first-ever major final on foreign soil. Yet, the prospect of Kane not starting Sunday's final is unthinkable given his outstanding record. "Unless Harry Kane is injured, he plays. He's the captain and the record goalscorer. There's no way you can leave him out," said Shearer. Wayne Rooney, who Kane surpassed to become his country's all-time leading goalscorer, has hailed him as England's greatest-ever player.

Kane's controversial penalty against the Netherlands took him into a share of the lead for the Golden Boot on three goals and made him the top scoring European in major tournament knockout stages of all-time with nine. "He's leading the team incredibly well, he's such a positive influence around the camp and guiding young players through everything the squad have had to deal with in the early stages of the tournament," said Southgate in defense of his skipper. Together captain and coach have marked an era of unparalleled consistency for English football.

In four major tournaments together, Kane and Southgate have never failed to reach the quarter-finals—progressing three times to the semi-finals and now twice to the final. Prior to this run, England had only ever been to one final in winning the 1966 World Cup. Yet, that remains their only-ever taste of tour-

name success and England must end a 58-year wait for more against a Spanish side that have thrilled on their way through the tougher half of the draw. Kane moved to Germany to end his own personal trophy drought, but, at the end of a season that failed to deliver, he has the chance to lift the one that will matter most to his legacy as an England legend. —AFP



BLANKENHAIN: England's goalkeeper #01 Jordan Pickford attends an MD-1 training session at the team's base camp in Blankenhain, on July 13, 2024.

DONAUESCHINGEN: Spain's forward #19 Lamine Yamal attends an MD-1 training session at the team's base camp in Donaueschingen, on July 13, 2024.