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NEWS IN BRIEF



Deputy PM visits oil minister

ANKARA: First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah on Thursday visited Minister of Oil Emad Al-Atiqi in Turkey, where he is receiving medical treatment, representing HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Sheikh Fahad prayed to the Almighty to grant Atiqi speedy recovery, abundant health and safe return. — KUNA

First vascular surgery in Mideast

KUWAIT: Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital's vascular surgery and catheterization team conducted an aortic thoracic aneurysm arch surgery, the first of its kind in the Middle East. The hospital said the surgery involves fixing a stent to fit the size of arteries of the patient, and later implanting it through catheterization, adding that the surgery was led by Dr Abdullah Al-Fawwaz. — KUNA

KFF guidelines to prevent fires

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Fire Force Director Brig Mohammad Al-Ghareeb emphasized the importance of fire prevention equipment, proper maintenance of electrical and gas systems and careful monitoring of children. He also advised on swimming pool safety, proper elevator maintenance and precautions for seagoers to prevent fire-related incidents. — KUNA (See Page 2)

Trump Org to build Dubai tower

DUBAI: The Trump Organization on Thursday announced a deal to partner with a Saudi developer to build a high-rise tower in the UAE business hub of Dubai. Trump Tower Dubai will target "the Dubai luxury market", real estate developer Dar Global said in a press release. The development will include a Trump hotel and branded residential units. "We are proud to expand our presence in the region further through the launch of our iconic Trump Tower Dubai," Eric Trump, the former president's son and executive vice president of the Trump Organization, said in a statement— AFP

99-yr-old Mahathir in hospital

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's nearly 100-year-old former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad has been hospitalized for "continuous coughing", his aide told AFP Thursday. "Mahathir is expected to be treated for the next few days," Sufi Yusoff said, adding he had been admitted on Monday. A two-time former prime minister, Mahathir turned 99 last week. — AFP

NEW YORK/GAZA: Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya said Wednesday that Zionist occupation military operations seek to destroy and terrorize Palestinians. Delivering Kuwait's speech before a UN Security Council session on the situation in the Middle East, Yahya said Gaza has turned into a bleak landscape of destruction, with 40,000 deaths, mostly women and children. The total number of victims under the rubble is unknown, he added.

Leading Kuwait's delegation to the meeting, Yahya said: "(The Zionist entity) has turned schools into battlefields and hospitals into landscapes of pain and powerlessness". Despite the efforts to bring an end to these attacks, the Zionist entity continues to cut lives short without any distinction, he noted. He added the Zionist authorities are

committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

Calling for unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance across Gaza, Kuwait's top diplomat underlined the essential role of UNRWA in supporting the Palestinian people in their darkest hour. Yahya further warned against double standards and expressed support for all initiatives to reach a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question. He highlighted the Zionist entity's continued criminal practices and violations of international law, referring to its unilateral decisions aiming to change the current legal and historic status of the occupied territories amid the failure of the UN Security Council to assume its responsibilities.

Yahya renewed Kuwait's firm solidarity with the brotherly

Continued on Page 6



GAZA: Medics at Kuwait Red Crescent Society's field hospital in Khan Yunis delivered a baby born to a displaced Palestinian woman, the first birth at the medical facility. — KUNA

Drilling at Durra gas field to start this year: KPC

KUWAIT: Procedures for drilling and construction work on the Durra gas field will begin later this year after engineering studies wrap up later this summer, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) CEO told Reuters on Thursday. Iran, which claims a stake in Durra, has criticized a Kuwaiti-Saudi development agreement for the field signed in 2022. Durra holds an estimated 20 trillion cubic feet in proven reserves. Iran's oil ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Kuwait's oil minister at the time last year said that his country and Saudi Arabia had exclusive rights

in Durra and called on Iran to validate its claim by demarcating its own maritime borders. KPC will this summer "finish updating the engineering studies and then begin the procedures for drilling and facilities construction," CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah said in an interview.

Kuwait has begun steps to build an onshore gas processing receiving facility, part of a Durra-related agreement with Saudi Arabia for each country to build those facilities, Sheikh Nawaf said. Sheikh Nawaf also said that KPC would reach a production capacity of 3.2 million barrels per day (bpd) by the end of this year and expects to increase that to 4 million bpd by 2035.

The company plans to invest KD 7 billion (\$22.92 billion) on its upstream operations over the next five years to boost production, he said. KPC subsidiary Kuwait Oil Company's CEO Ahmed Jaber Al-Eidan said in October Kuwait's production capacity was 2.9 million bpd and would reach 3.2 million bpd by

Three Omani brothers behind mosque attack

MUSCAT: The three gunmen who shot and killed six people at a Shiite mosque in Oman in an attack claimed by Islamic State this week were all Omani nationals, police said on Thursday. The assault began on Monday evening at the Ali bin Abi Talib Mosque in the Wadi Al-Kabir neighborhood of Oman's capital Muscat as Shiite Muslims gathered for Ashura.

The Royal Oman Police said the three gunmen were brothers and "were killed due to their insistence on resisting security personnel". It said that police investigations had indicated the three gunmen were "influenced by misguided ideas". The six people killed

by the gunmen were four Pakistani nationals, an Indian, and an Omani police officer responding to the attack, which Islamic State later claimed responsibility for. Pakistan has labeled the assault a terror attack.

Islamic State on Tuesday said that three of its "suicide attackers" fired on worshippers at the mosque on Monday evening and exchanged gunfire with Omani security forces until morning. The militant group also published what it said was a video of the attack on its Telegram site. It posted a picture purporting to show the three perpetrators raising the group's black flag.

IS has claimed responsibility this year for high-profile attacks in Russia and Iran which inflicted mass casualties and is active in Afghanistan. It had not claimed an assault on the Arabian Peninsula for several years until the attack in Oman. Its operations have indicated the group is attempting a comeback after it was crushed by a US-led coalition following its occupation of large swathes of territory in Iraq and Syria and declared a caliphate.

Isolated Biden battles COVID and Democrats

REHOBOTH BEACH, Delaware: Joe Biden holed up at his beach house Thursday, battling both a bout of COVID and calls by senior allies for him to abandon his 2024 reelection bid. While rival Donald Trump prepared for his star turn at the Republican National Convention, the 81-year-old US president found himself in both personal and political isolation.

The top Democrats in Congress, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, both reportedly met with Biden in recent days to warn that his candidacy threatens his party's prospects in November's election. Influential former House speaker Nancy Pelosi added to his woes by privately telling Biden he cannot win and



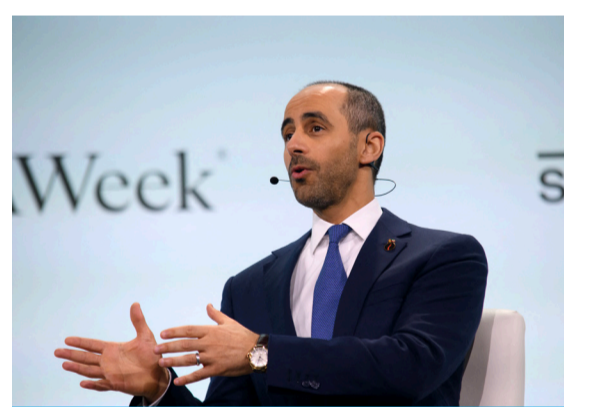
Donald Trump



Joe Biden

could harm Democrats' chances of recapturing the lower chamber, CNN reported.

Representative Adam Schiff, a senior House lawmaker running for a Senate seat in California, became the latest Democrat to call on Biden to bow out on Wednesday. White House officials believe Schiff was backed by Pelosi, according to a White House source



Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah

2025 or 2026. Kuwait last year announced a strategy to boost its overall oil production capacity to four million bpd by 2035 and a KPC executive said it would spend \$410 billion through 2040. — Reuters

It also inspired lone-wolf attacks in the West.

Any inroads in Gulf Arab oil producers such as Oman would raise fears in Washington and the region which has long viewed militant Islamist groups as a major threat. Dozens of people at the mosque in Oman were wounded with around 30 people treated at local hospitals, including for gunshot wounds. The attack was largely unprecedented in Oman, where most of its citizens follow the Ibadi Muslim faith. Oman has a small but influential Omani Shiite population. Like other Gulf countries, there is a large and significant foreign workforce in Oman too.

Several attacks on Shiite mosques have roiled the Gulf in past years but this was the first in Oman. A 2015 suicide attack on a Shiite mosque in Kuwait killed more than two dozen worshippers and was claimed by the IS group. The same year, Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province saw two attacks on Shiite mosques in the space of a week, with at least 25 people killed. IS again claimed the attacks. — Agencies

speaking on condition of anonymity. That could be an ominous sign for Biden, as the former House speaker is still one of the most influential Democrats in Washington. "Nancy is all over this. She doesn't miss," the White House source said.

Several party figures were meanwhile quoted anonymously by the Axios news outlet as saying that they believed the pressure would persuade Biden to drop out as soon as this weekend. Biden's campaign however insisted that he would not quit.

"He's staying in the race," deputy campaign chairman Quentin Fulks told a press conference on the sidelines of the Republican convention in Milwaukee. "Our campaign is not working through any scenarios where President Biden is not the top of the ticket — he is and will be the Democratic nominee."

California Senator Alex Padilla said Biden was "not skipping a beat". "I know having spoken to him personally he's committed to the campaign," he added. Biden told reporters on Wednesday that he was "doing well". His COVID diagnosis however came

Continued on Page 6



Local

Turning deserts into green havens

Kuwait's first forest planted by Kuwaiti dentist

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: A dream of turning Kuwait's deserts into fruitful forests and combating climate change, desertification and achieving food security has started to take shape under the initiative of Kuwaiti dentist Dr Issa Al-Issa. He has planted the first forest in Kuwait, covering an area of 25,000 square meters. Overcoming Kuwait's harsh climate, compacted hard soil, water scarcity and overgrazing, Issa's forest is now showing the growth of a thriving ecosystem.

This includes 5,000 trees producing kinar fruit and attracting wildlife such as desert foxes, nightingales, butterflies and bees. This success is attributed to his adoption of a special agricultural technique that yields great outcomes with minimal resources. "I discovered a natural farming system that can provide all the needed minerals for tree growth, almost without the intrusion of fertilizers or human intervention," Dr Issa told Kuwait Times.

Dr Issa's dream does not stop there. His vision for 2027 includes planting more fruit-bearing trees such as figs, pomegranates and oranges, with the goal of greening the entire country. He has expressed his readiness to share his knowledge and support any institution willing to collaborate on expanding the project, offering his services as a consultant free of charge.

Highlighting Kuwait's heavy reliance on food imports, Dr Issa emphasized the need to utilize the country's land and soil to achieve self-sufficiency, which is the main goal of his project. In addition to food security, he stated that increasing green areas will play a vital role in mitigating the impacts of cli-



Dr Issa Al-Issa walking through the forest.



Dr Issa Al-Issa standing in the middle of the forest.

mate change in Kuwait. Scientifically proven benefits of trees, he noted, include effectively lowering ambient temperatures, purifying the air, reducing dust and acting as windbreaks. Additionally, trees can enhance overall electricity efficiency in the region. Since the commencement of the project in February

2022, Dr Issa has been documenting the step-by-step process of forest planting on social media.

To this day, he continues to share his experience, raise awareness about the benefits of afforestation, and teach proper agricultural techniques for deserts. Dr Issa believes Kuwait needs between three to five

million trees to achieve significant environmental sustainability. He hopes the government will establish a mechanism to effectively utilize more volunteers like himself, listen to their initiative ideas and support them by allocating resources to the areas that need their efforts the most.

Kuwait Fire Force urges guidelines to prevent fires

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Fire Force (KFF) on Thursday called on citizens and residents to follow the safety guidelines and instructions in a bid to prevent fires, said a senior KFF official. In his interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), KFF Director Brig Mohammad Al-Ghareeb asserted that everyone must possess fire prevention equipment and must know how to use it, including fire blankets, smoke and gas detectors, and fire extinguishers.

He also emphasized the importance of teaching security personnel, tenants, and everyone living in residential and commercial buildings how to use such tools in order to prevent and deal with emergencies. Al-Ghareeb cited many causes of fires in residential buildings, with electricity being the most prominent, explaining that overloading electrical circuits often leads to electrical faults. He also pointed to the need to shut off unnecessary devices and gadgets, especially when leaving the building, so as to reduce energy consumption and prevent electrical faults that might lead to fire.

He added that gas stoves are also hazardous, and it is crucial to maintain them and ensure all gas cylinders are safe and not leaking, underscoring that turning off the gas lever when not in use significantly contributes to stove safety. Vehicle owners must ensure regular car maintenance, including oil and water changes, and avoid leaving flammable materials in the car, especially during peak heat times in the afternoon, Al-Ghareeb warned.

Another main cause of fires is children playing with hazardous electrical plugs, he said, emphasizing the necessity of carefully keeping an eye on children as they are playing in a bid to avoid emergencies and ensure their safety. Regarding general safety, Al-Ghareeb advised private swimming pool owners to install handrails and anti-slip tiles in and around the pools and ensure an adult is always present when children are swimming to avoid incidents.

Shifting his focus to elevators, Al-Ghareeb stated that nowadays, elevators are found in most residential buildings and almost all other buildings. He asserted that following safety guidelines and instructions is mandatory for all users and owners. He stressed that when installing a new elevator, it is imperative to ensure the company is certified by the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), conduct periodic maintenance, and install a backup battery in case of a power outage.

The KFF's instructions in the event of a power outage while someone is inside an elevator are to remain calm, not attempt to open the doors to exit, press the emergency button, and dial the 112 emergency hotline to request help. On another note, Al-Ghareeb advised sea-goers, both swimmers and fishermen, to be cautious of flammable materials in boats, swim in designated and safe areas, check the weather before sailing, carry safety equipment at all times, and notify friends and family of departure and arrival times. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Participants are pictured during an awareness campaign on climate change. — KUNA photos

MoH launches climate awareness campaign

KUWAIT: The Health Promotion Department at the Ministry of Health, represented by the National Committee to address the effects of climate change and environmental disasters, launched an awareness campaign on climate change on Thursday under the slogan "Climate Change: Strengthen Your Health." The assistant undersecretary for Public Health Affairs and deputy chairman of the National Committee for Preparedness and Response to the Effects of Climate Change and Environmental Disasters, Dr Al-Munther Al-Hasawi, told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) during the campaign that the Ministry is keen to prepare the health system so as to adapt and respond to climate changes.

The campaign aims to educate the community about the complications of high temperatures and how to avoid them and the need to act quickly in cases of heat stroke, heat stress, and other compli-



cations. He said that the Ministry is also keen to raise the level of community health awareness of this phenomenon through the work of the Health Promotion Department, explaining that climate change has many bad negative effects, including the constant increase in temperatures, dust storms, as well as heavy rainfall and sea level rise. These climate changes have health consequences such as sunburn, heat stress, muscle damage, and respiratory diseases associated with dust, and the issues will worsen if there are no actual measures to slow down the process of climate change.

The director of the Health Promotion Department at

the Ministry and member of the National Committee for Preparedness and Response to the Effects of Climate Change and Environmental Disasters, Dr Abeer Al-Bahwa, told KUNA that the committee, represented by the Health Promotion Department, launched this campaign to gather the most important parties. It has a role in improving the environment. The campaign coincides with the extreme rise in temperatures currently witnessed in Kuwait, so that the community will be made aware through printed awareness publications and awareness films in a simplified language of some of the dangers resulting from extreme heat. — KUNA

Kuwait and Spain discuss ties in new round of talks

KUWAIT: Kuwait and Spain held a fresh round of talks focusing on relations and efforts to bolster bilateral cooperation across various fields, the Foreign Ministry said on Thursday. The talks, presided over by Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Al-Sabah and Spanish Secretary for Foreign and Global Affairs Diego Martinez Belio, also looked into the progress of common initiatives and plans. Current developments around the world were among the topics mulled over, chief among them the need to halt the continued Zionist attacks against the Palestinians, according to a ministry statement. — KUNA



Local

Burgan Bank inaugurates on-site medical clinic at its head office

Ensuring that employees receive uncompromised care every day

KUWAIT: In a new effort to continue providing a well-rounded, healthy work environment that caters to employees' holistic well-being, Burgan Bank announced that a dedicated healthcare professional will be available at the HQ's medical clinic to tend to the employees' medical needs without delay. The newly introduced on-site medical care service is a testament to Burgan's commitment to its social responsibility

strategy and its mission to be an employer of choice in Kuwait.

"At Burgan Bank, our employees' health and overall well-being is our single most important priority. It is our responsibility to ensure the soundness of their physical, mental, and emotional health," said Naqeeb Amin, General Manager – Human Resources and Development for the Group at Burgan Bank. "With the new on-site

clinic, the primary healthcare that our employees need is now a few steps away every day."

It serves to note that Burgan Bank's approach to employee health and wellness remains one of the most comprehensive and engaging in the Kuwaiti banking market, spanning everything from sports competitions and programs to awareness workshops with top healthcare and nutrition professionals. The most recent exam-

ples include the month-long 'Rock Your Habits' wellness program and challenge, the breast cancer awareness workshop, and the 'Burgan Talk' on working parents' health and well-being. As a certified Great Place to Work®, Burgan Bank remains committed to providing its staff with a healthy, inclusive, and inspiring work environment that enables every employee to innovate and excel in their areas of specialty.

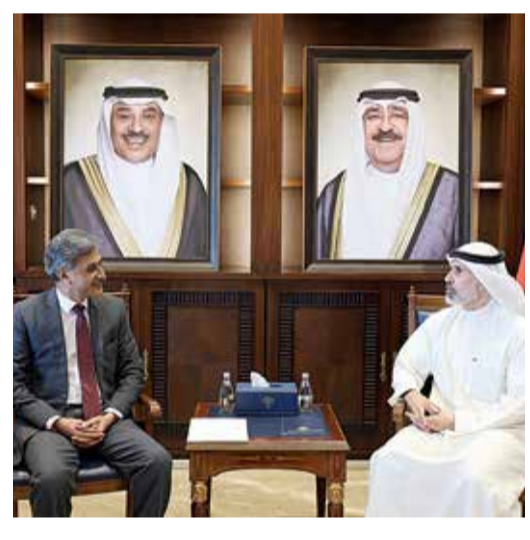


Naqeeb Amin

Amir, PM receive letters from Pakistani premier

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a letter from Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also received a similar letter from Sharif. The letters were received by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah while receiving the outgoing Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait, Malik Farooq. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital's vascular surgery and catheterization team conducted an aortic thoracic aneurysm arch surgery. — KUNA photos

Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital performs rare surgery

KUWAIT: Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital's vascular surgery and catheterization team conducted

an aortic thoracic aneurysm arch surgery, the first of its kind in the Middle East. The hospital said the surgery involves fixing a stent to fit the size of the arteries of the patient and later implanting it through catheterization, adding that the surgery was led by Dr Abdullah Al-Fawwaz. The team carried out the procedure by adjusting a stent surgically to fit the sizes and branches of the patient's arteries and placing them through catheterization.

The hospital said the technology used is considered an alternative that is safer compared with the regular stents. The studies showed that the technique significantly reduced the risk of stroke that comes along with the procedures. The procedure was carried out under local anesthesia, and the patient did not suffer any complications during or after the surgery and was discharged from hospital the next day. This type of procedure requires high technical skills and accurate planning. — KUNA

Diving Team calls for protection of rare sea turtles

KUWAIT: Kuwait Diving Team called Thursday for protecting the rare and nearly extinct sea turtles, especially the ones in Az Zour, south of the country. Team leader Waleed Al-Fadhel spoke to KUNA about the new phenomenon taking place in Az Zour, saying they have identified a couple of turtles residing on the sands. Al-Fadhel called on sea-goers to refrain from approaching the sea turtles, poaching them, or compromising their nests.

He explained that discarded plastic nets could potentially suffocate the turtles, adding that clear plastic bags are also a suffocation hazard as turtles consume them believing them to be jellyfish. The plastic bags could also obstruct their congestion tracks, prohibiting them from consuming sufficient food. Currently, sea turtle nests in Kuwait are limited to Qaruh Island, where they are being monitored and observed by researchers. Since its establishment in 1986, Kuwait Diving Team has conducted a variety of activities to protect the turtles and rescue them, Al-Fadhel elucidated. — KUNA



Customs officers foil attempt to smuggle banned substances

KUWAIT: Salmi customs officers foiled an attempt to smuggle tons of chewing tobacco along with several types of cigarettes and other banned substances to Kuwait. As the trucks were entering the Kuwaiti border, security officers stopped and searched the trucks and found several banned substances. The trucks were sent to the Sulabiya customs department, where around 36,000 tons of chewing tobacco (Paan), 66,000 cartons of cigarettes, 1,674 e-cigarettes, around 97,000 of various packs of cigarettes, a laser device, 4 walkie-talkies and a taser were found.



OAPEC reviews developments in energy industry

KUWAIT: The General Secretariat of the organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) on Thursday launched the 50th edition of the Secretary-General's annual report for 2023, which reviews the most important Arab and global developments in various activities of the energy industry in general and oil and gas in particular, in addition to the environment and sustainable development.

OAPEC Secretary General Jamal Al-Loughani said during a ceremony held in the presence of a number of members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the country from the OAPEC member states that the report included a number of statistics that reflect the important strategic position of OAPEC member states in the global energy industry.

Al-Loughani stated that the release of the 50th edition comes as the organization has completed 55 years since its establishment in January 1968. OAPEC is considered one of the leading and important achievements in the march of joint Arab action. He stressed that the organization has sought through these decades, with the great support of its member states, to encourage cooperation in various aspects of economic activity in the petroleum industry, pointing out that it has registered a distinguished and active presence in most activities and



The General Secretariat of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) on Thursday launched the 50th edition of the Secretary-General's annual report for 2023. — KUNA photos

events related to the oil, natural gas, and energy industries in general.

He pointed out that the timing of the release of the report coincided with the significant fluctuations witnessed by the global oil markets affected by many factors, including the slow recovery, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, and the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, as well as severe disruptions in the US banking sector and the uncertainty associated with monetary policies.

OAPEC Secretary General said that the escalation of geopolitical unrest in the Middle East during the last quarter of 2023 negatively affected supply chains and global trade, noting the positive role of ending the zero COVID policy in China and its key

role in the rise in global demand for oil. Al-Loughani praised the efforts exerted by the organization's member states within the framework of the OPEC+ group of countries in order to achieve stability and balance in the global oil market by following the successful approach of taking proactive measures.

The report seeks to highlight the various issues mentioned, and the analysis to be drawn from it will give a clear-cut picture of the developments witnessed by the energy industry during 2023, and it also highlights the efforts made by member states to develop their petroleum industries. It was reported that some OAPEC member countries announced new oil and gas discoveries. — KUNA



OAPEC Secretary General Jamal Al-Loughani

Audit Bureau focuses on sustainability reducing unnecessary spending

By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: The State Audit Bureau has released its annual assessment report for 2023, covering a wide range of financial, environmental and social issues. The bureau stated that its strategy focuses on sustainability and its understanding of material topics, allowing it to assess risks and opportunities. "The crisis and opportunities department supports global direction with regard to interior and exterior opinions, ranging from the academic field to the political field," it said.

The bureau aims to combat corruption, develop human abilities, reduce unnecessary financial spending and ensure environmentally friendly institutions. The year culminated in 30 publications covering 170 institutions, 1,335 employees, 41 workshops, 17 professional certifications, 28 international advisory benefits, 35 events and participations outside the bureau and 89 events within the bureau.

The bureau's report stresses that one of its objectives is to reduce negative environmental practices, particularly regarding water safety and urban air pollution. This aligns with the bureau's sustainability objectives, which are directly related to health and the increasing demand for energy.

The bureau is keen on becoming an environmentally friendly institution by developing its automatic systems while meeting the needs of its organizational units, aiming to transform into a paperless environment. It has also developed its annual assessment procedures in the EPES system by upgrading its facilities for supervisors and allowing employees to complete certain responsibilities online.

Moreover, technical support and the report archive have been upgraded to allow for wider electronic access, reducing paper documents as much as possible. The bureau also facilitates ease of company interactions by aiming to transfer all transactions from paper to electronic documents.

Socially, the bureau pays great attention to developing education and human resources, aiming to develop new skills up to international standards. It also supports upgrading health facilities to the highest standards by ensuring quality health services and professional safety. Throughout 2023, the bureau organized six workshops to raise awareness among high school and higher education students and participated in three career exhibitions.

NBK hosts awareness session on fraud and protection methods for 'NBK Aspire' interns

Part of bank's ongoing efforts to promote 'Let's Be Aware' campaign

KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing efforts to promote the "Let's Be Aware" banking awareness campaign launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait, in collaboration with Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), and in furtherance to its endeavors to increase fraud awareness and protection methods, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) held a session for the participants in the 'NBK Aspire' Summer Internship Program for 2024 in which it highlighted the importance of safeguarding oneself against fraud, with a particular focus on social media.



Adnan Al-Timimi

The interns delved into the various measures implemented by banks to ensure the protection of their customers and their sensitive personal information from fraudulent activities. The discourse underscored the significance of being vigilant and proactive in mitigating the threats posed by fraud, especially in the digital age where cybercrimes are prevalent. An integral part of the conversation revolved around the risks associated with sharing OTP and the potential consequences of such actions, noting that maintaining the confidentiality of OTP and not sharing it with anyone is the best way to keep bank accounts information secure.

Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan up 32.7%

TOKYO: Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan widened 32.7 percent from a year earlier to JPY 90.1 billion (\$556 million) in June, up for the second consecutive month buoyed by strong exports, government data showed on Thursday. Kuwait stayed in black ink with Japan for 16 years and five months, the Finance Ministry said in a preliminary report. Overall exports from Kuwait to Japan jumped 24.3 percent year-on-year to JPY 115.6 billion (\$597 million), up for the second straight month.

Imports from Japan grew 1.6 percent to JPY 25.5 billion (\$152 million), up for the second month in a row. The Middle East's trade surplus with Japan widened 2.5 percent to JPY 645.0 billion (\$4.1 billion) last month, with Japan-bound exports from the region increasing 6.2 percent from a year earlier. Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG), and other natural resources, which accounted for 95.2 percent of the region's total exports to Japan, went up 6.7 percent.

The region's overall imports from Japan soared 14.4 percent on demand for automobiles, machinery, and steel. Japan's global trade balance returned to surplus for the first time in three months at JPY 224.0 billion (\$1.4 billion) in June. Exports rose 5.4 percent from the year before, thanks to shipments of semiconductor-making equipment, non-ferrous metal, and plastic. Imports expanded 3.2 percent as computers and units, power-generating machines, and crude oil inflated costs amid the yen's depreciation against the dollar. China remained Japan's biggest trade partner, followed by the US. The trade data are measured on a customs-cleared basis before adjustment for seasonal factors. — KUNA



Commenting on this, Adnan Al-Timimi, Digital Communications Officer at National Bank of Kuwait said, "The session was highly engaging for the interns of 'NBK Aspire' program targeting students between the age of 14 and 18 years. It served as a platform for them to gain a deeper understanding of the strategies and best practices for enhancing their security posture and fortifying their defenses against fraudulent schemes." "By organizing such awareness activities, we help foster a fraud-resilient environment. NBK uses all its digital channels to highlight different fraud types.

It also warns customers against all fraud

schemes via SMS, e-mail or phone calls by sharing social media communications to warn customers against clicking unverified ads like those promising high gains, enticing individuals to register their personal information on fake trading platforms or accounts promising financial aids," he explained. It is worth mentioning that NBK frequently warns its followers against all types of fraud by posting text communications and video clips as well as reposting CBK's communications related to the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, as part of its efforts to promote fraud protection among all sectors of society.



GAZA: Palestinians walk past piles of garbage in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on July 18, 2024, as the conflict between Zionists and Hamas continues.— AFP photos

Gulf states denounce Knesset's opposition to Palestinian state

RIYADH: Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi Thursday emphatically condemned Zionist occupation Knesset's resolution that rejected the establishment of a Palestinian statehood. In a press statement, Al-Budaiwi billed the move as an obvious breach of relevant international resolutions and proof of the occupation's insistence on fueling tensions and jeopardizing regional and world security and stability.

He called on the international community to necessarily decry and condemn this unjust resolution, which reflects occupation forces' intention to widen the conflict. The GCC chief, further, restated the GCC member countries' support for the establishment of a Palestinian statehood on the June 4, 1967 border, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Earlier in the day, the Zionist occupation's Knesset (parliament) reportedly passed a resolution that overwhelmingly rejected the establishment of a Palestinian state. The Knesset passed the resolution with 68 votes in favor and just nine against it, according to Zionist occupation media reports.

Also, Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit strongly condemned the Knesset's vote to reject Palestinian statehood. In a statement on Thursday, Abul-Gheit said this is an attempt by the occupation forces to "legalize" its occupation of Palestine and deny the rights of Palestinians. The move, which came at a time when Zionist Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir broke into Al-Aqsa Mosque, is a new violation of previously-signed agreements and the international law, he added.

Terrible war must end

Meanwhile, Secretary-General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres said that the "parties must reach such a deal now...and this terrible war must end". Addressing ambassadors on behalf of Guterres, Chief-de-Cabinet Courtenay Rattray warned, before a UN Security Council session on the situation on the Middle East, that humanitarian support in the besieged Gaza Strip is about to fully collapse. Rattray reiterated the need for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

"Rafah is in ruins - and the Rafah crossing remains closed, further hampering humanitarian operations. Almost two million people have been displaced - nearly the entire population of Gaza - and many of them multiple times, Rattray said. Rattray also voiced deep concern over the situation in the occupied West Bank, amid high levels of violence by Zionist security forces, settlers and Palestinian militants.

"The seizure of large land parcels in strategic areas and changes to planning, land management and governance are expected to significantly accelerate settlement expansion," he added. Zionist administrative and legal steps are also "steadily altering" the geography of the occupied West Bank, Rattray said. He further informed ambassadors of the issuance of two military orders at the end of May, which transferred powers to, and appointed, a civilian deputy in Zionist Civil Administration.

"This move is another significant advance in the ongoing transfer of authority over many aspects of daily life in the occupied West Bank", he said. "If left unaddressed, these measures risk causing irreparable damage...we must change course. All settlement activity must cease immediately. Zionist settlements are a flagrant violation of international law and a key obstacle to peace." — KUNA



GAZA: Hussein Abu Assi, 67, walks out of his house that was heavily damaged by Zionist bombardment, in the town of Bani Suheila near Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip.



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UK PM pledges European reset

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DHAKA: Anti-quota protesters continue demonstrations, which have been ongoing since July 1, as police is dispatched to control dissent on July 18, 2024. — AFP

32 dead in Bangladesh protests

Protesters set fire to state TV network; two-thirds of deaths caused by police weaponry

DHAKA: Bangladeshi students set fire to the country's state broadcaster on Thursday, a day after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina appeared on the network seeking to calm escalating clashes that have killed at least 32 people. Hundreds of protesters demanding reform of civil service hiring rules fought back and overwhelmed riot police who had fired at them with rubber bullets, chasing the retreating officers to BTV's headquarters in the capital Dhaka. The incensed crowd then set ablaze the network's reception building and dozens of vehicles parked outside, a BTV official told AFP on condition of anonymity. The broadcaster said "many people" were trapped inside as the fire spread but another official from the station later told AFP that they had safely evacuated the building.

Hasina's government has ordered schools and universities to close indefinitely as police step up efforts to bring the country's deteriorating law and order situation under control. The premier appeared on the broadcaster on Wednesday night to condemn the "murder" of protesters and vow that those responsible will be punished regardless of their political affiliation.

But violence worsened on the streets despite her appeal for calm as police again attempted to break

up demonstrations with rubber bullets and tear gas volleys. At least 25 people were killed on Thursday in addition to seven killed earlier in the week, according to a tally of casualty figures from hospitals compiled by AFP, with hundreds more wounded.

Police weaponry was the cause of at least two-thirds of those deaths, based on descriptions given to AFP by hospital figures. "We've got seven dead here," an official at Uttara Crescent Hospital in the capital Dhaka, who asked not to be named for fear of reprisal, told AFP. "The first two were students with rubber bullet injuries. The other five had gunshot injuries." Nearly 1,000 others had been treated at the hospital for injuries sustained during clashes with police, the official said, adding many had rubber bullet wounds.

Didar Malekin of the online news outlet Dhaka Times told AFP that Mehedi Hasan, one of his reporters, had been killed while covering clashes in Dhaka. Several cities across Bangladesh saw violence throughout the day as riot police marched on protesters who had begun another round of human blockades on roads and highways.

Helicopters rescued 60 police officers who were

trapped on the roof of a campus building at Canadian University, the scene of some of Dhaka's fiercest clashes on Thursday, the elite Rapid Action Battalion police force said in a statement.

'Calling her a dictator'

Near-daily marches this month have demanded an end to a quota system that reserves more than half of civil service posts for specific groups, including children of veterans from the country's 1971 liberation war against Pakistan. Critics say the scheme benefits children of pro-government groups that back Hasina, 76, who has ruled the country since 2009 and won her fourth consecutive election in January after a vote without genuine opposition.

Her administration is accused by rights groups of capturing state institutions and stamping out dissent, including by the extrajudicial killing of opposition activists. Mubashar Hasan, a Bangladesh expert at the University of Oslo in Norway, said the protests had grown into a wider expression of discontent with Hasina's autocratic rule. "They are protesting against the repressive nature of the state," he told AFP. "Protesters are questioning Hasina's leadership, accusing her

of clinging onto power by force," he added. "The students are in fact calling her a dictator."

Mobile Internet down

Bangladeshis reported widespread mobile Internet outages around the country on Thursday, two days after Internet providers cut off access to Facebook - the protest campaign's key organizing platform. Junior telecommunications minister Zunaid Ahmed Palak told AFP that the government had ordered the network cut off. He earlier told reporters that social media had been "weaponized as a tool to spread rumors, lies and disinformation", forcing the government to restrict access. Along with police crackdowns, demonstrators and students allied to the premier's ruling Awami League have also battled each other on the streets with bricks and bamboo rods. Hasina's national address did not assign responsibility for the deaths, but descriptions from hospital authorities and students suggest at least some died when police used supposedly non-lethal weapons on demonstrations. Rights group Amnesty International said video evidence from clashes this week showed that Bangladeshi security forces had used unlawful force. — AFP

How Khamenei elevated a little-known moderate to the presidency

DUBAI: When intelligence officials briefed Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in May ahead of a snap presidential election, their report was grim: angered by economic hardship and crackdowns on social freedoms, most Iranians planned to boycott the vote and turnout would only be about 13 percent.

That's when Khamenei decided to plan a carefully orchestrated election, setting the stage for a little-known but trusted moderate, Massoud Pezeshkian, to rise to the presidency in a race that would initially be dominated by hardliners, five people with knowledge of the matter told Reuters. Khamenei gathered a handful of his most trusted advisers to discuss his plan in at least three meetings in late May at his residence in a fortified compound in Tehran, according to the five people, who are two hardline sources, a top security official and two insiders close to Khamenei's inner circle.

The supreme leader was concerned low turnout would damage the clerical establishment's credibility and he ordered those present to find a way to steer the election, said one of the people, who was briefed about the meetings. The election was called after President Ebrahim Raisi died in a helicopter crash in May. His death upset the plans of many fellow hardliners who wanted him to succeed the 85-year-old Khamenei and triggered a race among hardliners to influence the selection of the next supreme leader.

The meetings at Khamenei's residence included a small group of senior officials and security aides, his close ally and adviser Ali Akbar Velayati, as well as two senior commanders of the powerful elite Revolutionary Guards. Khamenei's aim was to preserve the Islamic Republic amid domestic dissent and heightened tensions with the West and the Zionist entity over Gaza, according to the five people, who were briefed in detail about what Khamenei said during the meetings regarding his plan and its goals. One of the insiders briefed about the meeting said Khamenei believed Iran needed a president who could appeal to different layers of so-

ciety, but would not challenge the ruling Shi'ite theocracy. Several names were floated at the second meeting. Khamenei suggested Pezeshkian as a person who could foster unity among those in power, bridge the gap between the clerical establishment and the people, and ensure a smooth selection process for the next supreme leader, two sources said. "It was a flawless plan by the supreme leader ... which guaranteed the survival of the Islamic Republic," said Tehran-based pro-reform analyst Saeed Laylaz.

"Pezeshkian will avoid any crisis at home, whether with the nation or the establishment," Laylaz said. "That will allow top leaders to decide about the succession and plan it in a calm atmosphere." Khamenei's office, the public relations office for the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Pezeshkian's office could not be reached for comment. Velayati's office declined to comment.

Election engineering

The new president is not expected to usher in any major shift on Iran's nuclear or foreign policy, or its support for militias in the region, but he will be closely involved in selecting the successor to Khamenei, who calls the shots on top state matters.

Pezeshkian's mild profile, the sources said, would appease disgruntled Iranians, ensure domestic stability amid mounting foreign pressure, as well as providing Khamenei with a trusted ally in the eventual succession process. A regional source close to Iranian circles of power said Pezeshkian's election had been "engineered" to defuse tensions after a wave of popular protests sparked by the death in custody of a young woman in 2022 and stricter curbs on social freedoms imposed by Raisi. The initial phase of Khamenei's plan was set in motion when then-lawmaker Pezeshkian - encouraged by pragmatic former officials with links to the supreme leader's office - registered to stand in the June 28 election, two sources said. They said Pezeshkian was unaware of the behind-the-scenes decisions. One source close to him said he didn't even expect to be approved by the Guardian Council, an unelected vetting body of six clerics and six jurists aligned to Khamenei which has banned many moderate and prominent conservative candidates in the past.

Khamenei's plan was designed to appear fair and democratic, so two prominent hardline candidates,

former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili and parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, were approved by the vetting council, the five people familiar with the matter said. That meant hardliner votes would likely be split between them, making it harder for both to make it to a run-off.

Jalili belongs to the ultra-hardline camp of "Paydari", which advocates tougher social restrictions, self-reliance, and a hawkish foreign policy. A win for Jalili, who opposed the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, would have sent a negative signal to the West as it piles pressure on Tehran over its fast-advancing uranium enrichment program, three analysts and two diplomats told Reuters. "With the increased likelihood of Donald Trump's return to the White House ... the Islamic Republic needed a moderate figure to keep dialogue with the West open and reduce tensions," said one Western diplomat in the region.

The desired outcome

Pezeshkian, who is an Azeri ethnic minority, won the first round with a core of voters that analysts said was mostly urban middle class or young - groups widely disillusioned by years of security crackdowns. But voter turnout was just 40 percent, the lowest for any election in the Islamic Republic, and the election went to a run-off between Pezeshkian and the fervently anti-Western Jalili.

Qalibaf, a security hawk, who has echoed the views of Khamenei on every major issue, such as backing the power of Islamic clerics, finished third. Fearing Jalili's antagonistic domestic and foreign policy, many Iranians who voted for Qalibaf, or abstained, went for Pezeshkian in the second round on July 5, bumping up the turnout to almost 50 percent of Iran's 61 million voters.

Ultimately, Khamenei's plan achieved the desired outcome. Pezeshkian, a 69-year-old heart surgeon, backed by reformists, moderate conservatives and ethnic minorities, won with 54 percent of the votes. "I thank the supreme leader. If it weren't for him, I don't think my name would have easily come out of ballot boxes," Pezeshkian said on state TV.

Two sources close to Khamenei said Pezeshkian was referring to an order from the supreme leader to electoral officials to ensure votes were counted properly. The electoral authorities said there were no complaints about vote rigging. — Reuters

US military closes problematic Gaza aid pier

WASHINGTON: The US military announced on Wednesday that its mission to install and operate a temporary, floating pier off the coast of Gaza was complete, formally ending an extraordinary but troubled effort to bring humanitarian aid to Palestinians. The pier, announced by President Joe Biden during a televised address to Congress in March, was a massive endeavor that took about 1,000 US forces to execute. Aid began flowing via the pier to Gaza in May, an operation aimed at helping avert famine after months of Zionist siege and bombardment. But bad weather and distribution challenges inside Gaza limited the effectiveness of what the US military says was its biggest aid delivery effort ever in the Middle East. "The maritime surge mission involving the pier is complete. So there's no more need to use the pier," Navy Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, the deputy commander of US Central Command, told a news briefing.

Cooper said efforts to distribute aid to Gaza arriving by sea would now shift to the established port of Ashdod in the Zionist entity. "Our assessment is that the temporary pier has achieved its intended effect to surge a very high volume of aid into Gaza and ensure that aid reaches the civilians in Gaza in a quick manner," Cooper said, adding that nearly 20 million pounds of aid was delivered to Gaza. The pier became a sore point in Congress, where Republicans branded it a political stunt by Biden, who was under pressure from fellow Democrats to do more to aid Palestinians after months of staunchly supporting the Zionist entity's punishing war on Hamas. "This chapter might be over in President Biden's mind, but the national embarrassment that this project has caused is not. The only miracle is that this doomed-from-the-start operation did not cost any American lives," Senator Roger Wicker, the top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said. — Reuters

International

2 dead after train derails in India

Four carriages overturned, injuring 35 people; cause of derailment unclear



UTTAR PRADESH: National Disaster Response Force personnel are seen during a rescue operation near the site of a train accident in Gonda district on July 18, 2024. (Right) A man stands near the compartment coach of the derailed train. — AFP



NEW DELHI: An Indian passenger train derailed and overturned several of its cars on Thursday, killing at least two people and injuring 35 others. India's railway network is the main form of travel in the vast country, but it is poorly funded and deadly accidents often occur. The Chandigarh-Dibrugarh Express, a 22-car passenger service that runs for 2,640 kilometers (1,640 miles), derailed near the northern Hindu holy city of Ayodhya, at around 2:30 pm (0900 GMT). "Two people have died," Indian Railways spokesman Pankaj Kumar Singh told AFP.

Uttar Pradesh state relief commissioner Naveen Kumar told AFP that another 35 were injured, three of them seriously. He added that rescue operations were

finished and no one was trapped inside the train.

At least four carriages had overturned at the site of the accident in Gonda district, broadcaster NDTV reported. Footage aired by the network showed passengers standing on top of a derailed compartment that had crashed onto its side while others milled about the wreckage.

"The train accident in Gonda district is extremely sad," Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath posted on social media platform X. "District administration officials have been directed to carry out relief and rescue operations on a war footing and to take the injured to the hospital," he added. Anil Kumar Tiwari, chief medical superintendent of Gonda

District Hospital, told AFP that a team of medics had been rushed to the accident site.

Antiquated rail system

India has launched a \$30 billion railway infrastructure modernization in a bid to boost the economy and connectivity. But analysts say that while accidents have reduced over time, India's antiquated rail system still has a long way to go.

An average of 20,000 people died each year between 2017 and 2021 in rail accidents — collisions, derailments and other causes — according to official records. Defective tracks, poor maintenance and old signaling kit combined with human error were the

main cause of derailments, a report by India's top audit authority said.

Last year nearly 300 people were killed when a passenger train and a stationary goods train collided, with the derailed compartments then striking another fast-moving passenger service. India's worst-ever rail accident occurred in 1981, when a cyclone blew a train off its tracks and into a river in the state of Bihar, leaving 800 dead and more than 100 injured.

Indian Railways, the world's fourth-largest rail network, runs some 14,000 trains daily with 8,000 locomotives over a vast system of tracks some 64,000 kilometers (40,000 miles) long. The trains carry more than 21 million people each day. — AFP

France hunts arson suspects after 7 killed in fire

NICE: Police were hunting three arson suspects on Thursday after an apartment building fire killed seven people in the southern French city of Nice. Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said. The dead include three children — 5, 7 and 10 years old — and a 17-year-old who tried to escape by jumping from a window, they added.

The apartment is located in the low-income neighborhood of Les Moulins, known for being a drug-dealing hub, in the west of the city. "What happened here, this fire, is absolutely awful and revolting," Attal told reporters at the scene, adding that "the investigation is ongoing, three individuals are being sought".

Nice Deputy Mayor Anthony Borre had said earlier that surveillance footage showed three men wearing balaclavas in the vicinity. The apartment was occupied by a family believed to have Comorian origins, regional prefect Hugues Moutouh said, referring to the southern African island nation.

Ten people were inside when the fire broke out and rescuers were alerted at around 2:30 am (0030 GMT) to the blaze on the seventh floor of the building. In spite of the substantial resources deployed, "unfortunately seven people died during this fire", firefighters said.

Neighbors hurriedly dragged mattresses in front of the building to break the fall of those jumping out of windows. Four police were in psychological care after witnessing the scene. Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said on social media that the quick arrival of firefighters "probably prevented more deaths".

'Serious, barbaric'

Nice prosecutor Damien Martinelli said investigators were looking into a "criminal" cause for the fire. "In light of the initial evidence, I have opened an investigation into acts of arson leading to death," he told reporters at the scene.

Borre, Nice's deputy mayor, said "These actions are serious, they are barbaric," adding that he hoped for "a strong response" by the authorities once the investigation was over. President Emmanuel Macron said he shared Nice's "emotion" following the fire, posting on social media that his thoughts were "with the loved ones of those who died". The blaze probably started on the building's second floor and spread through the staircase to higher floors, authorities said. Rescuers said that three people were taken to hospital, one of them with life-threatening injuries after jumping from a window.

Arriving firefighters were confronted by a "raging apartment fire" on the seventh floor of the building. They carried out three aerial ladder rescues and evacuated dozens. "There were flames in the staircase and smoke was entering under the door," said Soibrata, a resident on the building's fifth floor.

"I woke the children up, and called the firefighters who told us to put wet towels under the doors and go



NICE: Firefighters work inside a residential building where a fire broke out overnight in a working-class neighborhood in Nice, southern France, on July 18, 2024. — AFP

on the balcony" where they were rescued, she said. Soibrata, who did not give her last name, and others in the building told AFP that the wait for firefighters had been much longer than the "10 minutes" Martinelli said it took for them to arrive.

Neighbors sprayed water on parasols and furni-

ture on adjacent balconies to prevent falling burning debris from setting the rest of the building on fire, they said. Twenty people were evacuated to a temporary shelter, with Nice Mayor Christian Estrosi saying a crisis unit would be set up to help anyone affected by the fire. — AFP

Kuwait slams Zionist terrorism...

Continued from Page 1

Palestinian people who have been struggling to obtain their legitimate rights, topped with establishing their independent state based on June 4 1967 borders, and achieving a comprehensive and fair peace in line with the relevant international resolutions and references, to reach a fair and lasting solution to the Palestinian cause. This will lead to achieving security, stability and development in the region, Yahya concluded.

Meanwhile, a displaced Palestinian mother has given birth at a hospital run by Kuwait's Red Crescent Society in the southern Gaza Strip city of Khan Yunis, the first at the medical facility, manager Dr Anwar Al-Ghara said on Thursday. Spread across 750 sq m, the facility is equipped with fully functional maternity wards and has seen an influx of critical patients as of late, he said, adding the hospital has the capacity and critical supplies needed to treat them. He expressed his appreciation of Kuwait's support, singling out the "exceptional" efforts of Kuwait Red Crescent Society and the charity's cooperation with its Palestinian counterparts.

The Zionist parliament voted Thursday to oppose a Palestinian state as an "existential threat", a day after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told lawmakers the army had Hamas "by the throat". The vote, which drew swift criticism from the Palestinian leadership and the international community, is largely symbolic but laid down a marker ahead of a planned address by Netanyahu to the US Congress next Wednesday.

The veteran hawk has shown little interest in efforts by the US administration to broker a truce and hostage release deal for Gaza, insisting that "absolute victory" over Hamas is within reach and vowing to ramp up the military pressure. On the ground in Gaza, the Hamas-ruled territory's health ministry reported 54 deaths in 24 hours as the Zionist kept up its heavy bombardment of recent days.

The resolution passed by Zionist lawmakers in the early hours said a Palestinian state on land occupied by the Zionist army would "perpetuate the (Zionist)-Palestinian conflict and destabilize the region". It said "promoting" a Palestinian state "would only

encourage Hamas and its supporters" after its Oct 7 attack on the Zionist entity. The resolution passed by 68 votes to nine in the 120-member parliament.

The Palestinian Authority accused the Zionist entity's hard-right ruling coalition of "plunging the region into an abyss". France expressed "consternation" at the vote, noting that it was "in contradiction" with multiple UN Security resolutions.

All health facilities in southern Gaza have been pushed to "breaking point" by the influx of casualties from Zionist bombardments, the International Committee of the Red Cross said on Thursday. AFP TV images showed mourners at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central town of Deir el-Balah, where several white-shrouded corpses lay on the ground. One man cradled the covered body of a child.

Rescuers confirmed several people had been killed in separate Zionist strikes. At the hospital, Ahmed Abu Muheisen said one strike had targeted his cousin's family in the Al-Zuwaida area. "His children and his wife were martyred and so was he," Muheisen said. The Zionist military offensive has killed at least 38,848 people, mostly women and children, according to figures from the Gaza health ministry.

In an address to the European Parliament on Thursday, EU chief Ursula von der Leyen underlined international concern over the civilian death toll in Gaza. "The people of Gaza cannot bear any more, and humanity cannot bear any more," she said. The war has destroyed much of Gaza's housing and other infrastructure, leaving almost all of the population displaced and short of food and drinking water. — Agencies



JERUSALEM: A screen grab shows Zionist National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir speaking at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound on July 17, 2024. Jordan's foreign ministry condemned Ben Gvir's "provocative step". — AFP



DOVER, Delaware: US President Joe Biden steps off Air Force One upon arrival at Dover Air Force Base on July 17, 2024. — AFP

Isolated Biden battles COVID...

Continued from Page 1

at the worst possible time for his campaign, forcing him to cut short a trip to Las Vegas and isolate at his holiday home in Rehoboth, Delaware. The split-screen with Donald Trump could not have been more stark, with Trump set to formally accept the Republican nomination in Milwaukee.

US networks showed images of frail-looking Biden gingerly descending the steps of Air Force One in Delaware, in a week when Trump is lauded by supporters each night at a packed party convention. Former president Trump, who at 78 is just three years younger than Biden, is riding a wave of support from his party after surviving an assassination attempt on Saturday that left him with a bandaged ear.

Senator JD Vance, Trump's running mate and another former critic-turned-loyalist, presented himself on Wednesday as the son of a neglected industrial Ohio town who will fight for the working class if elected in November. As he chronicled his hard-scrabble journey from a difficult childhood to the US

Marines, Yale Law School, venture capitalism and the US Senate, Vance, 39, said he understood working Americans' struggles.

"I grew up in Middletown, Ohio, a small town where people spoke their minds, built with their hands and loved their God, their family, their community and their country with their whole hearts," Vance said. "But it was also a place that had been cast aside and forgotten by America's ruling class in Washington."

The United States could now be approaching the climax of an extraordinary three weeks in politics, which started when Biden gave a disastrous performance during a televised debate with Trump. Biden blamed jet lag and a cold, but the fact that America's commander-in-chief has now fallen ill for a second time just as fears grow about his fitness for the job has merely intensified the panic in Democratic ranks.

The White House said on Wednesday that Biden was suffering mild symptoms including a runny nose and a cough and would "carry out the full duties of the office while in isolation". White House spokesman Andrew Bates pushed back the previous night about the reports on Schumer and Jeffries, saying: "The President told both leaders he is the nominee of the party, he plans to win." — Agencies

International

UK PM pledges European reset

Starmer eyes new security pact with EU, improved trade deal as UK hosts 45 European leaders

WOODSTOCK: UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Thursday vowed to renew relationships with European allies soured by Brexit as he welcomed dozens of leaders to a summit designed to reaffirm backing for Ukraine and tackle irregular migration. Starmer, elected premier two weeks ago, told more than 45 European leaders the UK would be a "friend and partner" as he started work to improve ties hit by the country's tortuous departure from the European Union under his Conservative predecessors.

"We want to work with all of you to reset relationships, rediscover our common interest and renew the bonds of trust and friendship that brighten the fabric of European Life," Starmer told them as he opened the European Political Community (EPC) summit.

Europe is grappling with challenges ranging from supporting Kyiv after Russia's full-scale invasion to breaking up people-smuggling gangs contributing to record levels of irregular migration.

Ukraine, illegal migration, energy security and defending democracies are top of the agenda at Blenheim Palace, the stately home which was the birthplace of Britain's World War II leader Winston Churchill, near Oxford in southern England. "It's very important to be here, for Ukraine, especially this tough period, for us during the war," said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who was due to hold discussions with Starmer and meet head of state King Charles III.

"For us it's very important to maintain unity in Europe because always this unity leads to strong decisions." NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg attended an EPC meeting for the first time, as did the heads of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe. "We will not be coerced. We will continue to support Ukraine," Stoltenberg said on arrival.

Migration 'crisis'

Starmer, who led Labour to a landslide election win over the Tories on July 4, has said the one-day summit would "fire the starting gun on this government's new approach to Europe". He was set to tell fellow leaders that the UK will take "a more active and greater convening role on the world stage, to strike genuine partnerships that have impact on people's lives".

Vance woos US working class in convention speech

MILWAUKEE: Donald Trump's vice-presidential pick J D Vance lit up the Republican National Convention Wednesday with a speech leaning heavily on his personal story as he sought to connect his turbulent upbringing with the hardships faced by millions of Americans. In his first formal address since being tapped as Trump's running mate on Monday, Vance offered a powerful account of growing up poor, with no father at home and a mother hooked on drugs. "I grew up in Middletown, Ohio — a small town where people spoke their minds, built with their hands and loved their God, their family, their community and their country with their whole hearts," he said. "But it was also a place that had been cast aside and forgotten by America's ruling class in Washington." The story will be familiar to readers of his best-selling memoir "Hillbilly Elegy," an account of his Appalachian family and modest beginnings that gave a voice to rural, working-class resentment in left-behind America. But it was his first real introduction to many tuning in at home and the Trump campaign is banking on the address



WOODSTOCK: Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer (second right), Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban (from left), Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Netherlands' Prime Minister Dick Schoof, Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Albania's Prime Minister Edi Rama attend a working group session on migration, at the European Political Community meeting on July 18, 2024. — AFP

He will also say that border security will be "at the heart of the government's reset with Europe", according to Downing Street. New Foreign Secretary David Lammy said in broadcast interviews early Thursday that it was also about post-Brexit relations with more than just the 27 EU members invited.

Starmer called irregular migration a "crisis" affecting every country attending. More than 380,000 undocumented migrants crossed the EU's borders last year, and tens of thousands made their way to Britain. The Labour leader has promised to "smash the gangs" behind migrant Channel crossings from northern France in small boats which dogged the Tory administrations under Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak. "There's no silver bullet," said French President Emmanuel Macron as he arrived at the summit, the morning after one migrant died and 71 others were rescued off the French coast. "I think our coop-

eration to prevent this migration before the arrivals is the most efficient one," he added.

The conference will also see Britain reaffirm its "ironclad" support for Ukraine and likely push for additional international military and financial aid to be supplied to Kyiv. It comes amid the increasing possibility of Donald Trump regaining the White House in November and with fears over his commitment to the Western military alliance NATO.

'New chapter'

Starmer, who supported Britain remaining in the EU during the 2016 Brexit referendum, has ruled out rejoining the European single market, customs union or freedom of movement. But he does want to negotiate a new security pact with the bloc and a veterinary agreement to ease border checks on agricultural foods, as well as an improved trading deal.



MILWAUKEE: US Senator from Ohio and 2024 Republican vice presidential candidate J D Vance, alongside his wife Usha Vance, gestures after delivering his speech during the third day of the 2024 Republican National Convention. — AFP

chiming with blue-collar voters in the swing states key to winning November's election rematch against President Joe Biden. Vance emphasized his background as a former US Marine, making him the first veteran on a major party ticket since Republican John McCain ran for president in 2008, and talked about meeting his wife Usha at law school.

Big moment

He touched on trade, foreign policy and the drug epidemic — and on Trump's policies for addressing them — but he devoted much of the speech to his own

experiences, bringing his mom, who has been sober for a decade, on stage afterwards. Slamming Biden's presidency, he called for a leader "not in the pocket of big business (who) answers to the working man — union and non-union alike." "There is still so much talent and grit in the American heartland, there really is. But for these places to thrive, my friends, we need a leader who fights for the people who built this country," he said. The one-term senator, who will be just 40 on inauguration day, would be the third-youngest vice president in history — and one of the least experienced — if 78-year-old Trump defeats Biden.

Even before his big moment, Vance was a hit with the party faithful in Milwaukee's Fiserv Forum arena. They rewarded him with boisterous applause as he arrived with his wife on the opening day Monday to take his place with the Trump family in the front row, where he has since had pride of place. While Vance reinforces Trump's appeal to the headline base, he offers little chance of broadening the tent to more moderate voters and women. He is further to the right than Trump on some issues including abortion, where he embraces calls for federal legislation. "Wall Street barons crashed the economy and American builders went out of business ... We're done, ladies and gentlemen, catering to Wall Street. We'll commit to the working man," he said. He urged voters to "choose a new path" as he accepted his nomination, telling the crowd: "The people who govern this country have failed and failed again." — AFP

EU chief von der Leyen reelected for second term

STRASBOURG: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Thursday won a second five-year term that she vowed would tackle the EU's challenges head-on, including bolstering its defense capability and strengthening Europe's industry. The German ex-defense minister, who became the first woman leader of the European Commission in 2019, had presented herself as the best and most experienced captain to steer the commission.

Von der Leyen received votes backing her from 401 MEPs in the 720-seat chamber in the French city of Strasbourg — over the 361-vote majority she needed to remain head of the EU's executive body. There were 284 lawmakers who voted against in the secret ballot, held during the first parliamentary session since EU-wide elections in June.

An elated von der Leyen pumped fists in the air after parliament speaker Roberta Metsola announced the result. She later said it was "a very emotional and special moment for me" and the result "sends a strong message of confidence". Von der Leyen's first term was full of crises including the coronavirus pandemic and the outbreak of war in Ukraine. "We have navigated the most troubled waters that our union has ever faced," she told reporters.

Von der Leyen however faces another difficult five years, with rising expectations that former US president Donald Trump will return to the White House after elections later this year. And with conflicts in and near Europe, von der Leyen insisted on the need for a "strong Europe" during a "period of deep anxiety and uncertainty". Other issues in her in-tray are the risk of a wider conflict in the Middle East and the EU's trade tensions with China.

Not a 'blank cheque'

European leaders were quick to offer their congratulations. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, whose recent victory has many hoping for better EU-UK ties, said on X: "I look forward to working closely with you to reset the relationship between



STRASBOURG: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen celebrates after she was re-elected for a second term at the European Parliament on July 18, 2024. — AFP

the UK and the European Union."

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk hailed the result, vowing she would deliver for Europe. Von der Leyen's re-election was "a clear sign of our ability to act in the European Union, especially in difficult times," Scholz said. "Times are hard, but with your courage and determination, I'm sure you'll do a great job. We will do, together," Tusk, an ex-top EU official, said.

Reaching this point had been rocky. The EU's 27 leaders fiercely debated her candidacy in June before putting von der Leyen's name forward as their continuity pick. Von der Leyen belongs to the biggest political group in the parliament, the conservative European People's Party, which is in a centrist coalition with the Socialists and Democrats and the liberal Renew Europe groups.

She spent weeks seeking to convince different parties to give her support. Despite the Socialists and Democrats group backing her, the group stressed it did not mean a "blank cheque". "Our job begins now. We will continue working to put our social imprint in all EU policies for the next five years," the group's leader, Iratxe Garcia Perez, said in a statement.

Von der Leyen vowed earlier on Thursday to boost Europe's competitiveness by ensuring major investment in key industries including defense. But she also insisted the EU would not deviate from ambitious climate goals that entail reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 90 percent by 2040.—AFP

Starmer will hold several conversations with European leaders during the conference, including Macron. "It might put some flesh on the bones of how exactly they want to go about it or a little bit more detail," Anand Menon of the UK in Changing Europe think-tank told AFP.

European Council chief Charles Michel said he hoped that a "new chapter" would be opened with the UK. A high-ranking EU official said there were "good vibes" in the early contacts with the new Labour government but "now we need to go deeper".

The official said Brussels would need to see the details of any potential new security pact, but warned that the EU was not looking to "reopen" the Brexit deal with Britain. "Any proposals that would be made would be looked at with an open mind and favorably," the official said. "What we think is important is the implementation of existing agreements." — AFP

Indian family of Usha Vance known for academic prowess

HYDERABAD: Usha Chilukuri Vance, the wife of Donald Trump's vice presidential running mate, has a great-aunt in southern India, aged 96, celebrated in local media as the country's oldest active professor. Academic achievement marks the family of US-born Vance, notably Shanthamma Chilukuri, who still travels 60 km (40 miles) most weekdays to university to teach physics. "Most of our family is academically strong and education has been a top priority," Chilukuri told Reuters by phone from the city of Visakhapatnam. Usha Vance, 38, made her debut on the US national political stage on Wednesday when she introduced her husband, US Senator J D Vance of Ohio, at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee. "I got to know about Usha's husband being named as a vice president candidate and of course we are happy as a family," Chilukuri told Reuters by phone from the city of Visakhapatnam.

In his memoir "Hillbilly Elegy", Vance calls his wife a "supersmart daughter of Indian immigrants" whom he met at Yale Law School. The parents of Usha Vance moved to the US in the late 1970s and now teach engineering and molecular biology in San Diego.

While Usha Vance studied at Yale and Cambridge, her father and grandfather both taught or studied at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), India's premier engineering college. Her younger sister is a mechanical engineer with a semiconductor company in San Diego and an aunt a medical professional in the southern Indian city of Chennai.

The family is originally from a village called Vaduru in Andhra Pradesh state but moved to Chennai when Usha Vance's paternal grandfather, Ramasastry Chilukuri, went to teach at the IIT there around the time it was set up in 1959, members of the family said. The IIT now runs a student award in the memory of Ramasastry, who used to teach physics.

The family, which is Hindu, is also deeply religious. Shanthamma Chilukuri said many in the family were well-versed in ancient texts like Upanishads and Vedas. She has authored a book on verses from the Bhagavad Gita, one of Hinduism's holiest books. Senator Vance told Fox News in June that his wife had helped him "re-engage" with his Christian faith. Sitting by him during the interview, Usha Vance said: "I did grow up in a religious household. My parents are Hindu and that is one of the things that made them such good parents, that made them really good people. And so I have seen the power of that."

Usha Vance was a law clerk to US Chief Justice John Roberts and later became an attorney at US law firm Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP. She resigned after J D Vance was named as the Republican vice presidential candidate. A close India-based family member who attended their wedding in Kentucky in 2014 attributed Usha Vance's success to "the mindset that one must accomplish something, have degrees from top institutes". "Our family WhatsApp group is flooded with messages ever since J D Vance's name was announced," said the family member, who did not want to be named to avoid public attention as interest in the family spikes in the media. "I sent her a congratulatory message and conveyed my best wishes. She was also elated."

Usha Vance's parents and her sister in the United States did not respond to requests for comment. Indian media have hailed her as the latest among several Americans with roots in India rising to fame, including US Vice President Kamala Harris, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, Google CEO Sundar Pichai, and former Republican presidential hopefuls Nikki Haley and Vivek Ramaswamy, who was J D and Usha Vance's classmate at Yale Law.—Reuters

FRIDAY, JULY 19, 2024

Cautious ECB opts for rate pause

'Recent statistics suggest recovery has lost steam in Q2'



FRANKFURT: A pedestrian is seen crossing a street near the headquarters of the European Central Bank (ECB) in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany, on July 18, 2024, ahead of an ECB press conference on the Euro-zone's monetary policy. — AFP

FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank held borrowing costs steady Thursday, giving policymakers more time to assess progress on inflation after last month's first interest rate cut in five years. The ECB's governing council heads into the summer break leaving the benchmark deposit rate at 3.75 percent, after lowering it from a record four percent at the June meeting.

The pause was widely expected after ECB president Christine Lagarde said policymakers would need time to gather sufficient data before deciding the next move. The ECB will keep rates "sufficiently restrictive for as long as necessary" to ensure inflation remains on track to return to the two percent target, the Frankfurt institution said in a statement. The bank reiterated that policymakers would make decisions based on "a data-dependent and meeting-by-meeting approach".

Attention now shifts to Lagarde's 1245 GMT press conference, where observers will be listening for clues about a possible rate cut in September, when

the ECB will have new growth and inflation forecasts. "Investors will look for hints on potential moves in September and afterwards," Unicredit economist Marco Valli said. Euro-zone inflation hit a peak of 10.6 percent in 2022 after Russia's war in Ukraine and pandemic-related supply woes pushed prices up, prompting the ECB to launch an aggressive cycle of monetary tightening.

Inflation in the 20-nation currency club has fallen steadily since then, easing to 2.5 percent in June from 2.6 percent in May. Progress on inflation led the ECB to lower borrowing costs for the first time since 2019 in June, bringing some relief to households and businesses. Lagarde said in Portugal's Sintra this month that inflation was "heading in the right direction", but cautioned that it would likely be "a bumpy road until the end of 2024".

Sticky services, high wages

Policymakers are in particular keeping an eye on core inflation, which strips out volatile food and

energy prices, and remained stubbornly high at 2.9 percent in June. Inflation in the services sector was sticky at 4.1 percent, increasingly becoming a headache for ECB officials. The ECB is also hoping to see a slowdown in wage growth, which has been elevated as euro-zone workers seek salary increases to compensate for higher living costs. "Stickiness in services prices, fast wage growth and a resilient labor market" all argued "against back-to-back rate reductions", said Unicredit's Valli.

The euro-zone economy meanwhile emerged from recession with greater-than-expected growth of 0.3 percent in the first quarter of 2024. But recent data suggested the recovery "has lost steam" in the second quarter, said ING economist Carsten Brzeski, potentially strengthening the case for another rate cut to bolster economic activity. Given that the ECB will have more hard data to go on at its next meeting in September, most observers see that as the likeliest time for a second cut. One further rate reduction is then expected before the end of the

year, possibly in December, according to analysts.

Fed shift, French focus

September is also when the US Federal Reserve is increasingly expected to begin lowering rates, with confidence growing that US inflation is coming down to target. Lagarde, a former French finance minister, can also expect to be grilled Thursday about political uncertainty in her home country after snap elections produced a hung parliament.

French central bank chief Francois Villeroy de Galhau last week called for reducing the country's large deficit, amid concerns that increased government spending could push up inflation. "We expect president Lagarde to be guarded in her responses to direct questions on France," Deutsche Bank economists said in a note. She is likely to say "that the ECB is attentive to what is happening" and reiterate "that euro area member states have agreed a fiscal framework with which they are expected to comply", they added — AFP

British unemployment steadies; Labor vows action on jobs

LONDON: Britain's unemployment rate remains at 4.4 percent, official data showed Thursday, as the country's new Labor government vowed action on helping people into work. Unemployment in the three months to the end of May was unchanged from the three months to the end of April, the Office for National Statistics said. Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall hit out over data contained in the ONS release that showed 9.4 million people classed as economically inactive.

She said the UK was "standing alone as the only G7 country where the employment rate is still not back to pre-pandemic levels". "This is a truly dire inheritance which the government is determined to tackle," she said. The ONS data revealed that a near-record 2.8 million people are out of work owing to long-term sickness. Prime Minister Keir Starmer's center-left Labor party, elected this month after 14 years of Conservative rule, has set out plans for a new national jobs and career service to get more people into work.

Thursday's data was meanwhile analyzed for clues on when the Bank of England might start to cut interest rates after UK inflation returned to the central bank's target of 2.0 percent. The ONS figures show "the UK continues to see wage growth far outpace headline inflation", said Lindsay James, investment strategist at Quilter Investors, which is helping to raise expectations that the central bank will delay cutting until September rather than next month. — AFP

Italy probes Google over alleged unfair user data practices

MILAN: Italy's competition watchdog said Thursday that it had opened an investigation into Google and its parent company Alphabet over suspected "unfair commercial practices" linked to user data consent requests sent to consumers. "The request for consent that Google submits to its users to the linking of the services offered may constitute a misleading and aggressive commercial practice," the AGCM competition authority said in a statement.

"Indeed, it appears to be accompanied by inadequate, incomplete and misleading information and it could influence the choice of whether and to what extent consent should be given," it said. The US tech giant requests consent from users to aggregate and use their personal data across its different services,

including Google's search engine, its Maps service and YouTube, among others. But the consent request provides little or no clear information "as to the real effect that consent has on Google's use of personal data of users," the watchdog said.

It also accused Google of using "techniques and methods for requesting consent, and also for setting up the mechanisms for obtaining consent itself, which could condition the freedom of choice of the average consumer". A Google spokesperson told AFP the company would study the details of the case and "work cooperatively with the authority". The Federconsumatori consumer rights group welcomed the watchdog's case against Google, calling on consumers to be cautious when giving consent and to report back anything "unclear or intransparent".

In 2021, the watchdog imposed a fine of 10 million euros (\$10.9 million) on both Google and its rival Apple for failing to provide enough information to users and resorting to "aggressive methods" in the use of their data for commercial purposes. It said that neither company provided "clear and immediate information" on how user data was ob-

Airline passenger traffic expected to double in 20 years

PARIS: Airlines expect overall passenger numbers to double over the next two decades from the 4.3 billion who flew last year, with growth led by emerging markets such as Asia Pacific and the Middle East, the main global airline body said Thursday. The projected surge in traffic could put further pressure on carriers to contribute to the fight against climate change and make progress towards a pledge to reach "net zero" carbon emissions by 2050.

Average annual passenger growth is expected to be 3.6 percent a year to 2043, compared with a forecast of 9.7 percent growth this year, the International Air Transport Association said in its latest update.

The Asia Pacific region would lead with average growth of 4.8 percent, propelled by countries like India (6.9 percent) and China (5.8 percent) but also Thailand and Vietnam (6.4 percent each), the IATA said. Passenger growth in Africa and the Middle East would rise by 3.6 percent, while Latin American and the Caribbean would see a 2.9 percent increase. The mature markets of North America and Europe would see growth of 1.7 percent and two percent, the association said.

Air transport currently accounts for less than three percent of global CO2 emissions, but is often in the firing line because it serves a minority of the world's population. Airlines are mainly betting on increased production of sustainable aviation fuels produced from renewable sources, expected to provide 65 percent of the industry's "net zero" target for 2050. But the technological challenges of producing such fuels at scale—they currently provide just 0.53 percent of airlines' fuel consumption—are likely to require huge investments. — AFP



PARIS: Vice President Geminin User Experience and Google Jenny Blackburn speaks during the Samsung Galaxy Unpacked event to unveil the next generation of Artificial Intelligent (AI) powered Galaxy phones at the Carrousel du Louvre shopping mall in Paris. — AFP

tained and used. The authority also hit Google with a fine of more than 100 million euros (\$109 million) in May 2021 for abusing its dominant market position by shutting out a rival's smartphone app for users of electric vehicles. — AFP



Business

Ivory Coast tilts economy from farming to natural resources

Number of mining permits and projects tripled since 2012

ABIDJAN: The discovery of huge deposits of natural resources including oil, gas and gold in the Ivory Coast is pushing the country's economy in a new direction as it explores its underground potential. Over the last three years, the West African country - traditionally focused on agriculture, in particular cocoa - has leaned into a new role as an oil and gas producer. Three discoveries of oil deposits were made in September 2021, July 2022 and February this year, revealing huge reserves estimated at six billion barrels.

The discoveries give the country the potential to become a net exporter by the end of the decade. The first deposit, called "Baleine", is already up and running, operated by Italian company Eni. It aims to supply 200,000 barrels per day by 2026, and 200 million cubic feet per day of gas. The minister of mines, oil and energy, Mamadou Sangafowa Coulibaly, said the country could now have the chance of joining the OPEC group of oil-producing countries.

Other discoveries of raw materials are also opening potential new revenue streams. The number of mining permits and projects has tripled since 2012 - from nine to 28 - while research permits have increased from 120 to nearly 200 over the period. Sangafowa Coulibaly said the tax revenues generated are already 20 times higher than they were in 2012, at 372 billion CFA francs (\$620 million). "The western half and the northeast of our country are full of strategic and critical minerals," said the minister.

Moving to raw materials

"The Ivorian economy is diversifying into everything related to raw materials," said Cedrick Sehe, president of CAMP2E, an organization that promotes mining in the country. In May, the country's largest gold deposit was discovered in the west, with the potential to be the third-largest mine in West Africa. Lithium, manganese, nickel and even coltan - a precious ore used to make electronic devices - have

also been found in Ivorian soil. "These minerals are particularly sought after because they are part of energy transition policies," Serge Parfait Dioman, an engineering expert in the oil and energy industries, told AFP. "They are, for example, used for the manufacture of electric cars."

In a sign of its changing role, Ivory Coast will host the SIREXE conference - its first international mining industry exhibition - this November and December. But some have cautioned that the country could fall into the "raw materials curse", where a focus on extracting an abundance of resources can end up having negative impacts on the economy. Parfait Dioman countered that "the more diversified your raw materials are, the less risk you have of falling into this trap".

Environmental fears

Experts have also warned about the risk of environmental damage. Eni has said it plans to

make the Baleine field the first "carbon-neutral" operation in Africa, mostly by using less-polluting technologies and by setting up projects to restore forests in the country. But while this aim is linked to its own operations (Scope 1 and 2) it does not mention the significant amount of indirect emissions linked to its value chain, known as Scope 3.

Eni does however pledge to be carbon-neutral worldwide by 2050, in both direct and indirect emissions (Scopes 1,2 and 3). Last year, the Institute for Security Studies also noted a risk of increased deforestation through more drilling and mining. The country has already lost nearly 90 percent of its forest cover in half a century. Fears have also been raised over the toxicity of chemicals used in extraction processes. In June the Cavally river in the west of the Ivory Coast was polluted by cyanide discharges after an incident in the Ity gold mine. — AFP

India's Infosys beats profit estimates as client spending rises

BENGALURU: Indian IT giant Infosys raised its annual revenue guidance Thursday after reporting a 7.1 percent on-year rise in net profit for the June quarter, signaling a gradual revival in client spending. Infosys is India's second largest software services exporter and earns more than 80 percent of its revenue from Western markets. The company earned \$761.3 million (63.68 billion rupees) in net profit for the quarter, beating expert estimates, while on-year revenue was up 3.6 percent to \$4.7 billion. Infosys bumped constant-currency revenue guidance for the current financial year to 3-4 percent, up from an earlier forecast of 1-3 percent.

"All geographies and most industry groups grew sequentially," chief executive Salil Parekh told reporters. "Volume growth turned positive after several quarters. We had another strong quarter of large deal wins, with 34 large deals at a total contract value of \$4.1 billion." Parekh added that Infosys was seeing "early signs of improvement" for its financial services arm in the United States. Part of India's \$254-billion IT sector, Infosys saw a pandemic-fueled demand boom followed by a quick slowdown in growth when inflation and global uncertainty prompted Western customers to cut back on tech spending.

The slump has hurt the job prospects of thousands of



BENGALURU: CEO and Managing Director of Infosys Salil Parekh and CFO of Infosys Jayesh Sanghrajka address a press conference to announce the company's first-quarter results on July 18, 2024. — AFP

young Indian engineering graduates who depend on the sector, historically one of the country's biggest white-collar employers. Infosys, which has over 300,000 employees, upset markets last year after temporarily halting campus hiring in light of reduced client demand. The company's total headcount also dropped by nearly 26,000 in the 12 months to March 31. Despite its upbeat assessment of returning client demand, Infosys still ended the June quarter with nearly 2,000 fewer employees. Shares in Infosys ended 1.85 percent higher at the close of trading in Mumbai on Thursday ahead of the earnings announcement. — AFP

European stocks shrug off Wall Street retreat


LONDON: Europe's major stock markets rose Thursday, with London energized by the previous day's oil price surge, while Asia stumbled after Wall Street retreated on growing tech sector concerns. London's FTSE 100 index rallied with BP and Shell shares gaining more than one percent, as investors also digested steady UK unemployment data. Oil prices had vaulted two percent higher Wednesday after signs of strengthening crude demand in top consumer the United States, though the market stabilized Thursday.

"The FTSE 100 has outperformed its mainland European counterparts... with energy names leading the way thanks to a fresh surge in crude prices," said Shore Markets analyst Joshua Mahony. Energy majors tend to win a shot in the arm from rising crude futures that boost their revenues and profits. The dollar firmed following losses caused by growing expectations

the US Federal Reserve would cut interest rates at least once this year.

In Asia, tech firms took a hit Thursday following big losses for their Wall Street-listed counterparts after a report said US President Joe Biden would target firms supplying China with key semiconductor technology. Biden is reportedly looking at imposing strict curbs on companies including Tokyo Electron and Dutch firm ASML if they continued allowing Beijing access to their chip tech. Sentiment was also dented by Donald Trump's comments that crucial chip supplier Taiwan - home to TSMC and other major producers - should pay the US for helping the island defend itself militarily against China.

Nvidia shares slumped more than six percent Wednesday, while Tokyo Electron dived 8.8 percent Thursday. "An interview with Donald Trump, for Bloomberg Businessweek, saw the former president casting doubt on US willingness to defend Taiwan, should he be (re)elected in November," said Steve Clayton, head of equity funds at Hargreaves Lansdown. "With much of the world's most advanced chip manufacturing capabilities located within Taiwan... that was not a message the market wanted to hear. "Nor did it want to hear the Biden administration talking about tougher trade restrictions against China," Clayton said. — AFP



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 18 JULY 2024

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| No. | Ticker | Sector | Price Movement & Performance | | | | | | | | | | Valuation Multiples * | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-------|------------|------------|--------|---------|---------------|-----------------------|-------|------|-------|------|
| | | | Open Price | Close Price | Week High | Week Low | Range | Volume | WTD Change | WTD % | YTD % | Support Level | Resistance Level | P/E | P/B | Yield | Beta |
| 101 | National Bank of Kuwait | Banking | 860 | 871 | 873 | 859 | 14 | 21,045,276 | 12 | 1.40% | 2.30% | 870 | 879 | 13.1 | 1.71 | 3.9% | 1.03 |
| 102 | Gulf Bank | Banking | 278 | 274 | 279 | 271 | 8 | 47,883,646 | -4 | -1.44% | 2.38% | 270 | 281 | 15.6 | 1.32 | 4.2% | 1.27 |
| 104 | Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait | Banking | 303 | 297 | 303 | 291 | 12 | 7,637,578 | -8 | -2.62% | 33.84% | 292 | 303 | 14.9 | 1.24 | 2.9% | 0.94 |
| 106 | Kuwait International Bank | Banking | 189 | 188 | 192 | 186 | 6 | 14,630,607 | -1 | -0.53% | 29.09% | 186 | 193 | 18.3 | 0.70 | 2.6% | 1.07 |
| 107 | Burgan Bank | Banking | 188 | 190 | 190 | 188 | 2 | 5,296,309 | 2 | 1.06% | 15.99% | 185 | 191 | 18.6 | 0.68 | 3.0% | 1.32 |
| 108 | Kuwait Finance House | Banking | 728 | 725 | 738 | 724 | 14 | 44,236,119 | -2 | -0.28% | 8.85% | 725 | 745 | 21.5 | 2.13 | 2.5% | 1.14 |
| 109 | Boubyan Bank | Banking | 580 | 579 | 586 | 577 | 9 | 5,907,105 | 0 | 0.00% | 2.29% | 579 | 585 | 31.0 | 2.44 | 1.3% | 1.15 |
| 201 | Kuwait Investment | Financial Services | 174 | 175 | 177 | 174 | 3 | 2,432,530 | 1 | 0.57% | 37.80% | 168 | 178 | 8.1 | 0.81 | 5.6% | 2.01 |
| 204 | National Investments | Financial Services | 262 | 261 | 270 | 255 | 15 | 7,039,287 | -1 | -0.38% | 9.21% | 257 | 262 | 28.7 | 1.05 | 5.8% | 2.04 |
| 205 | Kuwait Projects | Financial Services | 113 | 112 | 115 | 111 | 4 | 20,855,475 | -1 | -0.88% | 6.67% | 110 | 116 | NM | 0.63 | 0.0% | 0.95 |
| 212 | Arzan Financial Group | Financial Services | 185 | 184 | 190 | 184 | 6 | 24,238,634 | -1 | -0.54% | -8.88% | 179 | 186 | 22.3 | 1.03 | 1.0% | 1.29 |
| 222 | Aayan Leasing and Investment | Financial Services | 155 | 153 | 155 | 151 | 4 | 6,971,058 | -2 | -1.29% | -12.07% | 151 | 158 | 7.9 | 1.06 | 4.9% | 1.60 |
| 252 | Al Imtiaz Investment | Financial Services | 50.5 | 51.3 | 52 | 49.2 | 2.6 | 2,849,645 | 2.5 | 5.12% | -9.20% | 49.1 | 52 | NM | 0.35 | 0.0% | 1.36 |
| 401 | Kuwait Real Estate | Real Estate | 238 | 234 | 248 | 230 | 18 | 46,886,583 | -2 | -0.85% | 21.00% | 229 | 237 | 19.4 | 1.43 | 1.6% | 1.13 |
| 404 | Salhia Real Estate | Real Estate | 424 | 426 | 434 | 421 | 13 | 4,516,155 | 4 | 0.95% | 4.27% | 424 | 444 | 16.3 | 1.42 | 3.3% | 0.58 |
| 413 | Mabaneer | Real Estate | 889 | 888 | 897 | 876 | 21 | 2,353,193 | 0 | 0.00% | 11.66% | 880 | 889 | 18.9 | 2.00 | 1.5% | 0.95 |
| 418 | The Commercial Real Estate | Real Estate | 138 | 144 | 146 | 138 | 8 | 15,817,270 | 6 | 4.35% | 44.00% | 141 | 144 | 16.2 | 0.88 | 2.7% | 0.65 |
| 501 | National Industries | Financial Services | 229 | 229 | 231 | 227 | 4 | 12,922,163 | 0 | 0.00% | 17.87% | 226 | 232 | 14.1 | 1.03 | 2.1% | 1.61 |
| 505 | Gulf Cable | Industrials | 1,598 | 1,593 | 1,598 | 1,555 | 43 | 2,479,387 | -1 | -0.06% | 21.60% | 1,575 | 1,652 | 17.5 | 1.27 | 4.1% | 1.04 |
| 506 | HEISCO | Industrials | 950 | 925 | 960 | 920 | 40 | 600,322 | -33 | -3.44% | 12.80% | 907 | 940 | 21.1 | 2.22 | 3.2% | 0.91 |
| 514 | Boubyan Petrochemical | Basic Materials | 587 | 585 | 593 | 584 | 9 | 2,844,239 | -2 | -0.34% | 0.00% | 580 | 604 | 17.7 | 1.19 | 10.2% | 0.95 |
| 603 | Agility | Industrials | 289 | 287 | 290 | 285 | 5 | 10,388,364 | -1 | -0.35% | -43.61% | 280 | 298 | 8.4 | 0.77 | 7.0% | 1.59 |
| 605 | Zain | Telecommunications | 457 | 451 | 458 | 450 | 8 | 7,448,646 | -6 | -1.31% | -11.05% | 450 | 459 | 10.3 | 1.57 | 7.7% | 0.55 |
| 623 | Human Soft Holding | Industrials | 2,695 | 2,688 | 2,700 | 2,675 | 25 | 212,513 | -7 | -0.26% | -16.96% | 2,675 | 2,750 | 8.7 | 3.89 | 12.4% | 0.63 |
| 642 | ALAFCO | Industrials | 225 | 225 | 226 | 224 | 2 | 1,095,834 | -1 | -0.44% | 25.00% | 222 | 227 | NM | 0.99 | 0.0% | 1.20 |
| 654 | JAZEERA | Consumer Discretionary | 888 | 931 | 943 | 887 | 56 | 2,953,813 | 46 | 5.20% | -32.97% | 915 | 949 | 183.0 | 9.01 | 3.0% | 1.33 |
| 813 | GFH Financial Group | Financial Services | 93.5 | 95.0 | 96.6 | 93.2 | 3.4 | 34,518,761 | 1.5 | 1.60% | 24.51% | 95.0 | 96.3 | 10.1 | 1.20 | 5.4% | 1.38 |
| 821 | Warba Bank | Banking | 183 | 184 | 186 | 183 | 3 | 17,744,432 | 2 | 1.10% | 4.86% | 181 | 188 | 23.6 | 1.02 | 1.5% | 1.08 |
| 822 | Kuwait Telecommunications | Telecommunications | 542 | 550 | 569 | 535 | 34 | 3,948,603 | 7 | 1.29% | -2.31% | 548 | 565 | 16.6 | 2.54 | 6.3% | 0.74 |
| 823 | Mezzan Holding | Consumer Staples | 800 | 795 | 810 | 794 | 16 | 2,379,105 | -4 | -0.50% | 38.26% | 785 | 801 | 19.1 | 2.12 | 2.5% | 0.43 |
| 824 | Integrated Holding | Industrials | 554 | 548 | 554 | 537 | 17 | 3,524,007 | -2 | -0.36% | 7.45% | 546 | 555 | 30.4 | 2.15 | 3.6% | 0.80 |
| 827 | Boursa Kuwait | Financial Services | 2,055 | 2,095 | 2,115 | 2,055 | 60 | 860,264 | 3 | 0.14% | 21.52% | 2,094 | 2,125 | 25.9 | 7.76 | 3.5% | 1.37 |
| 830 | AL GHANIM | Consumer Discretionary | 1,020 | 1,018 | 1,042 | 1,010 | 32 | 2,001,763 | -1 | -0.10% | -3.60% | 1,010 | 1,033 | 9.8 | 3.70 | 6.8% | 0.79 |
| 831 | Beyout Investment | Financial Services | 491 | 492 | 497 | 488 | 9 | 1,253,824 | -3 | -0.61% | #VALUE! | 488 | 495 | 19.1 | 2.87 | 0.0% | NULL |

* As of end of week closing

Business

Recycled fish nets and geothermal power: Inside Paris Olympic Village

Cycle building using purified rainwater for its toilets

PARIS: The athletes' village for the Paris Olympics, which welcomed its first athletes on Thursday, contains a host of innovations intended to make it a model of low-carbon construction. Faced with concerns about the vast emissions caused by the Games - from the construction work, the air miles and catering - Paris 2024 organizers set out to make the village as environmentally friendly as possible. With its roughly 40 different blocks, it was intended to be a "coherent model of the best things we can do at the start of the 21st century, even a bit ahead of time," the head of the Paris Olympics infrastructure group, Nicolas Ferrand, said earlier this year.

The 2,800 apartments will generate around half of the carbon emissions compared to equivalents built with regular construction techniques when energy savings over their lifetimes are taken into account, the Paris Games infrastructure body Solideo says. After they have been used by Olympians and Paralympians between July 26 and September 8, the apartments will be converted into homes, with at least a third destined for public housing. Here are some of their features:

Naturally cool

Organizers are proud of offering an Olympic village that they say does not require air-conditioning to keep residents cool, with temperatures inside set to be at least 6 degrees Celsius lower than outside in summer. As well as high-performance insulation and sun shades, the secret is reversible underfloor plumbing linked to a local geothermal power plant that draws cool water from beneath the surface during the summer and heat from far underground in the winter. The renewable system helps dramatically reduce operational costs and the carbon footprint of the buildings, but it has alarmed some sporting delegations given Paris' recent record-breaking summers. Around 2,500 temporary and portable air-conditioning units have been installed, paid for

by national teams from the United States, Australia and Japan among others.

Concrete improvements

Real estate companies had to agree to build the apartments while generating 30 percent less emissions per square meter than a traditional building under the terms of their contracts, according to Georgina Grenon, head of sustainability for the Paris Games. "That brought up new construction techniques," she told AFP.

In many cases, the builders swapped out carbon-intensive concrete for wood, resulting in many of the structures using the natural material for their core support, as well as facades and floors. Low-carbon concrete - which uses less energy-intensive materials and processes to make the bonding agent - was widely used across the site. "We chose materials not for their technical, economic or architectural qualities, but for their carbon footprint," said Julie Bosch, project director for real estate group Vinci Immobilier, which built part of the village. Recycled concrete was also deployed as ballast on the site and mixed with compost to form a base layer for the gardens.

Real greenery

As a showcase of a future urban model, the village has large gardens that account for 40 percent of total land space and include 9,000 trees and shrubs once the area has been fully developed after the Olympics. "It's a very high ratio, and with our system of recycling water, it will enable areas for relaxation and cooling off," Charles Richard-Molard, deputy director in charge of public spaces at Solideo, told reporters.

Water works

The site includes its own mini water treatment centre which will collect and purify waste water which can then be used on the gardens. One exper-



SAINT-DENIS: This photograph shows electric vehicles that will be used by athletes at the site of the Olympic village where the athletes will be housed in Saint-Denis, a nearby suburb of Paris. — AFP

imental building, known as "the Cycle building", will use purified rainwater for its toilets, which are designed to separate out urine and faeces which can then be converted into fertilizers. Some of the pavements have been made out of recycled oyster and seafood shells, which absorb more heat than a traditional tile, while other walkways contain byproducts of the paper-making industry or resin from pine trees instead of oil-based bitumen.

Circular economy

Of the roughly 300,000 household items des-

igned for the Olympic village, all are set for a second life afterwards. "We signed with suppliers only if they were able to show that they would be able to recycle or re-use," said Julia Watson, deputy director for the village works at Solideo. The bed bases will be made of reinforced cardboard and the mattresses are being manufactured from recycled fishing nets - the same system as at the Tokyo Olympics. Much of the wooden street furniture is from reclaimed wood, while some of the street lighting has been made from recycled steel piping. — AFP



PARIS: A visitor checks a display with Samsung products during the Samsung Galaxy Unpacked event at the Carrousel du Louvre shopping mall in Paris. — AFP

Samsung Electronics buys British AI tech startup

SEOUL: Samsung Electronics has bought a British startup that develops advanced AI technology, the South Korean tech giant said Thursday, as demand for its high-end chips used in artificial intelligence hardware surges. Oxford Semantic Technologies specializes in knowledge graph technology - a more advanced way of storing complex information in a web - Samsung said in a statement. It added that it expected to use the technology "not only in mobile devices but also in a wide range of products, including TVs and home appliances, in the future".

Samsung did not disclose the value of the deal. From generative capabilities such as writing texts from brief instructions to simultaneous translation of phone conversations, tech titans are in a frantic race to more fully deploy AI technology in smartphones and other consumer products. The purchase of Oxford Semantic marks the latest move by Samsung to strengthen its AI offerings. Samsung Electronics is the world's biggest producer of memory chips, including versions used in top-of-the-line AI hardware from industry leaders.

The firm is also one of the world's biggest smartphone makers, and the latest models it unveiled in January are powered by its own Galaxy AI tech. Samsung last week showcased new deployments of AI across a range of its consumer electronic products, from wireless headphones to smartwatches and health and fitness tracking rings. It also unveiled the latest generation of its AI-packed folding phones. The South Korean tech giant recently predicted a more than 15-fold increase in its on-year second-quarter operating profits. — AFP

China leaders to 'resolve risks' in the economy

BEIJING: China's leadership agreed on the need to "resolve risks" in real estate and local government debt while also boosting demand at a key political meeting that wrapped up Thursday, state media said. Top officials including President Xi Jinping gathered for a Communist Party conference in Beijing this week, with all eyes on how they would tackle the country's deepening economic malaise. As the meeting concluded on Thursday, they "adopted a resolution on further deepening reform", state news agency Xinhua said.

They also agreed to "actively expand domestic demand", state media reported, after data this week showed retail sales - a key gauge of consumption - rose just two percent in June. They further agreed to "prevent and resolve risks in key areas such as real estate, (and) local government debt", Xinhua said. Officials also resolved to "strengthen guidance of public opinion and effectively prevent and resolve ideological risks", according to state media. The meeting also formally removed ex-foreign minister Qin Gang from the ruling Communist Party's highest decision-making body, and "confirmed" the party's decision to expel former defense minister Li Shangfu. — AFP

'I feel empty': Cambodians on canal route await fate

PREK TAKEO: Food stand owner Dem Mech wells up as he sits in the yard of the home he will lose if Cambodia proceeds with a massive new canal running from the Mekong river to the sea. "I won't challenge the government, but what I want is decent compensation," the wiry 57-year-old told AFP, seated in the shade of the house he shares with eight relatives. "We don't have any official information. We have only heard about it from social media."

Mech is one of thousands of Cambodians living along the projected route of the \$1.7 billion Funan Techo canal - an ambitious infrastructure project the government says will offer vast economic benefits. The waterway will run 180 kilometers (110 miles) from the Mekong to the Gulf of Thailand, travelling part of the way along the Bassac river. It will offer an alternative for container ships that currently cross into Vietnam before heading to the sea, and allow Cambodia to keep transport revenue in-country.

The government plans riverside economic zones along the route that it says could create tens of thousands of jobs. That could be a key boost for an economy struggling to recover its pre-pandemic growth rate. But it is little consolation to Mech. "If the compensation is tiny, I will move out with tears," he said. "There is nothing we can do but cry. The villagers cannot stand up against them." His sentiments are echoed along the projected canal route, where the excavation rattles the homes of those who live there. Many who spoke to AFP declined to be named for fear of official backlash.

'Equitable compensation'

Lim Tong Eng's home abuts a channel leading from the Mekong that is already being widened. On August 5, a groundbreaking ceremony will be

TSMC 2nd-quarter net profit jumps on Gen AI demand

TAIPEI: Taiwan chip giant TSMC said Thursday net profit jumped by more than a third in the second quarter of 2024, buoyed by global demand for generative artificial intelligence products. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company - whose clients include Apple and Nvidia - controls more than half the world's output of silicon wafers, used in everything from smartphones and cars to missiles. Following the runaway success of ChatGPT, the company is now at the forefront of a generative AI revolution, churning out the world's most advanced microchips needed to power products made by Silicon Valley. The firm said it made NT\$247.8 billion (\$7.6 billion) in April-June, up 36 percent from NT\$181.8 billion in the same period last year.

Second-quarter revenues rose 32 percent on-year to \$20.82 billion, it added in a statement. "Our business in the second quarter was supported by strong demand for our industry-leading 3-nanometre and 5-nanometre technologies, partially offset by continued smartphone seasonality," said Wendell Huang, TSMC's CFO and senior vice president in an earnings conference. "Moving into third quarter 2024, we expect our business to be supported by strong smartphone and AI-related demand for our leading-edge process technologies."

The company expects its third-quarter revenue to jump to \$23.2 billion, above expectations, according to Bloomberg News. It also lifted its full-year capital expenditure outlook to US\$30-US\$32 billion from a



PREK TAKEO: A ship transports containers along the Mekong River (back) as excavators are used to dig the Funan Techo canal along the Prek Takeo channel in Kandal province. — AFP

held on the opposite bank, with the government urging temples to ring bells in celebration. The 74-year-old retired farmer will not participate. He is still waiting to learn when he will have to leave and what compensation he might get for his home and farmland. "From the time I was young until this age, this is all I have acquired. But now it is over," he told AFP. Infrastructure projects the world over often involve expropriation, and Cambodia's Deputy Prime Minister Sun Chanthol has promised that "community voices will be heard and their welfare prioritized". Writing in the Nikkei Asia in May, he promised "participatory planning and equitable compensation".

There are also signs that the project has support among at least part of the population, with analysts saying it is intended as a unifying national project that evokes Cambodia's historical standing in the re-

gion. Rights activists however point to a pattern of expropriation for infrastructure projects that has left people struggling to relocate with minimal compensation. Despite government promises, citizens have little recourse, said Am Sam Ath, operations director at rights group LICADHO.

While the constitution allows legal challenges, "in Cambodia, when it comes to courts, the lawsuits against authorities and the state, the possibility of winning is so minimal". Some experts said the government may be delaying an announcement on compensation to stop speculative land purchases along the route. But local residents say landlords nearby have already raised their prices, anticipating an influx of displaced buyers. Sok Rom, a 56-year-old widow, said she struggles to sleep with worry about where she will go. "I feel empty inside. We are losing the place where we lived in happiness." — AFP



KIKUCHI: A general view shows the new semiconductor plant by Japan Advanced Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (JASM), a subsidiary of Taiwan's chip giant TSMC (Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company), in Kikuchi of the Kikuchi district, Kumamoto prefecture. — AFP

previous estimate of \$28-\$32 billion. This month the company - listed in Taiwan and New York - briefly broke the US\$1 trillion market capitalization barrier, putting it ahead of Tesla as the seventh most valuable technology firm. Its headquarters - and the bulk of its fabrication plants - are in Taiwan, a self-ruled island that China claims as part of its territory.

Beijing has in recent years ramped up military and political pressure on Taiwan, upping the rhetoric of "unification" being "inevitable". The share price of several major AI companies - including TSMC - dropped Wednesday following reports that the United States was mulling strict curbs on firms that continue allowing China access to advanced chip tech. Former US president Donald Trump - who faces incumbent Joe Biden in a November election -

also said in a Bloomberg Businessweek report that Taiwan "should pay" the United States for defence, and lamented that it had taken "100 percent of our chip industry".

TSMC has launched new factories overseas, including three planned in the United States, while one opened in Japan this year with another on the way. Experts called the Japan plant "the most significant TSMC international investment to open in many years". Newly minted chairman CC Wei - who is also CEO - said there was "no change to our strategy" when it comes to plans for expansion in the face of future geopolitical risk. "So far we did not change any of our original plan of expansion of our overseas fabs - we continue to expand in Arizona and Kumamoto, and maybe in the future in Europe," he said. "We continue our current practice." — AFP

Weekender

FRIDAY, JULY 19, 2024



Glass act

Pioneering Kuwaiti artist introduces glassmaking to Kuwait



By Passant Hisham

Mirroring the glow of the furnace's flames, Mohammad Al-Duwaisan's eyes reflected unwavering passion, intense focus and determination poured into each glass piece he creates. Of all the art forms, it was glassmaking that caught the artist's interest, leading him to become the first to introduce this craft to Kuwait. "It's one of the most sophisticated arts, incomparable to any other. It teaches you how to engage with chemistry, gravity and colors," Duwaisan said, explaining what draws him to this craft. "You witness a beautiful piece emerge through multiple stages and intricate details."



Duwaisan uses a glass blowing technique to create a vase.

From ashes, glass pieces and even glass waste, Duwaisan transforms whatever he has on hand into creations that are both functional and artistic. His glass forms range from accessories, sculptures and decorative objects to recycled glass products and medical equipment.

Several of the most common specialties that Duwaisan mentioned for producing glass art include glass blowing, fusing, glass lathe and flame-working, with each specialty offering unique techniques and outcomes in glass artistry.

tions by passing on this skill through the Gulf's only glass art workshop. "The craft holds promising market potential, and Kuwait is leading the region in advancing its growth," he said.

With minimal effort, materials and equipment costs, he noted that learning the craft's knowhow allows anyone to start an individual business and secure a stable income. "The country needs more job opportunities, and this project can definitely open the gate to many," Duwaisan said. The capital needed to start this business, according to him, ranges from KD 3,000 to KD 6,000.



Adding colors by dipping the object into crushed colored glass.



Process of shaping a vase.



A finished glass censer inspired by the Sidr tree of Kuwait.



Glass artworks created from recycled glass bottles.

Instead of following the norm of importing most such products from overseas, Duwaisan aims to change the narrative by adding Kuwait's unique touch to the industry. He creates glass objects that capture the shapes, forms and colors of Kuwait's environment, which he describes as "very rich". He showcased some of his handmade decorative glass censers inspired by Sidr and willow trees and others inspired by the desert.

After nearly seven years of self-learning and efforts to establish the glassmaking craft in Kuwait, Duwaisan now aims to inspire younger genera-

He believes that this project will significantly boost Kuwait's economy and tourism, attracting businesses and visitors from all over the world. Currently held at Bait Al-Othman, Duwaisan hopes to soon expand his workshop to Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center, Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre and Shaheed Park. Among his aspirations, he wishes for government support for this project. "With state support, we could save a lot of money, and we're ready to share our expertise with anyone who needs it at any time," he said.



Placing the glass object in a portable furnace known as mini glass studio.



Tiny glass accessory shaped like candy.



PAINTING THE TOWN 'DRIP'

Clark Stoeckley infuses public spaces with dynamic imagery



By Faten Omar

American artist Clark Stoeckley has transformed Kuwait into a vibrant and colorful scene with his mural art, which can be seen throughout the country. As an artist and art professor at a university in Kuwait, Stoeckley has used his creative vision to infuse public spaces with dynamic and thought-provoking imagery.

Kuwait Times: When did you start painting murals?
Clark Stoeckley: I have been painting murals for 20 years across the United States. I began painting murals to engage with a wider audience rather than just art lovers.

KT: What inspired you to create murals in Kuwait?
Stoeckley: I have always wanted to paint a mural in Kuwait, but I was never sure who to contact for permission. In January, NCCAL posted a call for mural artists, and I immediately applied.

KT: Can you describe the main themes and messages you wanted to convey through your artworks?
Stoeckley: This body of work represents many things combined and nothing at all. I visualize the music, mutations of a spreading virus or the jolting culture shock of being at Burning Man one week and Kuwait the next. My tenth-floor apartment in Kuwait is just meters from the minaret of a neighboring mosque. At first, the five daily azans rattled me as they overlapped one another to create sonic collisions. Over time, I came to appreciate the layered discord from these reminders of gratitude and humility.
 Distraught by violence and vitriol on the news and social media, I desired an escape from political arguments and superficial platitudes - particularly those following mass shootings. I sought to save my psychological and spiritual well-being through meditational drawing and hopefully transmit feelings of joy

and bliss to others. I aim to discover euphoric harmony from chaotic asymmetry, rhythmic disruptions and disparate influences. I blend and distort imagery inspired by an amalgamation of motifs such as stained glass, psychedelia, science, street art and Islamic geometry.

KT: How long did it take you to complete the projects?
Stoeckley: The first substation took two weeks to paint, and the second substation took six weeks to paint. Getting permission took about a month beforehand.

through the visual pollution to give our eyes and minds a break.
KT: Can you share an interesting story you had while working on the mural?
Stoeckley: Everyone who has stopped by has been very supportive, often bring-

ing projects. There is so much public space that could be elevated in prestige just with a little paint.
KT: What feedback have you received from the local community?
Stoeckley: The feedback has been ex-



Clark Stoeckley's murals in Kuwait



These synesthesia-stimulated drawings depict the kaleidoscopic phantasmagoria of my semi-lucid subconscious and divine introspective explorations. Or, simply put, they originate from doodles I make when I'm in a meeting.

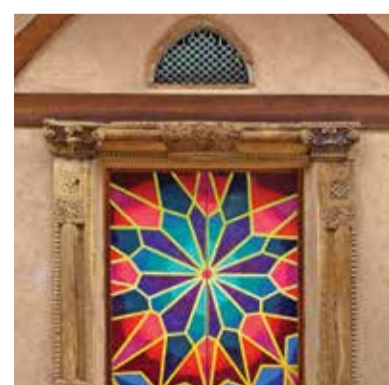
KT: What role do you think public art plays in the community in Kuwait?
Stoeckley: Public art not only beautifies the neighborhood, but it also makes people take pride in their environment. It increases morale and sparks creativity. We are constantly bombarded with images intended to sell us something by making us feel inadequate. Public art is the antithesis of propaganda and advertising. It cuts

ing me water and complimenting me. A young Indian girl told me the murals are "drip" which I have now learned the kids are using to describe something very cool, awesome or stylish.
KT: How do you see the future of mural art evolving in Kuwait and the broader region?
Stoeckley: Hopefully Kuwait continues to inspire and support more mural art

tremely positive. Many artists have asked how they can paint, and some business owners have contacted me about painting murals for them.
KT: Do you have plans for future projects in Kuwait or elsewhere that you can share with us?
Stoeckley: I plan to paint the wall around the AUK parking in the summer.



Stoeckley's murals in US





SUMMER IN KHAIRAN

Sun, sand, sea and shopping



By Ghadeer Ghloum

Khairan has become a popular getaway for Kuwait residents seeking a cooler coastal breeze to escape the summer heat. To understand how people in Kuwait navigate summer without leaving the country, Kuwait Times interviewed individuals across different age groups. Hasan, a middle-aged father of three, told Kuwait Times that he prefers escaping the city's suffocating heat by frequenting chalets in Khairan with friends and family. He indulges in activities like swimming and kayaking.

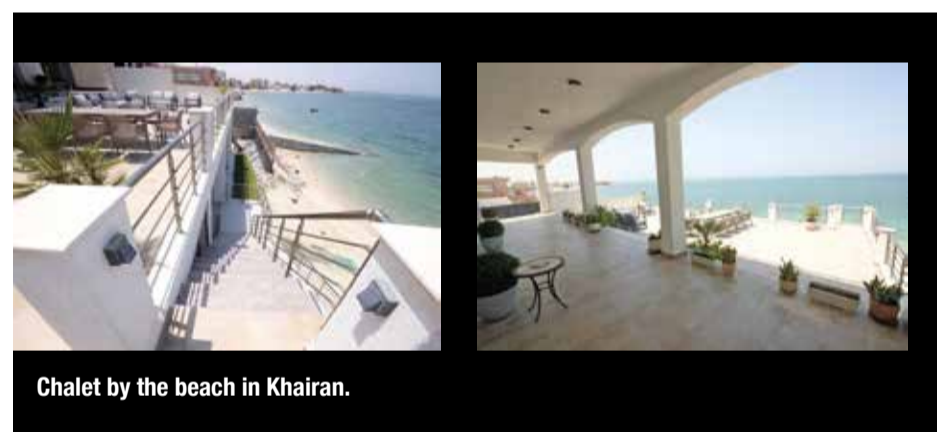
"The heat and crowd of the city are suffocating. I prefer going for a few days to the chalet, where I enjoy the serenity and routine breaking there. Swimming and kayaking are my favorite things to do in Khairan. I recommend going there when you need a short and affordable break without the need to leave the country, especially since Khairan today is way better with all the activities and conveniences provided. For people who love shopping, Khairan Mall is a fantastic option," Hasan said.

make such escapes more accessible. "Although it is fun to go on a quick trip to Khairan, it could cost you up to approximately KD 500 for only two days! When it gets down to this level, I would rather travel to some nearby country. I do love visiting Khairan and spending a few nights at a chalet, but the prices need to be controlled a little," Mona said. Hawraa said she avoids bustling malls and instead goes for weekend retreats at hotels or chalets with friends.

ming pool and then enjoying a movie together during the evening. This helps me refresh my mood and get ready for the week to get back to work," she said. High school student Al-Kawther said despite the high temperatures, summer

all fun time. Waking up early in Khairan feels so much better with all the excitement of the day ahead. Eating breakfast with the view of the sea is priceless!" she told Kuwait Times.

is so light and funny; I never get bored of this show, and it has many episodes," Al-Kawther said. "Besides that, I enjoy going to shopping malls and discovering fancy coffeshops. We have a lot of those in



Chalet by the beach in Khairan.

He added he loves to barbeque on the shore during the evening after spending the day swimming in the sea or in the swimming pool.

However, Mona, also a mother of three, expressed concern over the steep prices of renting chalets in Kuwait, particularly during holidays and weekends, making short trips to Khairan expensive. Despite her love for the place, she suggested pricing should be regulated to

They enjoy leisurely mornings, poolside relaxation and movie nights, which rejuvenate them for the workweek ahead.

"Malls are too noisy, and I just find myself walking with no specific purpose. Therefore, I tend to either rent a chalet or book a hotel on my weekend and enjoy my time there. I split a room with my friend, and we enjoy the leisure of waking up in a new, nice place, having some breakfast, jumping in the swim-



KHAIRAN MALL

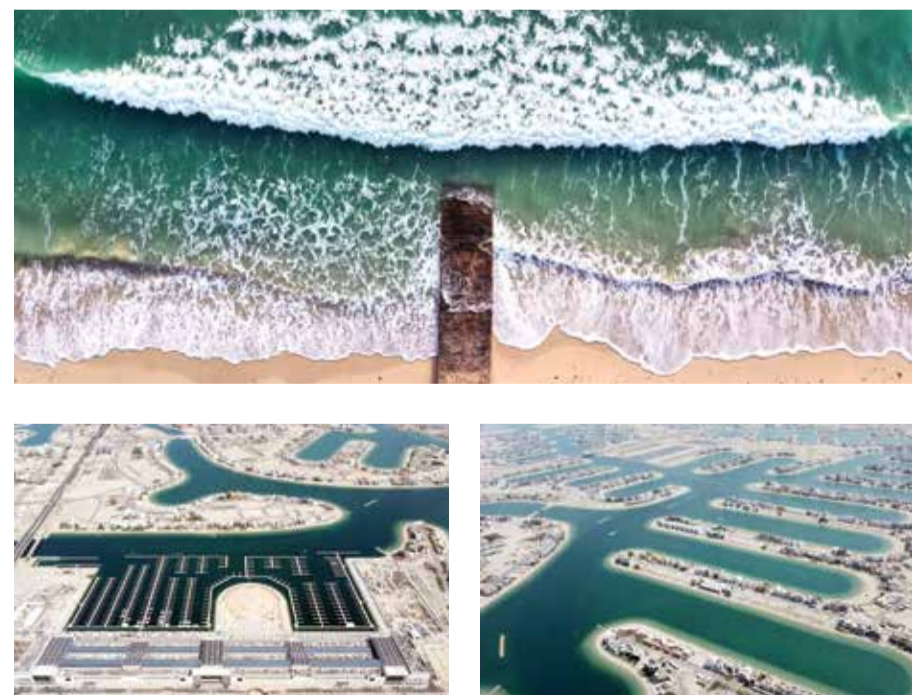
remains enjoyable since it's a break from school. "It is the time when we get a chance to go somewhere far from the city and not worry about driving to school the next day. Going to Khairan is like traveling to me. I pack my stuff, get a book to read and get ready for an

occupies a big part of my day as I enjoy the free time to read, annotate and discuss the book I am reading with my sister, who also loves reading. I also love watching series, and this is another way of spending time in Khairan. One of my favorite TV shows is 'Modern Family'. It

Kuwait! Each coffeshop has its own unique vibe and aesthetic. One of my favorite summer activities in Kuwait is when we rent a chalet in Khairan and go to Khairan Mall," she added.



Bird's eye view of Khairan showing chalets surrounding the sea. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



WHAT'S ON IN KUWAIT

Event: Ladies Social Squash
Location: Squash and More Academy
Date: July 19, 2024

Event: Little Architect workshop
Location: Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre
Date: July 19, 2024

Event: Le Tableau (2011) movie
Location: CAP theater
Date: July 20, 2024

Event: Voice Charisma Course
Location: Jassem Al-Yaqoub Building
Date: July 20, 2024

Event: Special Crafts Camp
Location: Argan Bedaya - Sabah Al Salem
Date: July 19, 2024

Event: Friday Kids Club
Location: Boulevard
Date: July 19-20, 2024

Event: International Moon Day
Location: National Library of Kuwait
Date: July 20, 2024

Event: Coding & Robotic Adventures
Location: Argan Bedaya - Sabah Al Salem
Date: July 20, 2024

Sports

Brathwaite adamant West Indies 'longing' for more Test cricket

'I think the more you play it, the faster you will learn'

NOTTINGHAM: Kraigg Brathwaite wants the West Indies to play more Test cricket as they look to square their series with England. West Indies suffered a humiliating innings and 114-run defeat by England in the first Test at Lord's last week, with the hosts wrapping up victory before lunch on the third day as they went 1-0 up in a three-match encounter.

But the difference between the two teams is about far more than on-field performances. England are one of international cricket's 'Big Three' financial powerhouse nations, together with India and Australia, while the West Indies are one of the economically poorer members of the Test-match elite.

The gulf between England and the West Indies is also reflected in their respective fixture lists, with Tests still largely a matter of bilateral arrangements between competing teams—the International Cricket Council merely specifies a minimum of two matches for a series.

Thursday's second Test at Trent Bridge will be England's seventh of 17 fixtures in the format this year, whereas the West Indies will be playing their third of nine in 2024. "It's a challenge. I mean, we're longing for more Test cricket," West Indies captain Brathwaite told a pre-match press

conference at Trent Bridge on Wednesday.

"I think the more you play it, the faster you will learn. If it's drawn over a long period of time, playing two Tests here, two Tests there, you will take longer to learn. We need more Tests." The 31-year-old added: "All I can do is keep preaching for it. I don't know how hard it is to put on a Test series for the West Indies but all I can do is keep asking. I just hope the powers that be that may control the schedule pertaining to white ball and T20 tournaments, can fit in five or six more Test matches for us per year."

A more immediate issue for the West Indies if they are to be competitive in this series is how to ensure an improved showing by their batsmen. At Lord's they were bowled out for just 121 and 136, with experienced opener Brathwaite managing just 10 runs in total during what was his 90th Test.

"It's pretty simple what we've got to do—we've got to bat a lot better," said Brathwaite, who made a Test hundred in England, at Headingley, seven years ago. "We've got to find a way. We've just got to put runs on the board. I know what I have to do and it's obviously important to lead this team and lead the batting. "We've just got to keep learning." — AFP



NOTTINGHAM: West Indies Shamar Joseph (2R) celebrates taking the wicket of England's Ben Duckett on the first day of the second Test cricket match between England and West Indies at Trent Bridge in Nottingham on July 18, 2024. — AFP

News in Brief

Postecoglou focused on Spurs

LONDON: Ange Postecoglou insists he has "no idea" about reports claiming the Tottenham boss is a contender to take charge of England. The Football Association have started their search for a new manager following Gareth Southgate's decision to end his eight-year reign on Tuesday in the aftermath of last weekend's Euro 2024 final defeat against Spain. Postecoglou has joined England Under-21s coach Lee Carsley, Newcastle manager Eddie Howe, former Chelsea bosses Mauricio Pochettino and Graham Potter and ex-Bayern Munich chief Thomas Tuchel on the FA's list of potential candidates. After a largely impressive first season with Tottenham, who finished fifth in the Premier League, the attack-minded Postecoglou would be an intriguing choice to replace Southgate, who was widely criticized for his cautious tactics. However, the 58-year-old stressed his attention remains on Tottenham, who opened their pre-season with a 5-1 win at Scottish Premiership side Hearts on Wednesday. — AFP

Competitors enter athletes' village

PARIS: The athletes' village for the Paris Olympics and Paralympics officially opened and welcomed its first inhabitants on Thursday. The village to the north of Paris will house nearly 14,500 people, including 9,000 athletes, at its peak. Eight days before the opening ceremony, the first team members to arrive were from Australia and Brazil. "We are super excited to check how it's looking. It looks amazing, can't wait to be inside. We can't wait to get started," said Australian hockey player Stephanie Kershaw as she waited to enter the village. Organizers are proud of offering a village that they say does not require air-conditioning to keep residents cool, with temperatures inside set to be at least 6 degrees Celsius (42 degrees Fahrenheit) lower than outside in summer. Some national delegations, including the United States have ordered their own air-conditioning units anyway. The village contains a host of innovations intended to make it a model of low-carbon construction. — AFP

Barcelona loan Dragoni to Roma

MILAN: European champions Barcelona have loaned rising teen star Giulia Dragoni to Roma, the women's Serie A winners announced on Wednesday. Dragoni, 17, became the first ever Italian to win the women's Champions League with Barca last season. The midfielder was the first non-Spanish woman to enter Barca's La Masia set-up when she signed for the Catalan giants in January last year. Dragoni has played eight times for Italy since making her debut against Morocco just before last year's women's World Cup. Roma have won the past two league titles in Italy but finished bottom of Group C in last season's Champions League. — AFP

Hamilton seeking to keep momentum and more records

BUDAPEST: A buoyant Lewis Hamilton heads into this weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix on the crest of a wave, seeking a record-increasing ninth Hungarian victory and Mercedes' third consecutive win of the season.

After two years of struggles, Hamilton ended his long winless run at the British Grand Prix with a record ninth home triumph at Silverstone and hopes to repeat that feat in forecast intense heat at the track where last year he secured his most recent pole position.

Following his emotional success in front of an adoring crowd in the English rain, Hamilton said he felt excited at the prospect of returning to a track where he has scored several memorable victories in his career.

Barrett starts as All Blacks ring changes for Fiji Test in US

WELLINGTON: New Zealand on Thursday made 11 changes to the team to face Fiji in San Diego, with Beauden Barrett starting at fullback, a debut for centre Billy Proctor and five uncapped players on the bench.

Proctor, who plays for Wellington Hurricanes, lines up with the experienced Anton Lienert-Brown in midfield for the game on Friday night in California.

Playmaker Barrett is restored after hugely influential performances coming off the bench in both Test wins against England. The two-time world player of the year sparked the All Blacks comeback in Auckland on Saturday after they had trailed 17-13 in the second half.

McIlroy, Scheffler eye Claret Jug as British Open gets underway

TROON: Former champion Justin Leonard hit the opening tee shot as the British Open got underway at Royal Troon on Thursday with Rory McIlroy and Scottie Scheffler among those with eyes on the Claret Jug.

Leonard, who won the 1997 Open at Troon, was given the honors of launching the 152nd Open Championship alongside fellow American and another former winner Todd Hamilton. Attention will turn to the world's top two players later as they aim to make a mark on the final major of the year.

McIlroy is aiming to get over his heartbreak at the US Open last month, where he blew a late lead due to two short missed putts as Bryson DeChambeau claimed his second major by one shot.

That extended the world number two's decade-long wait to add to his four major titles. McIlroy has finished in the top 10 in five of the last seven British Opens, part of his 21 top-10 finishes since last winning a major.

"I'd much rather have these close calls. It means that I'm getting closer," said the Northern Irishman, who also missed out narrowly at the 2022 British Open and 2023 US Open. McIlroy begins his quest at 09.09GMT alongside Max Homa and Tyrrell Hatton.

World number one Scheffler has won six times in just 14 starts this year and is aiming to make an impact across the Atlantic for the first time as he tees off at 14.10GMT. The American's best previous showing at the British Open was a tie for eighth in 2021. Scheffler won his second Masters in April but has failed to add to his two majors since at the USPGA Championship and the US Open.

In-form DeChambeau

The form player at the majors has been DeChambeau, despite his defection to the breakaway LIV Tour. The American finished sixth at the Masters and runner-up in the USPGA Championship behind a re-

"I love Hungary," he said. "And so I am definitely looking forward to going there. The trajectory we're now on and the fact that the car is starting to really, really come alive and feel great. I can't wait." The 39-year-old seven-time world champion won at the Hungarian—a tight, twisty and often dusty circuit 22 kilometres north of Budapest—in his debut season for McLaren in 2007 and again in 2009 and 2012.

After switching to Mercedes, he continued to relish the unique challenge of a track often described as 'Monaco without the walls' and won again in 2013, 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2020. If he secures a podium finish this Sunday, it will be the 200th of his career, a pole position would be a record-extending 10th, landmark achievements that set him apart as he bids to add to team-mate George Russell's victory in Austria and his own in Britain.

He and Russell know, however, that they will not be favourites despite their recent successes as defending three-time champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull bids to complete a hat-trick of Hungarian wins after triumphs in 2022 and last year. "Last year was brilliant," said Verstappen. "I have good

Coach Scott Robertson said that 125-Test Barrett's form could not be ignored, having been benched against England following a club season in Japan. "It was a reminder for us, a player like him coming back from Japan, playing at that top level, that class is permanent," Robertson told reporters.

"It was an incredible cameo and now it's an opportunity for us to build depth in different positions." Scrum-half Cortez Ratima gets his first start after debuting off the bench in the 24-17 win at Eden Park that gave New Zealand a 2-0 series sweep against England.

Hurricanes prop Pasilio Tosi, Auckland Blues lock Sam Darry, Waikato Chiefs loose forward Wallace Sititi, and Canterbury Crusaders pair of scrum-half Noah Hotham and hooker George Bell could all make debuts from the bench.

Robertson said the newcomers would have no easy ride against a dangerous Fiji, who beat Australia in last year's World Cup and exited in a narrow quarter-final loss to England.

Fiji respect

"It's a hell of a great opportunity for the debutants to show their talent," Robertson said. "We're really respectful of Fiji. When they get rolling, they get their arms free and they break the game up. They can beat anyone."

Captain Scott Barrett is one of only four Eden Park starting players to keep their place. The others are No.8 Ardie Savea, wing Sevu Reece and fly-half Damian McKenzie, who will play his 50th Test. Fiji coach Mick Byrne made three starting changes to the backline from the team who beat Georgia 21-12 in Batumi two weeks ago.

Fijian Drua fly-half Isaiha Armstrong-Ravula is promoted from the bench, pushing Castres playmaker Vilimoni Botitu to fullback in place of Ilaisa Droasese. Lyon winger Semi Radradra replaces Peniasi Dakuwaqa, who scored twice on Test debut against Georgia.

Fiji's starting side features six players from the Drua Super Rugby team, six from French Top 14 clubs and three from the English Premiership. — AFP



TROON: Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy lines up his putt on the 4th green on the opening day of the 152nd British Open Golf Championship at Royal Troon on the south west coast of Scotland on July 18, 2024. — AFP

cord-breaking 21 under par set by Xander Schauffele before claiming his second US Open.

DeChambeau has previously struggled with the windy conditions of links golf and recognized the need to alter his game on the west coast of Scotland this week. "Controlling that golf ball underneath the wind is going to be super key this week," said DeChambeau, whose previous best finish at the British Open was a tie for eighth two years ago.

"I hit the golf ball really high, so it's always been a bit of an issue. I've got to keep the ball under the wind a bit more, keep a lower flight." Tiger Woods makes his return to the event after missing last year's Open.

The three-time winner hit back at claims from former European Ryder Cup captain Colin Montgomerie that he should retire after playing sparingly and struggling since a serious car accident in 2021.

memories of racing here and last year achieved our 12th win in a row. So, hopefully, we can have a great race again."

Midway point

The Dutchman leads the title race by 84 points ahead of nearest rival and friend Lando Norris of McLaren as the season crosses the midway point after 12 of the scheduled 24 races. Team boss Christian Horner expects a close scrap.

"It's going to be interesting to see how we perform there," he said. "It could be very hot and I think it will be the usual people who are quick at the moment and it will be very, very close again." That suggests Horner considers Red Bull will be fighting with McLaren and Mercedes on recent evidence, but with Ferrari likely to return to form on a tighter circuit—not unlike Monaco where Charles Leclerc gained an emotional home win in May.

With the Belgian Grand Prix at Spa-Francorchamps following immediately, within a week, the double-header offers an opportunity for teams to make a telling impact before Formula One takes its annual 'summer shutdown' during August. — AFP



MOGYOROD: Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton arrives at the Hungarian race track in Mogyorod near Budapest on July 18, 2024, ahead of the Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix. — AFP

Sports

Nadal, Ruud save match point to make doubles semi-finals

Zverev plays through the pain to advance in Hamburg

BASTAD: Rafael Nadal and Casper Ruud saved a match point in the deciding set tie-break to reach the semi-finals of the doubles in Bastad on Wednesday, hours after the Norwegian was knocked out of the singles.

Nadal and Ruud squeezed past France's Theo Arribage and Roman Safiullin of Russia 6-4, 3-6, 12/10 to advance to the last four, winning the final three points of the match after being on the brink of defeat. "I think we had some fun. It was an emotional match at the end, a good level of tennis against two good players," said Nadal, who is also competing in the singles tournament.

"We enjoy it, the crowd was amazing. Full crowd in a doubles match, that's fantastic. Just enjoying every single day here." While Nadal and Ruud wait to discover their semi-final opponents, the Spaniard will be back in action on Thursday against Britain's Cameron Norrie in the round of 16 in the singles.

The 22-time Grand Slam champion returned to competition for the first time this week since his early French Open exit. He will hope to avoid the same fate as Ruud, whose Olympic preparations took a hit when he lost 6-3, 6-3 to Thiago Monteiro in the second round earlier on Wednesday.

Ruud, a two-time French Open runner-up, was a finalist in Sweden last year. He won the tournament in

2021. World number 121 Thiago Tirante of Argentina pulled off the biggest win of his career as he defeated top seed and defending champion Andrey Rublev 7-6 (7/5), 3-6, 6-4.

Meanwhile, top seed Alexander Zverev shrugged off a knee issue to ease past Jesper de Jong in straight sets and into the last 16 at his home tournament in Hamburg on Wednesday. The defending champion hurt his left knee in a fall at Wimbledon but advanced 6-2, 6-2 past 114th-ranked Dutchman De Jong to set up a meeting with France's Hugo Gaston in the pre-Olympic clay-court tournament.

"I was still unsure this morning if I was going to play or not and during the warm-up I was in quite a lot of pain," said the German world number four. "But somehow when I step on this court it disappears a little bit when the adrenaline gets going."

"I have an injury where I know where I stand and it will take time to heal. It won't heal in the next few days, it will take weeks and it's up to me if I am going to play like that or not." Zverev, who reached the fourth round on grass at Wimbledon, claimed his 41st match win of the season.

Third seed Sebastian Baez and fourth-seeded Francisco Cerundolo, both from Argentina, reached the quarter-finals Wednesday along with Italy's Luciano Darderi and Spaniard Pedro Martinez. — AFP



BASTAD: Spain's Rafael Nadal returns the ball to Sweden's Leo Borg during their men's singles match of the ATP Nordea Open tennis tournament in Bastad, Sweden. — AFP

Como sign former Spain goalkeeper Pepe Reina

MILAN: Como have signed former Spain goalkeeper Pepe Reina on a one-year deal, the newly-promoted Serie A club announced on Thursday. "Como 1907 is pleased to announce the signing of Pepe Reina until June 2025," said the club in a statement.

The 41-year-old, who has played for some of Europe's biggest clubs including Barcelona, Liverpool and Bayern Munich, will be a back-up keeper for Pau Lopez who is set to arrive from Marseille. Reina returns to Italy after being released by La Liga outfit Villarreal.

He won the 2014 Italian Cup in the first of two spells at Napoli and also played for AC Milan and Lazio. Reina has 36 international caps and was part of the squads which won the World Cup and two European Championships between 2008 and 2012.

He joins former La Roja teammate Cesc Fabregas at ambitious Como, who kick-off their first top flight season in 21 years on August 19 at Juventus. Como have been busy this summer, bringing in five players including Italy international forward Andrea Belotti, and are also in the hunt for former France defender Raphael Varane.

Bankrolled by tobacco giants Djarum, Como have stormed through the divisions since being acquired in 2019 following multiple bankruptcies. The club have created a glitzy image thanks to their glamorous location on Lake Como in northern Italy. — AFP

Kuwait Parkour team to participate in first Arab Championship

KUWAIT: Kuwait Parkour Gymnastics team will participate in the first Arab Championship which started on Thursday in Amman, Jordan and will continue until Sunday. Kuwait delegation left for Amman



Kuwait's Parkour Gymnastics delegation before heading to Amman to participate in Arab Championship.

on Thursday headed by the treasurer of Kuwait and Arab Gymnastics Federations Nasser Al-Halifi, and includes coach Suleiman Abdulredha, judge Mohammad Al-Attar and players Ali Al-Shatti and Khalifa Al-Asfar.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Gymnastics Federation thanked the Public Authority for Sport and its Acting Director General Bashar Abdullah for approving the Parkour team's participation in the first Arab official Championship and wished the players success in this modern game that will be included in the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

Carapaz ticks off Tour win

SUPERDEVOLUY: Ecuador's Richard Carapaz won stage 17 of the Tour de France after the remnants of a breakaway finished ahead of the main pretenders in the High Alps on Wednesday. EF rider Carapaz dropped Simon Yates and soloed the final 10km to win his first ever Tour de France stage after finishing third overall in 2021. The former Giro d'Italia champion, who won the Tokyo Olympics road race, also wore the overall leader's yellow jersey after his efforts in the second stage to Bologna. "That was a big day for me," Carapaz said. "I suffered but I put a cross on an objective."

"How special it feels, I owe so much to my team," he said of the American Education First team who will be delighted with their two million euros a year new signing. Overall leader Tadej Pogacar, defending champion Jonas Vingegaard and Remco Evenepoel kept their powder dry until a late series of attacks and counter-attacks put a shine on the medium mountain run.

The trio produced an entertaining scrap with third-placed Evenepoel finishing 12 seconds ahead of Pogacar, with Vingegaard losing two seconds to the leader. The relentless Slovenian said his attack was off the cuff and "maybe stupid". "I enjoyed it, I don't know what to say, I tested my legs and theirs. I thought I might be able to get away, so I had a go," said the 25-year-old Pogacar. Pogacar had been the first to try his luck and Vingegaard was initially unable to follow.

Evenepoel however closed the gap while Denmark's Vingegaard then rallied to catch them both on a daredevil descent after picking up the wheel of a teammate who had been in the early attack. "Well done to Visma for their tactics," Pogacar said.

Belgian Evenepoel then broke again, and finished strongly to consolidate his third place overall. A group of over 30 riders broke away early on a balmy day in the south as they climbed to the ski resort of Superdevoluy.

Girmay stays in green

Nursing knee and elbow injuries, Biniam Girmay retained the green jersey for best sprinter with 387 points to Jasper Philipsen's 354. "It's never easy a day after a fall, but I felt okay today," said the Eritrean who will race at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Girmay spoke excitedly about the reaction back home where he said "from two in the afternoon until the end of the race everyone goes out onto the streets to watch the race or listen to it together". Stage 18 on Thursday is billed as one of the prettiest, with lakes and mountains in Haute Provence and an opportunity for the one-day specialists during a 179km ride from Gap to Barcelonnette.

With the temperatures set to rise as the 2024 edition reaches a fascinating climax Pogacar admitted he had a history of wilting in the heat. "Yes it's easy to see that all the times Jonas has dropped me, and maybe it's coincidence, it's been in the heat. So I've been working on heat and high altitude training," said Pogacar, cutting a happier figure than he has all Tour.

The final three stages are all potential game changers, with Friday's run taking the peloton to 2,800m altitude before a huge descent. Saturday is also mountainous and features another downhill finale. — AFP

Ultimate challenge for marathon legend Kipchoge

KAPTAGAT: When he started out running in the early 2000s, a young Eliud Kipchoge simply wanted to get on a plane and go to Europe. Two decades later, the Kenyan marathon legend is heading to Paris for what could be his final challenge at the 2024 Olympics.

At 39, he says he is hoping to make history on August 11 by becoming the "first human being" to win the Olympic marathon three times in succession, overtaking Ethiopia's Abebe Bikila (1960, 1964) and Waldemar Cierpinski of Germany (1976, 1980). It was in Paris in 2003 that the then 18-year-old made a thunderous international debut, snatching the 5,000 meters world championship gold ahead of favorites Hicham El Geroj and Kenenisa Bekele. But Kipchoge's first major prize ended up being his only one on the track.

It was on the road, which he turned to after failing to qualify for the 2012 London Olympics, that he would achieve glory. With his long, metronomic stride, he has twice broken the marathon world record—streaking

to 2:01:39 in 2018 and 2:01:09 in 2022. He is the only man to have covered the 42.195 kilometer (26.2 mile) marathon distance in under two hours, albeit during a specially organized, unofficial race in Vienna in 2019. He has won 16 of the 20 official marathons he has run



SAPPORO: (FILES) Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge crosses the finish line to win the men's marathon final during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games in Sapporo on August 8, 2021. — AFP

since 2013, including 11 victories in the majors (five in Berlin, four in London, one each in Tokyo and Chicago), alongside Olympic golds in 2016 and 2021.

'Really determined'

The youngest of four children, Kipchoge was raised by his mother, a kindergarten teacher, in the village of Kapsisiywa in the foothills of Kenya's Rift Valley. His father died when he was a baby. Young Eliud loved running but didn't dream of glory.

"Running is normal in our village, in our community, you run up and down to school, to the shopping center," he told AFP in an interview. He decided to take a chance in athletics, "but it was not about aiming to become a big runner... I just wanted to get into a plane and fly to Europe," he said.

"I didn't know that being an athlete can put more food on my table for my family and my siblings." As a teenager, he often spotted a neighbor during his training sessions, someone he had watched on television winning silver at the 1992 Olympics: 3,000 meter steeplechaser Patrick Sang.

In 2001, Kipchoge approached him to ask for a training program and Sang scribbled one on his arm. "Then he kept coming for more," said Sang. "At that moment, I could not say that there is something special about this guy. — AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals

Hospitals

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

Change of Name

I, MOHAMMED MOTACIN, holder of Indian Passport No. M7062858 having permanent address ward No 7, Dabaka Town, PS Daboka Sub Divn Hojal Dist, Nagaon, Assam, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: given name Matsin Ali

(17/07/2024)

I, Omer Mohammed Basalama, holder of Indian passport No. Z 3017406, Maqbooi Gulshan Colony, Mumtaz Bagh, H.No.18-11-30/1 Barkas, Balaguda, Telangana, 500005- Hyderabad, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that I have changed my name from Omer Mohammed Basalama to Omer Mohammed Basaad

(#5632, 17/07/2024)

I, Krishnan Kumar (as given name), Ponnusamy Navaneedha (as surname), holder of passport No. Z 7067773 do hereby change my name to P.N. Krishna Kumar (as given name) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known by the name P.N. Krishna Kumar and I also undertake to carryout this name change in all my documents.

(#5631, 17/07/2024)

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LeBron James sees 'much to improve' before Olympics despite Serbia win

Jokic had a double-double 16 points and 11 rebounds



ABU DHABI: US forward #06 LeBron James (L) fights for the ball against Serbia's guard #23 Marko Guduric during the Basketball Showcase friendly match between the United States and Serbia at the Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi on July 17, 2024. — AFP

ABU DHABI: LeBron James was pleased with the progress made by the US in their 105-79 victory over Serbia in a friendly in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday, but insists there is "so much room to improve" in the hunt for Olympic gold.

After a narrow win over Australia on Monday, that saw the United States nearly blow a 20-point lead towards the end of the clash, the stars and stripes were in commanding form against a Nikola Jokic-led Serbia.

Stephen Curry, who scored just three points in the US's 98-92 win over the Boomers, caught fire on Wednesday, opening the scoring with a signature three on the very first play and finishing the game with a team-high 24 points, shooting six for nine from beyond the arc.

"We drew it (the opening play) up for that particular reason, to get him going," said James of Curry. "He sees one go through the hoop, you see what it opens up for the rest of his game, for the rest of the game for all of us. He set the tone and we just tried to continue to keep finding him."

Bam Adebayo also had a successful

evening, coming off the bench to tally up 17 points, eight rebounds and a pair of assists. The Miami Heat center combined seamlessly on defence with Anthony Davis, who had six blocks, six rebounds and seven points.

"Bam and AD together are really something," US head coach Steve Kerr said. "Just the switching, but they can also protect the rim and be in a drop if we go to that coverage."

"They'll combine with the ball pressure that Book was putting on their point guard, I thought that really set a tone for us." Serbia, who lost to Australia on Tuesday, were once again without Atlanta Hawks guard Bogdan Bogdanovic, who was on the bench but did not play.

Reigning NBA MVP Jokic had a double-double 16 points and 11 rebounds but it was not enough to halt the formidable Americans, whom they will face again in their Olympics opener in Lille, France on July 28.

"We've still got so much room to improve but we want to continue to get better and not waste the opportunities. I felt like tonight we got better,"

said James, who is gunning for his third Olympic gold medal this summer.

'Strength is team depth'

Kerr made one change to the starting lineup he deployed against Australia two days ago, keeping Jayson Tatum, James, Joel Embiid and Curry on the floor but opting for Jrue Holiday instead of Anthony Edwards.

Curry scored nine points within the first two minutes before Serbia picked up the pace with back-to-back threes from Aleksa Avramovic giving them an early 12-9 lead. Kerr continued with his hockey subs pattern during these exhibition games, taking off all five starters midway through the quarter to bring in Edwards, Tyrese Haliburton, Davis, Adebayo, and Devin Booker.

It was Edwards who reclaimed the lead for US, going four for four from the free throw line with 38 seconds left on the clock. Vanja Marinkovic had other ideas though, his buzzer-beating layup making sure the first quarter ended with both teams on level terms.

Curry, Edwards and Adebayo helped the US pull ahead, and the Americans were never in trouble again beyond that first quarter. Kerr is happy with the strategy he's been applying so far, of subbing all five starters with an entirely new second unit and alternating those two groups every five minutes in the game.

"I think the identity of the team is our depth, the strength of the team is the depth," said Kerr. "And so, if we can play in four, five-minute bursts of just playing intense defence, hitting bodies, rebounding, being physical, then it makes sense to play that way."

"We'll see if we keep doing it but for now, it's allowed groups to get together, AD and Bam for example, Steph and LeBron, kind of learn how to play together, having a better feel for each other. "The strength of our team is just the depth and so if we have to play that way, we'll play that way."

The US head to London next, where they have two final exhibition games scheduled, against South Sudan on Saturday and reigning world champions Germany on Monday. — AFP

Paris locks down for Olympics as athletes arrive

PARIS: French security forces began locking down large parts of central Paris on Thursday ahead of the hugely complex Olympics opening ceremony next week on the river Seine. The opening parade along six kilometres (four miles) of the river led to the closure of riverside central districts to most vehicles from 5:00 am (0300 GMT) on Thursday.

Anyone wanting to enter the highest-security "grey zone" along both banks of the Seine, such as residents or tourists with hotel reservations in the area, will need a security pass in the form of a QR code.

With the opening ceremony just eight days away, the City of Light is transforming ahead of the Games when around 10 million spectators are expected. Temporary sports stadiums have sprung up at popular locations such as the Eiffel Tower, the Invalides or the Place de la Concorde, while new Olympic VIP lanes are the latest traffic-snarling addition.

"We're entering a very operational phase of hosting the world's biggest event," Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin told reporters on Wednesday as he outlined the security measures by the Seine. Many central Metro stations were also closed on Thursday until the day after the opening ceremony, which will see 6,000-7,000 athletes sail down the Seine on around a hundred barges and river boats.

It will be the first time a Summer Olympics has opened outside the main athletics stadium, with up to 500,000 people set to watch in person from stands, on the river banks and from the overlooking apartments.

The vast security operation for the opening ceremony has been giving senior police officers cold sweats ever since it was announced in 2021 because of the difficulty of protecting so many spectators in such a large, densely packed urban area.

Around 45,000 officers are set to be on duty for the July 26 parade, assisted by 1,900 foreign police, as well as 10,000 French soldiers and thousands of private security agents. The installation of tens of thousands of metal security barriers all along the opening ceremony route in Paris and around the temporary venues has outraged some Parisians, who feel closed in or find their routes on foot or by bike blocked.

"It's a bit like being in Planet of the Apes," Aissa Yago, who lives on the Ile Saint Louis in central Paris, told AFP this week from behind a barrier. "All they need to do is throw us some peanuts." The concept for the Paris Games—of using the historic city centre as a backdrop for the sport rather than moving the events out of the city—has caused complaints and led many wealthy residents to flee.

"It's true that our concept of having a large number of temporary sites in the heart of the city, obviously with that, there are constraints, but I feel like people are seeing what we're doing," Paris 2024 director general Etienne Thobois told AFP last month.

Darmanin insisted that French authorities would be ready to welcome spectators in safety and that there was "no credible (terror) threat at this point." On Wednesday, a suspected far-right extremist was arrested in eastern France after he allegedly made threats against the Games in a group on the Telegram phone application. A man was also arrested on Monday evening after he stabbed an on-duty soldier in a Paris train station.

Complaints



PARIS: French Gendarmerie officers check pedestrians and cyclists QR codes and luggages at a barriers checkpoint to circulate near the Louvre Museum in Paris on July 18, 2024, ahead of the opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. — AFP

Village opens

Elsewhere on Thursday, the first athletes are set to arrive to take up residence in the newly built Olympic Village in a northern suburb of the capital. Comprising around 40 different low-rise housing blocs, the complex has been built as a showcase of innovative construction techniques using low-carbon concrete, water recycling and reclaimed building materials.

It was intended to be free of air-conditioning, although Olympic delegations have ordered around 2,500 portable cooling units for their athletes out of fear of the impact of high temperatures on their performances.

"The major countries are going to arrive on the first day ... so Great Britain, the United States, New Zealand, Brazil, Switzerland," said the deputy head of the French delegation, Andre-Pierre Goubert. — AFP

Titmus warns she is better now than Tokyo

SYDNEY: Swim star Ariarne Titmus says she has never prepared as well for a major event and is in better shape now than when she won Olympic 200m and 400m freestyle gold in Tokyo. The Australian heads to Paris on the back of shattering the 200m world record last month and clocking the second quickest 400m of all time, behind only her own world best.

It makes her red-hot favourite in both disciplines, with her task in the 200 made easier by key rivals, American great Katie Ledecky and Canadian teenager Summer McIntosh, opting to focus on other races. Titmus will also swim the 800m after winning silver at the Covid-delayed Japan Games behind Ledecky.

"I definitely think as an athlete I have grown a lot in three years and as a person I've grown a lot," the 23-year-old said late Wednesday from the Australian swim team's training camp outside Paris. "I think, mentally, I've got so many learnings from the last Olympic Games."

"I know this is going to be different with big crowds, which I'm very excited for. But I think as an athlete—all together as a whole—I'm in a better position than three years ago. "I think I've prepared the best I ever have for a swim meet," she added.

Ledecky, who was stunned by Titmus in the 200m and 400m at Tokyo, has entered the 400m, 800m and 1,500m in Paris, but is set to skip the shorter distance. McIntosh has also pared down her freestyle schedule to enable her focus on other events.

Titmus said she wasn't disappointed not to be facing them. "No, not really. I mean, my toughest competitor I train with every day and that's a massive task in itself," she said, referring to teammate and former 200m world record holder Mollie O'Callaghan.

"The fact that those two have pulled out doesn't change anything for me. It doesn't change the way I want to swim the race."

Best ever

Titmus's form will tested right out of the gate in Paris, with her 400m title on the line on day one at La Defense Arena. She beat Ledecky in a thrilling final in Tokyo then broke the American's long-standing world record in 2022, only for McIntosh to better the mark last year.

The Australian hit back to reclaim the world record months later with the clash between the three shaping as a blockbuster. "Out of all of my races I know how to race it the best. I'm excited to see what I can put together on the world stage," Titmus said of the 400m.

"I don't think about the result or the magnitude of the Olympic Games, I just think about putting together eight great laps." Titmus will dive in as favourite with the two quickest times in history. She has swum nearly three seconds faster than Ledecky this year and almost four seconds better than McIntosh. Ledecky, however, is the undisputed 800m queen and will be gunning for a fourth straight Olympic gold. — AFP