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DARKNESS AT DAWN

93 killed in Zionist strike on Gaza school • Kuwait slams bombing amid global outrage



(Left) Relatives mourn over the shrouded body of a family member at the Al-Maamadani hospital following a Zionist strike that killed nearly 100 people on a school sheltering displaced Palestinians in Gaza City on Aug 10, 2024. (Right) An injured man mourns over the corpses of members of his family, killed in an overnight Zionist strike that hit their home in Nuseirat, in the yard of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip on Aug 10, 2024. — AFP photos

UN rapporteur condemns Zionist genocide • US releases \$3.5bn military aid to Zionists

Guards get new arms as Iran vows to punish Zionists

TEHRAN: Iran's Revolutionary Guards have added long-range missiles and drones to the force's navy, official media said Friday, amid heightened regional tensions following the Hamas leader's killing in Tehran blamed on the Zionist entity. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the ideological arm of Iran's military which has links to Tehran-aligned armed groups across the Middle East, played a key part in the Islamic republic's first direct attack on the Zionist entity in April.

Iranian state TV on Friday said that "a large number of new anti-ship cruise missiles were added to the IRGC naval forces by the order of the Guards chief". The missiles "have new capabilities" with "high-explosive warheads and being untraceable", it added. According to the report, a total of 2,654 military systems including long-range and medium-range missiles, drones for combat and reconnaissance, and electronic warfare units were added to the Guards' naval forces.

IRGC chief General Hossein Salami, speaking at an event where some of the new weapon systems were showcased, stressed the importance of being able to "stop the enemy from afar". "If we cannot engage with the enemy in the depths of the sea and oceans at any desired point and stop the enemy from afar, we will naturally have problems at our national borders," he said. "In today's world, one must either be strong in order to survive and be safe, or surrender. There is no middle way."

The unveiling of the weapons came as the region, already affected by the Zionist war in Gaza since early October, was on high alert after Iran and its allies have vowed retaliation for the killing last week of Hamas' political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

Continued on Page 6

GAZA: Rescuers in Gaza said a Zionist air strike on a religious school housing displaced Palestinians killed 93 people on Saturday, sparking international condemnation. The toll is one of the largest from a single strike during 10 months of war between the Zionist entity and Hamas Palestinian fighters. Hamas denounced the "dangerous escalation" in north Gaza, while the Palestinian group's Lebanese ally Hezbollah called it a "horrific massacre".

Civil defense rescuers in Gaza said three Zionist missiles hit Al-Tabieen religious school in Gaza

City while people performed dawn prayers. "Their bodies were torn apart," civil defense spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP. "It reminds us of the first days of the war in the Gaza Strip." With nearly all of Gaza's 2.4 million people displaced during the war, many have sought refuge in school buildings, which have been hit at least 14 times since July 6, according to an AFP tally.

Kuwait's ministry of foreign affairs strongly deplored Saturday the Zionist occupation's bombardment of the school. In a statement, the ministry said

that the act is a blatant violation of international law and international humanitarian law as well as relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

The ministry reiterated the need for the international community and the Security Council's intervention to halt these gruesome crimes committed against unarmed people, it added. It further demanded providing civil protection for unarmed Palestinians and compelling the occupying entity to comply with international resolutions in this regard.

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33rd pearl diving trip kicks off with 'dasha' ceremony

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The 33rd pearl diving trip, held under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, began with the traditional "dasha" ceremony at the Kuwait Sea Sports Club in Salmiya. The event, involving 150 Kuwaiti youths aged 15-20 aboard four wooden dhows this year, celebrates and preserves the Gulf's maritime heritage, Chairman of Kuwait Sea Sports Club Maj Gen Fahad Al-Fahad said.

He highlighted the trip's role in promoting national unity, loyalty and a sense of shared heritage among the youth. He also emphasized the trip's importance in strengthening ties between Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. (See Page 2)



KUWAIT: Dhows set off on the 33rd annual pearl diving trip from Salmiya on Aug 10, 2024. — KUNA

Brazil plane crash kills 62

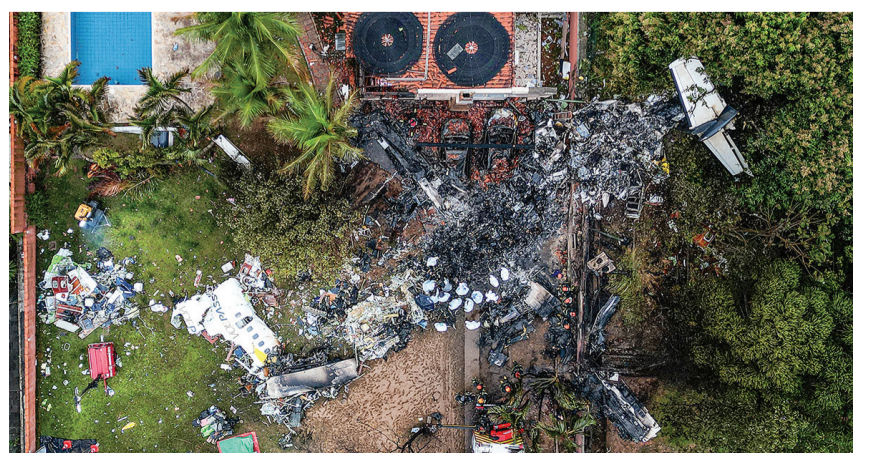
VINHEDO, Brazil: Emergency crews on Saturday began removing the victims of a plane crash in Brazil's Sao Paulo state that killed all 62 people aboard, as authorities sifted through the wreckage to try to determine what caused the plane's dramatic plunge. Videos showed the ATR 72-500 plane in a sickening downward spin Friday before it crashed into a residential area of the town of Vinhedo, some 80 km northwest of Sao Paulo city.

The Voepass airlines said Satur-

day that verification of the passenger list showed there were 62 people on board, not 61 as reported earlier. All 62 were Brazilian; there were no survivors. While some houses at the crash site were damaged, no injuries or deaths were reported among their residents. The crash transformed the plane's fuselage into a mass of twisted iron. As of Saturday morning, 16 bodies had been removed, firefighters said.

In all, some 200 people were working on the recovery effort. The dead are being transported to the Sao Paulo morgue. The normally peaceful, wooded enclave where the plane came down was swarming Saturday with police cars, ambulances and firetrucks.

Continued on Page 6



VINHEDO, Brazil: An aerial view of the wreckage of an airplane that crashed with 62 people on board on Aug 10, 2024. — AFP



33rd pearl diving trip kicks off

Diving trip aims to foster the spirit of national unity



KUWAIT: Children wave at the divers aboard wooden boats as they begin the annual pearl diving festival.



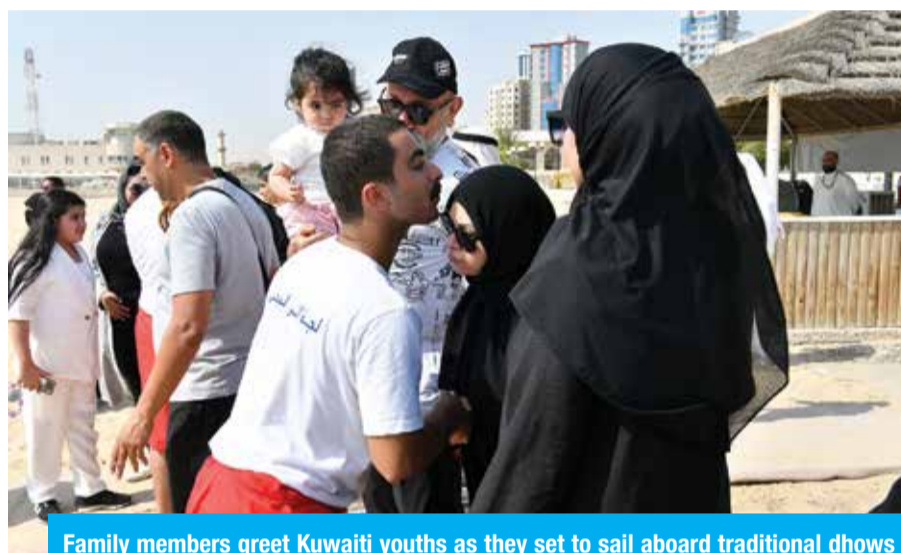
Kuwaiti sailors prepare to sail away in dhows on a pearl diving trip.

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the 33rd pearl diving trip kicked off on Saturday with the traditional ceremony of 'Dasha' at Kuwait Sea Sports Club, with 150 Kuwaiti youngsters, aged between 15-20, aboard four wooden ships that were donated by late Amir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

During the ceremony, the Chairman of the Kuwait Sea Sports Club, Maj Gen Fahad Al-Fahad, emphasized the significance of the diving commemoration trip as a distinguished Gulf event of national importance, noting that the traditional ceremony of 'Dasha' stands out as one of the most prominent in preserving and celebrating maritime heritage.

He explained that the diving trip is aimed to foster a spirit of national unity among the youth, encouraging them to embrace the remarkable legacy passed down by their fathers and grandfathers, adding "The trip plays a vital role in reinforcing many ideals. This tradition not only preserves their unity and cohesion but also strengthens their loyalty to their leadership by embodying the spirit of a single family, in addition to being com-



Family members greet Kuwaiti youths as they set to sail aboard traditional dhows on a pearl diving expedition.

mitted to the enduring principles and values upon which the nation was founded, and the authentic customs that align with the teachings of Islam."

Fahad indicated that the diving trip also emphasizes the depth of the common Gulf ties between the people of GCC in the past and the present, expressing his deep appreciation to the captains, young divers, and their families

for their dedication to participating in the trip, despite the challenging weather conditions, including high temperatures and humidity. He also extended his gratitude to all the ministries, agencies, and institutions that support this significant national activity, acknowledging the important role that the media, various ministries, and the Public Authority for Sports play in ensuring that heritage



events like this receive the attention they deserve.

The annual tradition that was held by the Heritage Committee at the Kuwait Sea Sports Club started on Saturday morning with the gathering of captains and young divers performing old Kuwait's maritime tradition, followed by the trip's general supervisor, Captain Hamed Al-Sayyar, and a number of young divers

heading to the honor platform to receive the Kuwaiti flag. Then, the Kuwaiti flag was raised on the mast of a model of a diving ship, accompanied by the playing of the national anthem. Captains and divers headed to their vessels after bidding farewell to their families. Their vessels headed to the Khairan area, where actual diving would be practiced until next Thursday.

Say hello to helpers, know their names and stories

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: Unlike her peers, who spent most of their time with friends, Melanie Abou Saleh's childhood memories were mostly around her school's cleaners whom she felt were always neglected. When she was in third grade, she would wait for lunchtime to sit with them, share her snacks, and eagerly approach them with paintings she had drawn just for them. "People often dismiss these helpers, perceiving them as less than human," she said.

Observing the mess left in the bathroom by other girls during her visit and hearing them say, "The nanny will clean it up; it's fine," motivated her to initiate the change she wanted to see. Now 17 years old, Abou Saleh has always taken the time to learn the names of the staff, spent time with them, and often listened to their stories, goals, and dreams in life. "Listening to their stories isn't something that happens every day, so small gestures can have a big impact," she said.

Through these conversations, she learned to

never judge anyone by their occupation, recognizing the importance of every job, no matter how simple it seems. For instance, she learned from the school nurse's helper that although she aspired to be a nurse, she had to take on her current role to support her family. "But you are still helping people here," Abou Saleh told her, which brought her genuine happiness. "Everyone should respect other people's jobs and their place in life, especially when they don't know their backgrounds," she believes.

Every year, from third grade until her senior year, Abou Saleh, half German, returned from Germany for Christmas with a bag of souvenirs just for the school's workers. Chocolates, flowers, and special notes would brighten their days for weeks. "The smiles I saw on their faces were irreplaceable," she said. She has consistently promoted kindness to helpers through her involvement in Model United Nations, various non-profit organizations, and volunteering activities. Abou Saleh encouraged others to participate through donations or small acts of kindness and shared her message through public talks.

With the launch of the "Be Kind to Helpers Organization," she aims to extend her initiative internationally, making a global impact by forming connections with people in low-wage sectors in every country she visits, and encouraging others to do the same. "This type of kindness is contagious," she believes.

"I don't want to be the exception," she said. Abou Saleh challenges everyone driving or walking in the street or at school to take a moment to greet the cleaners they meet, to learn their names, and to ask about their stories. "Really listen to them and understand who they are. You'll never know what connection you might make, whether you'll gain a lifelong friend or even save that person's life one day," she said.



Melanie Abou Saleh



Summer enters its final stages

KUWAIT: Al-Ojeiri Scientific Center announced on Saturday that summer is entering its final stages with the start of the Al-Kulaibin season on Sunday, August 11, which is considered the last season that records an increase in temperature. The center said in a press statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the Al-Kulaibin season lasts for 13 days, which is the dividing line between high temperatures and

moderate weather, and is considered the sixth house of summer for the Bedouin Arabs and the seventh in the calendar of the houses of the sun and moon.

It added that the stormy winds will calm down during the (Al-Kulaibin) season and the interior of the earth cools down at the end of the season, indicating that (Al-Kulaibin) has two stars located within the last constellation. He explained that during Al-Kulaibin, a gradual moderation in the atmosphere is observed, especially at night, noting that the night hours continue to increase at the expense of the day, as the length of the day at the beginning of the season reaches 13 hours and 18 minutes, while the night records 10 hours and 41 minutes. — KUNA

Kuwait expresses sympathy with Brazil over plane crash

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) expressed on Saturday Kuwait's sympathy and solidarity with Brazil over a plane crash near Sao Paulo that resulted in the demise of 62 passengers. In a statement, the Ministry offered on behalf of Kuwait sincere condolences to the government of the Brazilian Federation and to the victims' families.

Meanwhile, emergency crews on Saturday began removing the victims of a plane crash in Brazil's Sao Paulo state that killed all 62 people aboard, as authorities sifted through the wreckage to try to determine what caused the plane's dramatic plunge. Videos showed the ATR 72-500 plane in a sickening downward spin Friday before it crashed into a residential area of the town of Vinhedo, some 80 kilome-

ters northwest of Sao Paulo city.

The Voepass airlines said Saturday that verification of the passenger list showed there were 62 people on board, not 61 as reported earlier. All 62 were Brazilian; there were no survivors. While some houses at the crash site were damaged, no injuries or deaths were reported among their residents. The crash transformed the plane's fuselage into a mass of twisted iron. As of Saturday morning, 16 bodies had been removed, firefighters said.

In all, some 200 people were working on the recovery effort. The dead are being transported to the Sao Paulo morgue. The normally peaceful, wooded enclave where the plane came down was swarming Saturday with police cars, ambulances and firetrucks. A steady overnight rain complicated recovery work, which could "take days," according to Captain Maycon Cristo, a spokesman for local firefighters. The twin-engine turboprop, built by French-Italian aviation firm ATR, was on a flight from Cascavel in southern Parana state to Sao Paulo's Guarulhos international airport. — Agencies



Local

Minister inaugurates pediatric dental clinics at Al-Siddiq Center

MoH: All locally traded medicines comply with international standards



Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi inaugurates children's dental clinics at Al-Siddiq Health Center. —KUNA photos

KUWAIT: The Minister of Health, Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi, inaugurated new pediatric dental clinics at Al-Siddiq Health Center as part of the 100-day plan for the government's work program, in the presence of the Assistant Undersecretary for Dentistry Affairs, Dr Ahmed Asad. According to a statement by the Ministry of Health (MoH), Dr. Al-Awadhi emphasized that the opening is aimed at providing comprehensive medical services for children.

Dr Asad, in a similar statement, expressed optimism about the clinics' ability to meet children's needs and deliver high-quality services. The MoH confirmed that this initiative aims to enhance the treatment services provided to children in the Al-Siddiq and Al-Masayel areas. The new clinics will contribute to offering integrated and specialized healthcare

for children, improving the level of care for their oral and dental health. The new clinics, open 7 am to 9 pm, boost health infrastructure in line with international standards, the MoH's statement confirmed.

In another development, the Ministry of Health said that all locally traded medicines comply with international standards, indicating that what is stated in a fragmented video circulating about pharmacies is false information that can harm the country's pharmaceutical sector. MoH confirmed in a statement on its social networking site X that the quality and safety of all medicines in circulation are subject to the drug safety standards adopted in international health systems.

She pointed out that the total number of community pharmacies with their various branches in the country does not exceed 600, which is much less than the

total number of pharmacies mentioned in the video (2000). According to the laws regulating the profession of pharmacy, the license of a private pharmacy is issued with the approval of the Ministry of Health to a Kuwaiti pharmacist who holds a bachelor of pharmacy with at least 5 years of experience in the field. The license is issued to individuals, not companies.

The MoH confirmed the implementation of laws and legislation and the continuation of systematic monitoring and inspection campaigns on community pharmacies and other health institutions, monitoring the misuse of licenses by individuals and companies and referring the violators to the concerned regulatory and legal authorities. The latest of which was the closure of six health facilities and the referral of seven doctors for investigation recently. — KUNA



Kuwait Science Club spreads scientific culture

KUWAIT: Over the past 50 years, the Kuwait Science Club has proved the rightness of the vision that it launched when it was founded, which is to spread scientific culture in society, enhance the level of knowledge of its members, and create the appropriate environment to unleash their diverse energies and creativity. With the Science Club celebrating the golden jubilee of its establishment on Sunday, this cultural edifice is taking a new step in achieving its goals aimed at embracing the energies of young people and motivating them to scientific research and innovation and pushing the comprehensive development process in the country.

On August 11, 1974, the club was established, which was then a pioneering Kuwaiti initiative in the field of scientific culture. It was launched by a number of Kuwaiti pioneers who believed in the importance of science, building a society, the role of knowledge in promoting youth and culture, and the need for scientific centers.

Since its establishment, the Science Club has been affiliated with the Ministry of Social Affairs and is managed by an independent board of directors consisting of nine people who are elected periodically. At the launch of the club, it announced its goals of contributing to the dissemination of scientific



information among the society's groups, working to increase the scientific level in various disciplines, creating and caring for the appropriate scientific environment, and documenting and promoting their religious, ethical, educational, and national values.

The objectives of the club are also to contribute to the discovery of the inclinations of the members and to guide them properly, strengthen the relationship between the club and other local, Arab, and international science clubs and institutions, develop the scientific trend among its members, and fill their free time with useful things.

The Science Club plays a prominent role in training young people to practice scientific hobbies and offers its members many activities such as camps, forums, seminars, lectures, competitions, exhibitions, and scientific trips. The club contributes to train-

ing young people on how to coexist with machines and tools, focusing on business, skills, and scientific arts.

Believing in the importance of the role of the Kuwaiti girl and the need to take care of her from the scientific and knowledge aspects, the club established, in 1986, a special department for girls to meet the need and desire of a Kuwaiti girl to have an edifice where she practices her hobbies and invests her free time to benefit and open new horizons for creativity and innovation.

Over the past five decades, the club's objectives and activities have evolved based on the keenness of its successive administrations to enhance its role in society, diversify its contributions locally, regionally, and globally, and keep abreast of scientific and technical developments in the field. The most important are the current activities of the club "International

Exhibition of Inventions in the Middle East," which launched its first edition in 2007 and has assumed a high position on the map of international invention exhibitions, reflecting the leading role of Kuwait in supporting scientists and science at the Middle East level.

The club has been organizing the "Kuwait Science and Engineering Competition" since 2012, which is considered the largest scientific competition in Kuwait for pre-university students and comes as the culmination of the club's vision and strategy in activating the national program to sponsor and support young researchers and innovators.

This competition is considered a qualification for the INTEL International Science and Engineering competition, which is held annually in the United States and targets students from the ninth to twelfth grades who are from the age group 14-18 years. In August 2013, the club's astronomical museum, which contains about 400 astronomical objects, was opened through the voluntary efforts of members in confirmation of its orientation to support Kuwaiti youth.

Over the past decades, the club has signed agreements with many government agencies, associations, and regional and international organizations to open new horizons of cooperation in the science fields. The members of the club have recorded many achievements in the field of inventions, obtained advanced positions in regional and international competitions, and raised Kuwait's flag high in a number of scientific forums in which they participated. — KUNA

Price of image over true value

By Monai Kraidees

KUWAIT: Most people today have become increasingly materialistic; the more they acquire, the more they desire. They are rarely satisfied with what they have, believing that their worth is tied to the price of their possessions rather than their intrinsic value. This mindset has driven people to take out loans and fall into debt just to keep up with others, often purchasing poor-quality products or engaging in activities they don't enjoy, simply to project a certain lifestyle or imitate someone else.

Shahad Fahad, a 20-year-old student, shared an experience with Kuwait Times about her time at a university abroad. She was advised to remove all her jewelry for an interview to align with societal perspectives that differ from those in Kuwait. "In Kuwait, some people judge you based on the brands you wear, the car you drive or the area you live in. The more expensive you look, the more respect you get," she explained.

Sara Bader, 48, commented on how Kuwaiti society has reached a point where appearance seems to outweigh actions. "Yes, it's important to look put-together, but what's more important is who you are as a person, how confident you are, how you carry yourself and how educated you are. In Kuwait, people often find it easier to buy things than to invest in themselves. Human nature tends to choose the easier path," she said. Bader stressed that individuals should focus on personal growth and achieving their own goals, rather than following others. "You shouldn't be a follower; you should be a leader," she added.

Some people feel the need to mimic others to avoid feeling inferior. For example, Nora Bader, 17, said: "My cousin traveled to Spain, so I told my mother I want to go to Spain too." When asked why, she replied, "My cousin isn't better than me; why should she visit a country I haven't been to?"

Psychologist Latifah Al-Hadhoud explained to Kuwait Times that materialism has always been a source of excitement. "Designer brands, expensive cars and a lavish lifestyle have always existed. What has changed is people's perspectives, which have been influenced by social media," she explained.

Hadhoud advised people to focus less on superficial appearances and more on inner qualities, noting that those who prioritize the shallow often fail to realize that, once the superficial is stripped away, there's nothing left. "While it's important to present yourself well in today's society, this should never overshadow being true to yourself and who you are as a person," she concluded.



Latifah Al-Hadhoud

Kuwait residents try to ward off the heat

KUWAIT: While Kuwait is one of the most exposed countries to sunlight with temperatures rising above 50 degrees Celsius in summer, many people resort to insulating or shading their vehicles or buildings. Almost a decade ago, the so-called "shading or thermal insulation" was not known in Kuwait, but currently, many vehicles have been shaded thermally to avoid strong sunlight that causes immense heat inside the car.

The presence of thermal shading prevents a high percentage of the rays from entering the cars. It is also used in buildings. Thermal shading is a transparent adhesive. It is glued to the windows and works to reflect the sunlight stream, thus preventing the rays from entering inside the car, a house, or any building, in addition to trapping cold air inside the place for as long as possible.

In this regard, one of the owners of thermal shading companies, Mahmoud Al-Abdullah, told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Saturday that thermal shading is important and vital for cars, as it wades off harmful sunlight and ultraviolet rays and can reduce the ingress of rays by up to 99 percent. This has been



scientifically proven through international experiments, which made many people install shading immediately after buying a new car. Abdullah added that users of thermal shading should purchase the products from the right dealers to avoid counterfeit products.

In addition, thermal shading is needed for medical reasons, as many people suffer from allergies due to sunlight. Consultant dermatologist and Skin Surgery and head of the Skin Surgery Unit at Asaad Al-Hamad Center, Dr. Ibrahim Al-Arabi, told KUNA that the sun rays are divided into two types: the first is infrared, which is difficult to reach the human body; the second is ultraviolet radiation, which is harmful to the skin and is divided into three types A, B, and C.

A and B are more harmful on human skin, while C does not pose direct harm. Al-Arabi added that ultraviolet rays can cause sunburn, which is a common thing, especially for those with sensitive skin, and they are the most vulnerable category, as the amount of



light that reaches the skin is very large and more than it can withstand, thus resulting in skin burns.

He explained that the best way to avoid harmful sunlight is to apply sun protection like ointment to the parts that may be exposed to the sun directly, but it is better to wear long sleeves so as to cover the body thoroughly. He pointed out that thermal shading on cars is very effective to protect them from sunlight, and its effectiveness in curbing rays has been proven through experiments by specialists in the field of shading.

In terms of traffic and security, the Ministry of Interior does not allow the installation of all types of thermal shading, so the Ministerial Decision No. 864 of 2020 was issued on the amendment of Article No. 46 BIS on shading glass, which included allowing the installation of tinted glass for all types of vehicles, provided that the degree of transparency is not less than 30 percent. — KUNA

Arab League deplores Gaza school massacre

CAIRO: Secretary-General of the Arab League Ahmad Abul-Gheit condemned, in the strongest terms, the new massacre committed by Zionist occupation earlier in the day in a Gaza school sheltering displaced people, killing more than 100 people and wounding hundreds others. In a statement, Abul-Gheit described the massacre as a "cowardly act," affirming that killing displaced civilians during Fajr prayer is a crime that exceeded even the known dirty level of Zionist occupation.

Continued genocides committed against Palestinians in Gaza are a license given to Zionists to carry on killing people without being punished, it added. He called on the international community to put real pressure on Zionist occupation to get into serious negotiations through mediators to reach an immediate ceasefire in the Strip in exchange for a prisoner swap.

In another development, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Al-Budaiwi, has welcomed all the substances of the joint statement issued by leaders of Qatar, Egypt, and the United States on the importance of ending the crisis in the Gaza Strip and alleviating the suffering of the Palestinian people. In a statement, Al-Budaiwi praised the exerted efforts made by Qatar, Egypt, and the United States and their attempts to resume negotiations between all parties to reach an agreement and reduce escalation in the region.

Al-Budaiwi stressed GCC support for all efforts aimed at stopping the crisis and saving the Palestinian people, believing that combining efforts and unifying positions is the best way to stop the crisis in a way that reflects positively on regional and international peace and stability. At the same time, Al-Budaiwi affirmed GCC support for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of their independent state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and all relevant international resolutions.

The leaders of Qatar, Egypt, and the United States said in a joint statement yesterday, "The three of us, with our teams, have worked hard for several months to reach a framework agreement, which is now on the table, and all that is missing is the completion of the details related to implementation." "As mediators, we stand ready, if necessary, to put forward a final proposal to resolve the remaining implementation issues in a manner that meets the expectations of all parties," the three leaders added. "We have called on the two sides to resume urgent talks on Thursday, August 15, in (Doha or Cairo) to bridge all remaining gaps and begin implementing the agreement without any delay." — KUNA

Burgan Cares: Expanding support with MBA programs, bachelor's degree opportunities

Part of bank's dedicated commitment to holistic development of human capital

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank recently celebrated three of its employees who completed their undergraduate studies and earned their bachelor's degrees as part of the "Burgan Cares" program, which has now expanded to encompass postgraduate support. This comes in line with the Bank's dedicated human capital development strategy and its unwavering commitment to embedding Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices in its operations and culture.

Since its launch in 2022, the "Burgan Cares" program has centered on advancing employees in their careers by supporting their academic endeavors. In its initial phase, the program focused on sponsoring employees' efforts to earn a bachelor's degree. This year, the program's scope has been extended to offer more opportunities for those interested in pursuing an MBA, which serves as a testament to the Bank's pledge to create a supportive and enriching environment for its employees, where learning is encouraged and achievements are celebrated.



Bashar Al-Qattan

"At Burgan Bank, we believe that nurturing talent, fostering growth, and investing in our employees is the foundation of our institutional development, making every individual achievement a win for the Bank," said Bashar Al-Qattan, Acting Executive Manager – Learning and Talent Development at

Burgan Bank. "Since the launch of the 'Burgan Cares' program, we have seen determined employees rekindle their aspiration to earn a bachelor's degree. Today, we are delighted to celebrate the first three Burgan employees to complete their undergraduate studies under the umbrella of 'Burgan Cares.'"

"On behalf of the Burgan Bank family, I would like to commend the graduates on their hard work, perseverance, and dedication to balancing their professional and academic responsibilities," he added. "We believe that many growth opportunities await them along their journeys. More importantly, we vow to exert all that is in our power to ensure that Burgan employees receive the necessary support to reach their full potential, especially through pursuing undergraduate or postgraduate degrees." In addition to the three recent graduates, 15 Burgan employees remain enrolled in their undergraduate studies on their way to earning a bachelor's degree under the "Burgan Cares" umbrella, with more aspiring employees expected to join

the program.

As a certified Great Place to Work, Burgan Bank continues to develop its growth and development scheme in a bid to offer its employees a wide range of learning opportunities that match their diverse personal needs and professional aspirations. Among the Bank's most notable learning and development programs is its flagship Ro'ya program, which aims to prepare the Bank's top talents to assume leadership positions within Burgan and across Kuwait's banking sector.

The Bank's learning and development efforts also include the Entelaqah program, which caters to the needs of new hires and ensures that they get an insightful head-start in their banking careers. Furthermore, Burgan Bank offers flagship programs internally and in partnership with distinguished universities to nurture the skills of its talents. This further solidifies the Bank's commitment to investing in human capital, developing Kuwait's vast talent pool, and contributing to the domestic economy.

Gaza ship sails towards Jordanian port of Aqaba

ANKARA: The third Gaza ship sailed from the Turkish port of Mersin to the Jordanian port of Aqaba on Saturday, carrying 1,600 tons of basic relief supplies and essential needs to be sent to the Gaza Strip, said Jamal Al-Nouri, treasurer of the Kuwait Relief Society and head of the relief committee. Al-Nouri told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) before sailing that the third Gaza Ship aims to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians affected by Zionist attacks on the Gaza Strip by providing them with the necessary relief supplies and urgent needs.

The ship is loaded with tons of humanitarian donations. Al-Nouri explained that the aid ship's cargo included parcels, food, health supplies, shelter supplies, and personal items amounting to about 650 tons, including about 150 tons of dates, in addition to 35,000 food parcels, 35,000 flour bags, and 20,000 malnutrition treatment parcels, each of which contains baby milk, vitamins, and nutritional supplements essential for the health of children and pregnant mothers.

The ship also contains about 5,000 parcels of mother and child care kits (for newborns) and 35,000 parcels of personal hygiene parcels, other care detergents, shelter materials, including 500 tons of supplies, 1,200 tents with an area of 24 square meters, 4,800 sponges, 4,800 sleeping pillows, 3,600 blankets, 1,200 blankets, and 1,200 carpets.

The ship is expected to arrive at the port of Aqaba before mid-August, to be unloaded directly at the port and then reloaded in land trucks in cooperation with the Hashemite Jordanian Charity Organization, and to be directed through land crossings to support and relieve the people of the Gaza Strip.

He praised the efforts of the Kuwaiti ministries, headed by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Social Affairs, and the efforts of Kuwaiti charitable societies, the Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation, Human Rights and Freedoms (IHH), the Hashemite Jordanian Charity



The third Gaza ship sails from Mersin port towards Aqaba port. — KUNA photos

Organization, and officials responsible for managing sea and land ports in Turkey and Jordan, especially their role in quickly completing all procedures for obtaining the licenses necessary for the ship to sail.

For his part, the Deputy Director General of the Society and General Supervisor of the Gaza Ship Campaign, Omar Al-Thuwaini, stressed in a similar statement to KUNA the society's keenness in recent years to conclude more cooperation agreements, strategic partnerships, and executive contracts with relief institutions and local and international humanitarian organizations with the aim of expanding the society's message to broader humanitarian horizons and achieving the highest standards in rapid intervention to support those

affected by disasters and crises.

Al-Thuwaini said that the success of the ship's operation comes as a result of fruitful cooperation with various official bodies, both inside and outside Kuwait, as part of the donations of the "Gaza Ship" campaign launched by the Kuwait Relief Society, along with 30 charitable societies and Kuwaiti governmental and civil institutions. He stated that the association signed an executive contract last February at its headquarters with the Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) worth \$4 million to operate the 'Gaza Ship' to support and provide relief to the Palestinians who are affected by the ongoing Zionist attacks on the Gaza Strip since October of last year. — KUNA



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Bangladesh's leader Yunus appeals for religious unity

Russian military heightens surveillance to stop incursion

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GAZA: People check the damage inside a school used as a temporary shelter for displaced Palestinians in Gaza City, following a Zionist strike on August 10, 2024, that killed more than 90 people. — AFP photos



A young man mourns over the corpse of a person killed in the Zionist strike on the school.

Worshippers torn to pieces in horrific Zionist massacre

14 schools sheltering Gaza's displaced have been hit since July 6, killing at least 280 people

GAZA CITY: White body bags littered the floor and mourning filled the air after a school housing displaced Palestinians was struck with Zionist missiles Saturday — a horrific and increasingly common sight in the Gaza war. Dawn prayers were shattered by the early morning triple air strike from Zionist warplanes, which gutted Al-Tabieen religious school and mosque in Gaza City.

In the hellish aftermath, body parts were strewn around the rubble and charred, bloodied bodies slumped in the wreckage of the two-storey complex. Grim-faced volunteers piled corpses in blood-stained blankets into an ambulance, as seriously wounded men lay groaning on the ground. Gaza's civil defense agency said at least 93 people were killed, 17 of them women and children, making it one of the war's deadliest strikes.

The Zionist military disputed the death toll, saying the school was targeted with "precision munitions" because it "served as an active Hamas and Islamic Jihad military facility". Such incidents have become a pattern in recent weeks. According to an AFP tally, at least 14 schools sheltering Gaza's displaced have been hit since

July 6, killing more than 280 people. "Peaceful people — women, children, and youths — were performing the Fajr prayer as usual when suddenly a missile hit them," said Abu Wassim, who lives nearby and came to survey the scene. "They were reduced to remains. Children were torn apart, and women were burned. What can we say or do? What is in our power?"

"They were just praying"

As the sun climbed and mourners gathered, one man stroked the face of a dead child shrouded in a plastic body bag. "They dropped a missile on them while they were just praying. Fear God, people! Fear God, Arabs!" a woman wailed over the body. Another man looked lost as he held a small corpse wrapped in a blanket. Nearby, six body bags lay on the ground, three of them children.

Tattered Qurans were piled on a window ledge. "We woke up before dawn to the sound of a strike," said Sakr, a resident from the neighborhood who gave just one name. "We headed to the site and found body remains of civilians who were peaceful-

ly performing prayers. We found bodies of children scattered in the street." Another man said: "You can't even recognize the bodies, there were scattered remains." "The ones who were struck are displaced people taking shelter in a school. What's their fault? What have they done wrong?"

Mohammad Al-Mughayyir, director of the supply and equipment department of Gaza's civil defense service, told AFP that six schools in Gaza City had been targeted in the past week alone. Zionist military spokesperson Lieutenant-Colonel Nadav Shoshani said that about 20 Hamas and Islamic militants were operating from the Al-Tabieen complex. "The compound, and the mosque that was struck within it, served as an active Hamas and Islamic Jihad military facility," he posted on X. Later on Saturday, Gaza civil defense agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal told journalists that the strike "directly targeted" two floors of the school. The strike hit "the upper floor housing women and children and the ground floor that was used for prayers by the displaced people," he said. — AFP

US won't sanction Zionist unit involved in death of citizen

WASHINGTON: The US State Department said Friday it would not sanction a Zionist army unit involved in the killing of a Palestinian-American, saying the Zionist entity had already taken remedial action. Omar Assad, 78, a grocer who spent most of his adult life in Milwaukee, was on a return visit to the West Bank in January 2022 when he was handcuffed, gagged and blindfolded, dying after lying on the ground for more than an hour on a cold winter night.

The incident was linked to the Zionist army's Netzah Yehuda, which Al Jazeera says is a controversial Zionist battalion notorious among Palestinians for repressive activities in the occupied West Bank.

The administration of President Joe Biden had considered blocking the battalion from receiving US assistance amid reports of involvement in human rights violations, but Department of State spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Friday that such abuses had been "effectively remediated".

A State Department panel decided against imposing sanctions on the unit after being presented with information by the government of the Zionist entity, which has vocally opposed action against its military. "This unit can continue receiving security assistance from the United States of America," State Department spokesman Vedant Patel said.

A US official said that two soldiers involved in the incident, while not ultimately prosecuted, were removed from combat positions and have left the military. The military has also taken steps "to avoid a recurrence of incidents," including enhanced screening of recruits and a two-week educational seminar specifically for the unit.

The Zionist army concluded that Assad's death was the result of "a moral failure and poor decision-making on the part of the soldiers." It said Assad "refused to cooperate" when stopped by soldiers in the village of Jiljilya and that soldiers tied his hands and gagged him without checking on him later. It was unclear why soldiers stopped Assad. The Palestinian official news agency Wafa said he died from a stress-induced heart attack.

The decision comes as Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris hardens her tone on pro-Palestine protesters who have been coming to her rallies. During her Arizona rally on Friday, Harris told pro-Palestine protesters who interrupted her speech that now is the time for a ceasefire deal in the Zionist war in Gaza.

The demonstrators shouted, "Free, free Palestine" as Harris spoke to an estimated 15,000 people. Pausing her speech to directly address the protesters, Harris said: "I have been clear: now is the time to get a ceasefire deal and get the hostage deal done." Harris also told the protesters, "The president and I are working around the clock every day to get that ceasefire deal done and bring the hostages home. I respect your voices, but we are here to now talk about the race in 2024." — Agencies

'No one deserves this': UK riots leave Muslims reeling

LONDON: Noor Miah was a student when riots broke out in northern England in the summer of 2001, with angry young British South Asians clashing with police after a series of racist attacks and incidents. The northern town of Burnley was engulfed in the riots which began an hour away in Oldham, as the far-right stoked racial tensions and minority communities accused the police of failing to protect them.

More than two decades later, Miah recalled that dark period as he tried to calm Muslim youths in Burnley after several Muslim gravestones in the local cemetery were defaced and far-right riots targeted mosques in nearby cities. "2001 was a difficult time for Burnley. We have moved onwards since then, picked ourselves up. The next generation has a lot of hope," Miah, now a secretary for a local mosque, told AFP.

On Monday, Miah received a message from a friend who found a family member's grave covered in paint. "When I rushed to the cemetery there were already a couple of families, who were really concerned, really emotional," Miah said, with around seven gravestones vandalized with grey paint. The act is being treated as a hate crime by local police. "Whoever's done this is trying to provoke the Muslim community to get emotionally hyped up and give a reaction. But we have been trying to keep everyone calm," Miah said. "It's a very low thing to do. No one deserves this ... things like this shouldn't happen in this day and age."

Restricting movement

The attack has added to the fear among Burnley's Muslims, after anti-immigrant, Islamophobic riots occurred in other northern towns and cities in the last week. The violence followed a mass stabbing on July 29 in Southport, near Liverpool, in which three children were killed, which was falsely blamed on social media on a Muslim migrant.

Miah worries about his wife going to the town center wearing a hijab and has told his father to pray at home instead of at the mosque "to limit how much time he spends outside". "I helped build that mosque, I physically moved bricks there. I was part of that



LONDON: Police officers stand guard outside the East London Mosque after Friday prayers in Tower Hamlets in London on August 9, 2024. — AFP

mosque, but I have to think about my family's safety," he said. But Miah still hoped there would be no violence. "We haven't had riots yet here. Hopefully the riots won't come to Burnley." In Sheffield, violence hit close to home for Ameena Blake. Just a few miles away in Rotherham, hundreds of far-right rioters attacked police and set alight a hotel housing asylum seekers on Sunday. While Blake, a community leader on the board of two local mosques, said Sheffield is a place of "sanctuary", Rotherham "is literally on our doorstep". Since the weekend riot, there has been "a feeling of massive fear", especially among Muslim women, Blake said. "I've had Muslim sisters who wear hijab contacting me saying, 'I'm worried about going out with hijab.'"

'Unexpected'

Like Miah's family in Burnley, here too "people have been staying in their homes". "I know of sisters who usually are very independent ... who now won't go out without a male member of the family dropping them off and picking them up because they don't want to be out in the car alone." The government has announced extra

security for the places of worship in the wake of the violence, which reportedly left mosque-goers in Southport trapped inside the building during clashes. While the last two major bouts of rioting to rock England in 2001 and 2011 involved an outpouring of mistrust and anger against the police by minorities, this time police forces have worked alongside Muslim community leaders to urge calm.

"Historically, there has been a lot of mistrust in the police between BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) communities, Muslim communities," said Blake, who is also a chaplain for the South Yorkshire police in Sheffield. "Communities have almost parked to one side the mistrust and the historical issues to join together (with the police) to tackle this very, very real problem." Support from the police and government has been "really amazing, and to be honest, quite unexpected", Blake added. As Friday prayers beckoned this week, Muslims in Sheffield were feeling "quite nervous and vulnerable". But people will go to mosques, Blake said. "There is fear, but there's also very much a feeling of we need to carry on as normal." — AFP

International

Russian military heightens surveillance to stop incursion

Ukraine believed to have pierced around 13 km into Russian territory: Institute

MOSCOW: Moscow on Saturday mounted a "counter-terror operation" in three border regions adjoining Ukraine to halt Kyiv's advance deeper into Russia and warned that the fighting endangered a nuclear power plant. Ukrainian units stormed into Russia's western Kursk region on Tuesday morning in a shock attack, the largest and most successful cross-border offensive by Kyiv of the two-and-a-half year conflict.

Its troops have advanced several kilometers and Russia's army has rushed in reserves and extra equipment — though neither side has given precise details on the forces they have committed. Russia's nuclear agency on Saturday warned the Ukrainian attack posed a "direct threat" to the nearby Kursk nuclear power station.

At least 16,000 civilians requested state assistance to leave their homes in Russian border areas, where emergency aid has been ferried in, and extra trains to the capital Moscow have been put on for people fleeing. "The war has come to us," one woman from the border zone told AFP at a Moscow train station on Friday, declining to give her name.

Russia's army confirmed Saturday it was still fighting the Ukrainian incursion. It said Kyiv initially crossed the border with around 1,000 troops, around 20 armored vehicles and 11 tanks. Though it claimed Saturday to have destroyed five times that much military hardware so far.

'Unprecedented'

Russia's national anti-terrorism committee said

late Friday it was starting "counter-terror operations in the Belgorod, Bryansk and Kursk regions ... in order to ensure the safety of citizens and suppress the threat of terrorist acts being carried out by the enemy's sabotage groups."

Security forces and the military are given sweeping emergency powers during "counter-terror" operations. Movement is restricted, vehicles can be seized, phone calls can be monitored, areas are declared no-go zones, checkpoints introduced, and security is beefed up at key infrastructure sites. The anti-terrorism committee said Ukraine had mounted an "unprecedented attempt to destabilize the situation in a number of regions of our country."

Russia on Friday appeared to hit back, launching a missile strike on a supermarket in the east Ukrainian town of Kostyantynivka that killed at least 14 people. Three were killed in the northeastern Kharkiv region on Saturday, local officials said. Ukraine also said it needed to evacuate 20,000 people from the Sumy region, just across the border from Kursk. Neither side has provided details on the extent of the incursion.

Russia's defense ministry on Saturday said it had hit some Ukrainian positions as far as 10 kilometers (six miles) from the border. It also reported hitting Ukrainian troops in areas 30 kilometers apart — an indication as to the breadth, as well as depth of Ukraine's advance.

The US-based Institute for the Study of War said Saturday it believed Ukrainian forces had pierced around 13 kilometers into Russian territory. Belarus,



ORYOL: Russian Emergency Situations Ministry personnel assist people who have been evacuated from the border settlements of the Kursk region, as they arrive at a railway station in Oryol on August 9, 2024. — AFP

Russia's close ally, on Saturday ordered military reinforcements — ground troops, air units, air defense and rocket systems — to be deployed closer to its border with Ukraine in response to Kyiv's incursion,

the defense ministry in Minsk said. The United States, Kyiv's closest ally, said it was not informed of the plans in advance. But President Volodymyr Zelensky has appeared to tout his troops' early successes. — AFP

Trump sticks to tale of scary helicopter ride, despite denials

WASHINGTON: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump on Friday insisted he was in a near-fatal helicopter ride with former San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, although Brown said the incident never happened and another politician said he had been on a similar flight with Trump decades earlier. Trump on Thursday related the tale of almost dying on a helicopter with Brown, who had briefly dated Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris several decades ago.

"I went down in a helicopter with him," Trump said in a rambling press conference. "We thought maybe this is the end. We were in a helicopter going to a certain location together, and there was an emergency landing. This was not a pleasant landing, and Willie was, he was a little concerned." Trump also asserted Willie Brown told him "terrible things" about Harris.

Brown, a longtime Democratic power broker who also served as speaker of the California State Assembly, told the San Francisco Chronicle after Trump's press conference that he was never in a helicopter

with the former president. He also denied that he had ever said anything disparaging about Harris to Trump.

Another Black former California politician, Nate Holden, told Politico late on Friday that he had been in a turbulent helicopter ride with Trump in New Jersey, likely in 1990. Earlier on Friday, Trump had dug in, insisting in posts on his Truth Social platform that his helicopter ride had been with Willie Brown and that it had occurred in New Jersey, not California. "There were 'Logs,' Maintenance Records, and Witnesses. There was also a story on 'Willie and Me,'" Trump said. He did not provide any of the evidence he referred to in the post.

Asked to share the evidence Trump mentioned, Trump campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung referred Reuters to a post of his on X of a picture from a page in the 2023 "Letters to Trump" book. It contains a picture of Trump and Willie Brown, and quotes Trump as saying: "We actually had an emergency landing in a helicopter together."

Asked about Holden's account of being in a helicopter with Trump, Cheung said: "Sounds like Holden is either lying or is having memory issues." Holden, a former city councilman and state senator from Los Angeles, scoffed at Trump's account, Politico reported. "Willie is the short Black guy living in San Francisco," Holden was quoted as saying. "I'm a tall Black guy living in Los Angeles. I guess we all look alike."

Holden added that Harris was not brought up during the helicopter ride. "He either mixed it up. Or, he made it up," Holden said of Trump. Holden did not immediately respond to an e-mail request for comment. As president in 2018, Trump also toured fire-ravaged portions of California by helicopter with then-California Governor Jerry Brown. NBC News reported. A representative for former Governor Brown, who is white, told the New York Times there was no emergency landing and Harris was not discussed during that flight.

Trump said he would "probably" sue the New York Times over its coverage of his comments on the helicopter story, according to a Times story on Friday. Trump disparaged the newspaper on Truth Social, attacking its reporter Maggie Haberman as "Maggot Hagermann." The Times did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Harris campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the apparent mix-up.

When 81-year-old President Joe Biden was still the Democratic candidate in the November 5 election, Trump, 78, frequently mocked his opponent's mental acuity and offered to take a cognitive test, arguing Biden was too infirm to be president. Biden has since been replaced atop the ticket by the 59-year-old Harris, forcing Trump to scramble to find new lines of attack.

Republicans have insinuated that Willie Brown



MONTANA: Former US President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump is seen during an election campaign rally in Bozeman, Montana, on August 9, 2024. — AFP

is in part responsible for Harris' rise in politics, although the two broke up in the mid-1990s and Harris did not win her first election until 2002. While the two were dating, Brown appointed Harris, then a young prosecutor, to two well-paying jobs on state boards. — Reuters

DARKNESS AT DAWN...

Continued from Page 1

Jordan's foreign ministry said the timing was an indication of the Zionist entity's efforts to "obstruct and thwart" the peace push. One of the mediators, Qatar, called for an "urgent international investigation" into strikes on school shelters. Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry expressed "condemnation in the strongest terms" and stressed "the need to stop the mass massacres" in Gaza.

Iran condemned the "barbaric" Zionist strike, saying the strike was "a clear example of the simultaneous perpetration of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity" by the Zionist entity. Turkey decried a "new crime against humanity" and claimed Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wanted "to sabotage ceasefire negotiations".

"(The Zionist entity) is genociding the Palestinians one neighborhood at the time, one hospital at the time, one school at the time, one refugee camp at the time, one safe zone at the time," Albanese, the United Nations special rapporteur on the rights situation in the Palestinian territories, said on social media platform X.

The Zionist entity was carrying out such strikes against Palestinians using "US and European weapons", Albanese said. "May the Palestinians forgive us for our collective inability to protect them," she added. In a report issued in March, Albanese said there were "reasonable grounds" to determine that the Zionist entity had committed several acts of genocide in its war in Gaza.

Washington will provide the Zionist entity \$3.5 billion to spend on US weapons and military equipment, the State Department said on Friday, with the release of the money coming months after the US Congress appropriated it during the Zionist entity's war in Gaza. CNN reported earlier on the release of this amount which comes from a

\$14 billion supplemental funding bill for the Zionist entity passed by the Congress in April.

The European Union's top diplomat Josep Borrell said the school strike left him "horrified", adding that there is "no justification for these massacres". France said "(The Zionist entity) must respect international humanitarian law". "For several weeks, school buildings have been repeatedly targeted, with an intolerable number of civilian victims," the French foreign ministry said. Britain's top diplomat David Lammy said on X: "We need an immediate ceasefire to protect civilians, free all hostages, and end restrictions on aid."

In a rare intervention on Saturday, Iraq's top Shiite Muslim cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, denounced "crimes" including the latest school strike and the senior militants' killings which, he said, risk "catastrophic consequences". Sistani urged an end to the genocidal war in Gaza. "Once again, the (Zionist) occupation army has committed a huge massacre... adding to its series of ongoing crimes" in Gaza, Sistani said in a rare statement since the start of the 10-month-old war. "We once again call on the world to stand against this terrible brutality," Sistani said, urging Muslims "to unite in order to press for an end to the genocidal war" in Gaza.

"Those who were inside the mosque were all killed. Even the floor above, where women and children were sleeping, was completely burned," local resident Abu Wassim said. Hamas has always denied using schools, hospitals and other civilian facilities for military aims. The attack left dead and wounded strewn around the ground floor of the two-storey complex with a courtyard, where debris lay inside and out. APTV images showed. The upper floor was partially blown out and charred.

Images showed white-shrouded bodies, blood stains on the ground, and smoke rising from the rubble. The Zionist military campaign in Gaza has killed at least 39,790 people, according to Gaza's health ministry, mostly women and children. Bassal told a press conference that 11 children and six women were among those killed at the school

investigators on Friday recovered the "black box" containing flight data that might be useful in the inquiry. The plane had been in use since 2010 and was in compliance with current standards, the National Civil Aviation Agency said, adding that the four crew members were all fully certified. Voepass' operations director, Marcel Moura, said the plane had undergone routine maintenance the night before the accident and that "no technical problems" were found.

Residents of the neighborhood where the plane fell said they had heard a loud noise and then watched in horror as the plane came down in an almost vertical free-fall. Videos showed an enormous cloud of smoke rising from the scene. Military police told local media there were no casualties on the ground, and that fires sparked by the crash had been brought under control.

It was one of the worst aviation accidents in the country's history. In 2007, an Airbus A320 of Brazil's TAM airlines overran a runway at Sao Paulo's Congonhas airport and crashed into a warehouse, killing all 187 on board and 12 runway workers. — AFP



GAZA: Displaced Palestinians watch as first responders prepare to transport corpses of people killed in a Zionist strike on a school in Gaza City on Aug 10, 2024. — AFP

shelter, "and there are many unidentified body parts."

Iran last week accused the Zionist entity of wanting to spread war in the Middle East, while Hamas officials, some analysts and critics in the Zionist entity have said Netanyahu seeks to prolong the fighting. However, Netanyahu's office on Thursday said the Zionist entity would send negotiators "to conclude the details of implementing a deal", after the joint invitation from the United States, Egypt and Qatar. They invited the warring parties to resume talks on August 15 to swiftly implement an agreement, after intense diplomacy aimed at averting a region-wide conflagration.

Guards get new arms as Iran vows...

Continued from Page 1

Following Haniyeh's killing, Iranian officials and military commanders have promised to take action against the Zionist entity, while calls for regional de-escalation have grown.

Iran is set to carry out an order by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to "harshly punish" the Zionist entity over the assassination of Haniyeh in Tehran, a Revolutionary Guards deputy commander was quoted as saying on Friday by local news agencies. "The supreme leader's orders regarding the harsh punishment of (the Zionist entity) and revenge for the blood of martyr Ismail Haniyeh are clear and explicit ... and they will be implemented in the best possible way,"

The killing on July 31 of Hamas' Ismail Haniyeh during a visit to Tehran had sidelined truce talks. Iran's mission to the United Nations on Saturday said the Islamic Republic has "the legitimate right to self-defense" after its sovereignty was "violated". "However, we hope that our response will be timed and conducted in a manner not to the detriment of the potential ceasefire," it said. Haniyeh's death came hours after a Zionist strike on south Beirut killed Fuad Shukur, Hezbollah's military chief. Hamas ally Hezbollah has been trading near-daily cross-border fire with Zionist forces. — Agencies

said Ali Fadavi, cited by Iranian media.

Asked by reporters to respond to Fadavi's remarks, White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said the US was ready to defend the Zionist entity with plenty of resources in the region, adding: "When we hear rhetoric like that we've got to take it seriously, and we do." Iran's mission to the United Nations said later on Friday that Tehran's response to the Zionist entity's assassination of Haniyeh was "a matter totally unrelated" to efforts to broker a ceasefire in the 10-month war in the Gaza Strip.

"Our priority is to establish a lasting ceasefire in Gaza; any agreement accepted by Hamas will also be recognized by us," Iran's UN mission in New York said. "The (Zionist) regime has violated our national security and sovereignty through its recent act of terrorism. We have the legitimate right to self-defense - a matter totally unrelated to the Gaza ceasefire," it said. — Agencies

Brazil plane crash kills 62...

Continued from Page 1

A steady overnight rain complicated recovery work, which could "take days," according to Captain Maycon Cristo, a spokesman for local firefighters. The twin-engine turboprop, built by French-Italian aviation firm ATR, was on a flight from Cascavel in southern Parana state to Sao Paulo's Guarulhos international airport. The company said its experts will assist in the investigation. According to the Flight Radar 24 website, the plane flew for about an hour at 17,000 feet, until at 1:21 pm (1621 GMT) it began rapidly losing altitude.

Radar contact was lost at 1:22 pm, the Brazilian air force reported. Brazil's Aeronautical Accidents Investigation and Prevention Center (CENIPA) has opened an inquiry into the cause of the crash. Its

International

Bangladesh's leader Yunus appeals for religious unity

Bangladesh chief justice steps down after protestors demand resignation

DHAKA: Bangladesh's interim leader Muhammad Yunus appealed for religious unity Saturday after embracing the weeping mother of a student shot dead by police, a flashpoint in mass protests that ended Sheikh Hasina's 15-year rule. Nobel laureate Yunus, 84, returned from Europe this week to helm a temporary administration facing the monumental challenge of ending disorder and enacting democratic reforms. "Our responsibility is to build a new Bangladesh," he told reporters.

Several reprisal attacks against the country's Hindu minority since autocratic ex-premier Hasina's toppling have caused alarm in neighboring India as well as fear at home. Yunus called for calm during a visit to the northern city of Rangpur by invoking the memory of Abu Sayeed, the first student slain during last month's unrest. "Don't differentiate by religion", he said. "Abu Sayeed is now in every home. The way he stood, we have to do the same," he added. "There are no differences in Abu Sayeed's Bangladesh."

Sayeed, 25, was shot dead by police at close range on July 16 at the start of a police crackdown on student-led protests against Hasina's government. His mother sobbed as she clung to a visibly emotional Yunus, who had come to pay his respects alongside members of the "advisory" cabinet



RANGPUR: Nobel laureate and chief adviser of Bangladesh's new interim government, Muhammad Yunus (right) visits slain Abu Sayeed's house, who was killed by police during the anti-quota protests, in Rangpur on August 10, 2024. — AFP photos

now administering the country. Fellow cabinet member Nahid Islam, a 26-year-old sociology graduate who led the protests that culminated in Hasina's ouster, wept by the leader's side.

Allies purged

Hasina, 76, fled by helicopter to neighboring India on Monday as protesters flooded Dhaka's streets in a dramatic end to her iron-fisted rule. Her government was accused of widespread human rights abuses including the extrajudicial killing of thousands of her political opponents. Cabinet ministers left blindsided by her sudden fall have gone to ground, while several top appointees have been forced out of office — including the national police chief and the central bank governor.

The chief justice of the Supreme Court became on Saturday the latest to announce his departure. "It's not possible anymore for me to perform the duty," Obaidul Hassan said in a statement. "Therefore, I have decided to resign." Appointed last year, Hassan earlier oversaw a much-criticized war crimes tribunal that ordered the execution of Hasina's opponents, and his brother was her longtime secretary.

His announcement came after hundreds of protesters gathered outside the court to demand he and other judges step down by the early afternoon. "No one should do anything that pits the Supreme Court against the mass uprising of the students and the people," Asif Nazrul, a student protest leader now serving in Yunus' government, told reporters. — AFP

India faced with diplomatic dilemma after Hasina ousted

NEW DELHI: The ouster of Bangladesh's autocratic premier sparked celebrations in Dhaka this week but alarm in neighboring India, which backed Sheikh Hasina to counter rival China and quash Islamist alternatives, analysts say. It has created a diplomatic dilemma for the regional powerhouse. Hasina, 76, quit as prime minister in the face of a student-led uprising on Monday and fled by helicopter to longtime ally New Delhi. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the first to offer his "best wishes" after Bangladesh's newly sworn-in interim leader Muhammad Yunus took power Thursday, saying New Delhi was "committed" to working with Dhaka. But China was also swift to welcome Dhaka's new authorities, saying it "attaches importance to the development" of relations.

With Hasina's rivals in control in Dhaka, India's support for the old government has come back to bite. "From the point of view of Bangladeshis, India has been on the wrong side for a couple of years now," said International Crisis Group analyst Thomas Kean. "The Indian government absolutely did not want to see a change in Dhaka, and had made that very clear for years that they didn't see any alternative to Hasina and the Awami League."

'Detrimental'

Bangladesh is almost entirely encircled by India, with a deeply intertwined history long before they were partitioned out of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. But while India's 1.4 billion population and dominating economy overshadow Bangladesh — with a population of 170 million — Hasina also courted China. India and China, the world's two most populous nations, are intense rivals competing for strategic influence across South Asia, including in Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Hasina pursued a delicate balancing act, benefiting from support from New Delhi, while maintaining strong relations with Beijing.

New Delhi saw a common threat in groups Hasina viewed as rivals and crushed with brutal force, including the key Bangladesh National Party (BNP). "India ... worried that any alternative to Hasina and the Awami League could be detrimental to Indian interests," said Michael Kugelman, director of the South Asia Institute at the Washington-based Wilson Center. "In New Delhi's view, the BNP and its allies are dangerous Islamist forces that could imperil Indian interests."

Yunus has said he wants elections in Bangladesh "within a few months". The BNP could be poised for a comeback, holding a mass rally in Dhaka this week. In the immediate aftermath of Hasina's fall, some businesses and homes owned by Hindus were attacked, a group seen by some in Muslim-majority Bangladesh as having been her supporters. Hundreds of Bangladeshi Hindus this week arrived on India's border, asking to cross. Hindu nationalist leader Modi on Thursday said he hoped "for an early return to normalcy, ensuring the safety and protection of Hindus and all other minority communities."

'She will go back'

The fact Hasina is sheltering in India may prove to be a stumbling block to relations between New Delhi and Dhaka. Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar told parliament Hasina had flown to India "at very short notice", and according to Indian media, intended to stay only briefly in transit.

But her reported bid to travel onwards to Britain was scrapped after London called for a "full and independent UN-led investigation" into the deadly crackdown on protests in the last weeks of her rule. The United States in the past had praised Hasina's economic track record and saw her as a partner on priorities such as countering Islamist extremism, but Washington more recently imposed visa sanctions over concerns about democracy. It is not clear how long she will now stay in India, or where else she might go.

Since arriving at military airbase near New Delhi, she has been hosted in a secret safe house and has not spoken publicly. Her daughter Saima Wazed said she was "heartbroken" she could not see her mother. "As much as I would love to see Ma, I don't want to compromise her whereabouts in any way", Wazed, the World Health Organization's Southeast Asia chief, said in a since-deleted post on social media platform X. Her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy told the Times of India newspaper his mother still hoped to contest for political office. "She will go back to Bangladesh the moment the interim government decides to hold an election," he said.

'Earned the enmity'

Indian media warn of the "formidable diplomatic challenge" the country now faces. "New Delhi must actively work to limit the damage, and ensure the high stakes in the relationship are protected," the Indian Express newspaper warned. "This could involve some near-term setbacks."

But Bangladesh's new leader Yunus has offered an olive branch. "Although some countries, such as India, backed the ousted prime minister and earned the enmity of the Bangladeshi people as a result, there will be many opportunities to heal these kinds of rifts," Yunus wrote in *The Economist*, shortly before returning to Bangladesh. — AFP



DHAKA: Students hold Bangladesh's national flags as they protest to demand the resignation of Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, in front of the Supreme Court in Dhaka on August 10, 2024.

India and Maldives look to reset ties

MALE: India's foreign minister called for stronger ties with the Maldives Saturday, on his first trip to the archipelago nation since its pro-China president expelled Indian troops. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said he was "committed to deepen India-Maldives ties", after meeting President Mohamed Muizzu in Male on Saturday.

Jaishankar earlier said he was in the Maldives to "take stock of our defense and security engagement",

months after Muizzu's administration signed a military assistance pact with Beijing. Known as a luxury holiday destination with pristine white sand beaches and secluded resorts, the atoll nation has also become a geopolitical hotspot.

India is suspicious of China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean, and Male's military deal with Beijing came as Muizzu ordered a garrison of Indian soldiers stationed in the Maldives to assist with maritime patrols to leave. Global east-west shipping lanes pass the nation's chain of 1,192 tiny coral islands, stretching around 800 kilometers (500 miles) across the equator.

India's government has traditionally considered the Maldives, home to around half a million people,

within its sphere of influence. "For India, neighborhood is a priority and, in the neighborhood, Maldives is a priority," Jaishankar said in a speech Friday. Muizzu thanked India for "always supporting" the country, saying their "enduring partnership continues to strengthen, bringing our nations closer through cooperation in security, development, and cultural exchange", in a post on X.

Male's foreign minister Moosa Zameer said the two countries had agreed to strengthen economic ties, proposing negotiations on a free trade agreement with New Delhi. Defense links were also discussed, including "continuing joint exercises and expanding training opportunities for officers", he added. — AFP

Philippines condemns China's provocation

MANILA: The Philippines and China traded accusations on Saturday following an encounter between their aircraft over a contested area of the South China Sea. The Philippine military strongly condemned "dangerous and provocative actions" by China's air force, while the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) said it acted in a professional and legal manner.

It is the first time the Philippines has complained of dangerous actions by Chinese aircraft, as opposed to navy or coast guard vessels, since President Ferdinand Marcos Jr took office in 2022. Two Chinese Air Force aircraft executed a dangerous maneuver and dropped flares in the path of a Philippine air force aircraft conducting a routine patrol over the Scarborough Shoal on Thursday morning, the military said in a statement.

"It endangered the lives of our personnel undertaking maritime security operations recently within Philippine maritime zones", said Philippines armed forces chief Romeo Brawner, adding that the Chinese aircraft interfered with lawful flight operations and violated international law on aviation safety. — AFP

Top Indian opposition leader granted bail

NEW DELHI: India's Supreme Court on Friday granted bail to a top opposition politician who was detained last year over a long-running corruption probe. Manish Sisodia, 52, the deputy chief minister of Delhi, is among several leaders of the opposition Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) who have been accused of receiving kickbacks while handing out liquor permits.

The party's boss, and the capital's chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, has been in prison over the same charges since March, save for a brief period when he was released to campaign during national elections. Both have denied the charges as a "political conspiracy" by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. "Sisodia has deep roots in society and he cannot flee," said judge Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai while granting bail. Gavai said Sisodia had been "deprived" of the "sacrosanct right to a speedy trial". Leaders of the AAP said the order was a "big victory" for the party and they expected him to be released from jail later on Friday. — AFP

Flood of 'junk': How AI is changing scientific publishing

PARIS: An infographic of a rat with preposterously large genitals. Another showing human legs with way too many bones. An introduction that starts: "Certainly, here is a possible introduction for your topic". These are a few of the most egregious examples of artificial intelligence that have recently made their way into scientific journals, shining a light on the wave of AI-generated text and images washing over the academic publishing industry. Several experts who track down problems in studies told AFP that the rise of AI has turbocharged the existing problems in the multi-billion-dollar sector. All the experts emphasized that AI programs such as ChatGPT can be a helpful tool for writing or translating papers — if thoroughly checked and disclosed.

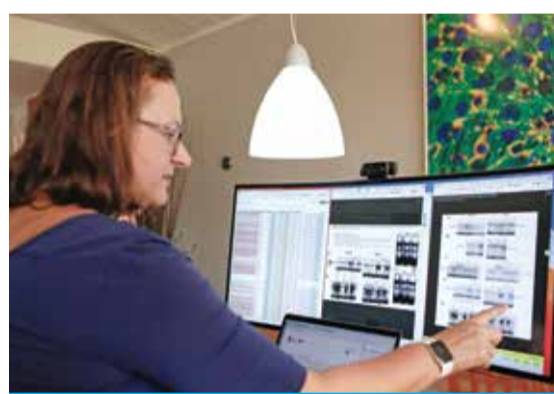
But that was not the case for several recent cases that somehow snuck past peer review. Earlier this year, a clearly AI-generated graphic of a rat with impossibly huge genitals was shared widely on social media. It was published in a journal of academic giant Frontiers, which later retracted the study.

Another study was retracted last month for an AI graphic showing legs with odd multi-jointed bones that resembled hands. While these examples were images, it is thought to be ChatGPT, a chatbot launched in November 2022, that has most changed how the world's researchers present their findings. A study published by Elsevier went viral in March for its introduction, which was clearly a ChatGPT prompt that read: "Certainly, here is a possible introduction for your topic". Such embarrassing examples are rare and would be unlikely to make it through the peer review process at the most prestigious journals, several experts told AFP.

Tilting at paper mills

It is not always so easy to spot the use of AI. But one clue is that ChatGPT tends to favour certain words. Andrew Gray, a librarian at University College London, trawled through millions of papers searching for the overuse of words such as meticulous, intricate or commendable. He determined that at least 60,000 papers involved the use of AI in 2023 — over one percent of the annual total. "For 2024 we are going to see very significantly increased numbers," Gray told AFP.

Meanwhile, more than 13,000 papers were retracted last year, by far the most in history, according to the US-based group Retraction Watch. AI has allowed the industrialization of scientific publishing and academia,



SAN FRANCISCO: Elisabeth Bik, a microbiologist known for her work detecting photo manipulation in scientific publications, points out image duplications she found in a scientific paper published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal PLOS One. — AFP

leading to an overflow of "junk" papers.

There is a large-scale industry of so-called "paper mills" that sell fictive research, sometimes written by AI, to researchers who then publish it in peer-reviewed journals — which are sometimes edited by people who had been placed by those sham groups. Two percent of all studies are thought to be published by paper mills, but the rate is "exploding" as AI opens the floodgates, said Elisabeth Bik, a Dutch researcher who detects scientific image manipulation.

This problem was highlighted when academic publishing giant Wiley purchased troubled publisher Hindawi in 2021. Since then, the US firm has retracted more than 11,300 papers related to special issues of Hindawi, a Wiley spokesperson told AFP. Wiley has now introduced a "paper mill detection service" to detect AI misuse — which itself is powered by AI.

Retraction Watch co-founder Ivan Oransky told AFP that the problem was not just paper mills, but a broader academic culture which pushes researchers to "publish or perish". "Publishers have created 30 to 40 percent profit margins and billions of dollars in profit by creating these systems that demand volume," he said. The insatiable demand for ever-more papers piles pressure on academics who are ranked by their output, creating a "vicious cycle," he said.

Many have turned to ChatGPT to save time — which is not necessarily a bad thing. Because nearly all papers are published in English, Bik said that AI translation tools can be invaluable to researchers — including herself — for whom English is not their first language. But there are also fears that the errors, inventions and unwitting plagiarism by AI could increasingly erode society's trust in science. — AFP

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 2024

US retailers rush holiday imports, fearing port strikes, disruptions

Global shipping industry signals an earlier than usual peak season

NEW YORK: Retailers are fueling a summer rush of imports to the United States this year as companies guard against a potential strike by port workers and ongoing shipping disruptions from attacks in the Red Sea ahead of a shortened holiday shopping season. Container imports and freight rates surged in July, signaling an earlier than usual peak season for an ocean shipping industry that handles about 80 percent of global trade. July is expected to be the peak for US retailers, which account for about half of that trade, and August is expected to be almost as robust, analysts said.

Companies that import toys, home goods and consumer electronics have brought forward holiday promotions to capture customers who are shopping earlier each season. "Retailers don't want to be caught back-footed," said Jonathan Gold, the National Retail Federation's (NRF) vice president for supply chain and customs policy. Many shippers expedited holiday goods orders, with some putting Christmas items on the water as early as May, said Peter Sand, chief analyst at pricing platform Xeneta.

The influx is not a result of consumer spending, which has been tethered by stubborn inflation and high interest rates, experts said. Rather, it is a precaution against a potential US port strike and the late Nov 28 date for Thanksgiving this year, squeezing the peak shopping and delivery season running to Christmas Eve.

In July US container imports registered the third-highest monthly volume on record with 2.6 million 20-foot equivalent units (TEUs), up 16.8 percent from a year earlier, in part owing to record imports from China, according to supply chain software provider Descartes Systems Group.

The NRF, which is chaired by the CEO of

Walmart's US business and includes the CEOs of Target, Macy's and Saks on its executive committee, said it also expects strong August imports. Walmart, the nation's largest container shipping importer, reports second-quarter earnings on Aug 15. Retailers are concerned about a possible Oct 1 strike at sea-ports stretching from Maine to Texas after talks between the International Longshoremen's Association and the United States Maritime Alliance stalled.

Maersk on Friday outlined the consequences of potential strike disruption at US ports. "Should a general work stoppage occur on the US Gulf and East Coasts, even a one-week shutdown could take 4-6 weeks to recover from, with significant backlogs and delays compounding with each passing day," Maersk said in a US market update.

Non-contract spot rates for a container going from the Far East to the US West Coast jumped 144 percent between the end of April and start of July but have since fallen 17 percent, with similar trends seen in container routes to the US East Coast and into northern Europe and the Mediterranean, according to Xeneta. "We should now see the spot market fall further, but the decline is unlikely to be as rapid as the rise, so it is still going to be a painful end to the year for shippers," Sand said.

The industrial sector has been a significant driver of US container import growth in the first half of 2024, partly due to looming tariffs on exports from China and other countries. President Joe Biden's administration levied new tariffs on numerous goods, which will take effect later this year. "The big tariff pull-through is EV batteries and solar cells," said Jason Miller, professor of supply chain management at Michigan State University's business school.

Biden has maintained tariffs put in place by his



BETHLEHEM, US: People line up at the entrance to the New Bethany food pantry in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on July, 22, 2024. — AFP

predecessor, Donald Trump, who as the 2024 Republican nominee has threatened more and larger tariffs if he regains the White House. Despite that threat, the response from companies has so far been muted, Miller said. Global shipper Maersk said there could be some pulling forward of demand ahead of the US

election in November owing to uncertainty over tariffs. "Where there seems to be agreement so far is that the United States and China have entered into a much more competitive relationship, and it will not matter whether one party or the other wins the election," Maersk CEO Vincent Clerc said this week. — Reuters

Global oil demand needs to rise faster to absorb OPEC+ hike

LONDON: Global oil demand growth needs to accelerate in coming months or the market will struggle to absorb an increase in oil supply that OPEC+ is planning to make from October, according to data, analysts and industry sources. Oil demand growth in the first seven months of the year from top consumers the United States and China had failed to meet some expectations even before renewed fears of a US recession triggered a global stock and bond sell-off this week.

If the economy slows further, oil demand growth will likely slow with it. That will mean OPEC+ would either have to delay plans to pump more oil or accept lower prices for higher supply, analysts said.

"In current circumstances of significant risk of recession, it is unlikely OPEC+ would move forward with the planned October increases," said Gary Ross, CEO of Black Gold Investors and a veteran OPEC-watcher. The price of oil LCO1 has fallen below \$80 per barrel in August — less than most members of OPEC+, or the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies such as Russia, need to balance their budgets. "Oil demand definitely has a downside risk," said Neil Atkinson, an independent analyst who previously worked at the International Energy Agency, citing concern about Chinese and US economies. "It's very difficult to see how prices can rise significantly if demand is slower than we thought" he said, adding that he expected OPEC+ to hit pause on its output increase.

For the first seven months of 2024, China's crude imports totaled 10.89 million barrels per day, down 2.4 percent on the year, official data showed on Wednesday. China's slumping consumption of diesel, as use of LNG-powered trucks grows, is weighing



DUBAI: This picture taken on Dec 10, 2023 shows the OPEC pavilion at the United Nations climate summit in Dubai. — AFP

on domestic fuel demand, as is a sluggish economy hobbled by a prolonged crisis in the property sector. In the United States, oil consumption through July has risen by 220,000 bpd on the year to average 20.25 million bpd, according to Reuters calculations based on government estimates. Demand will need to accelerate to reach the government's 2024 forecast of 20.5 million bpd.

Whether or not global demand hits the heights needed to absorb additional supplies this year is difficult to gauge because of a record variation in where the world's most respected oil demand analysts at OPEC and the IEA measure demand to date. There is a time lag on oil consumption data, and preliminary figures are often revised. That leaves forecasters including best estimates in some of their demand figures. OPEC pegs global demand growth at 2.15 million bpd in the first half of 2024, while the IEA estimates it was 735,000 bpd. The IEA advises industrialized countries on energy policy.

OPEC's estimate of first-half demand growth is little changed from what it was at the start of the year. The IEA has cut its estimate of first-half demand growth from 1.19 million bpd forecast in January. The IEA estimated China's consumption contracted in the second quarter, while OPEC es-

timates it rose by over 800,000 bpd. China is one of the main reasons for the difference in outlooks for the full year, as well as for the first half. Global growth would need to accelerate a little in the second half if OPEC estimates on first-half demand were correct. But if the IEA is right, demand would need to accelerate rapidly. The second half is typically the period of highest consumption as the simple fact of global economic growth increases oil demand and because it includes the peak driving season, Northern Hemisphere harvest and purchases to prepare for winter.

For demand growth to hit OPEC's full-year prediction, it would need to accelerate to an average of 2.30 million bpd in the second half, according to Reuters calculations. Demand needs to grow by 1.22 million bpd in the second half to reach the IEA's full-year prediction. OPEC and the IEA are scheduled to update their demand forecasts next week.

OPEC+ supply increase

OPEC+ last week confirmed its plan to start raising production from October with the caveat that it could be paused or reversed if needed. The increase is predicated on demand hitting OPEC's forecast, which would increase the need for oil from the producer group and its allies. OPEC+ pumps more than 40 percent of the world's crude. Should OPEC's demand prediction be realized, the demand for crude from OPEC+ countries is forecast to reach 43.9 million bpd in the fourth quarter, up from production of 40.8 million bpd in June, in theory allowing room for extra output.

OPEC+ still has a month to decide whether to start releasing the oil from October, and the group will study oil market data in the coming weeks, a source close to the group said. Saudi Aramco CEO Amin Nasser said on Tuesday he expected growth of between 1.6 million and 2 million bpd in the second half of the year. Two OPEC sources said it was unclear if demand was rising as rapidly as needed to meet OPEC's third-quarter forecast. OPEC did not respond to a request for comment. — Reuters

Ethiopian Airlines signs deal for \$6bn mega airport

NAIROBI: Ethiopian Airlines has signed a deal for the design of a new \$6 billion airport described as the biggest in Africa, state media reported. The new hub will be able to handle 100 million passengers a year once completed in five years, Ethiopian Airlines chief executive Mesfin Tasew was quoted as saying at a press conference on Friday.

He said Ethiopian Airlines had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Dubai-based consulting company Dar to develop the design for the airport, which will have four runways. It will be built in Bishoftu, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) southeast of the capital Addis Ababa, and stretch across 35 square kilometers (13.5 square miles), he said. "The first phase includes the construction of the airport facility with a capacity of 60 million passengers per year and the completion of phase two of the airport project will grow to handling more than 100 million passengers per year," Mesfin said, according to state-affiliated Fana Broadcasting Corporate.

Dar director of operations Tariq Al-Qanni, who was at the press conference, said it would be the biggest airport in Africa once complete, Fana reported. "The scope of the agreement is for Dar to develop the detailed design of the new airport and at the same time to assist Ethiopian Airlines in the selection of the contractors who will build the new airport facilities," Mesfin added.

Ethiopian Airlines is the largest in Africa, last month reporting revenue of \$7 billion for its 2023/24 financial year, carrying 17.1 million passengers. Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa, currently the airline's hub, has a maximum capacity of 25 million passengers a year. — AFP

China files appeal at WTO over EU electric vehicle tariffs

BEIJING: Beijing said Friday it had filed an appeal with the World Trade Organization over the European Union's imposition of additional tariffs on imports of electric vehicles from China. In July, the EU slapped extra provisional duties of up to 38 percent on Chinese EVs after its executive arm concluded in an investigation that they were unfairly undermining European rivals.

"On August 9, China appealed to the World Trade Organization's dispute settlement mechanism over the EU's temporary anti-subsidy measures on EVs," a spokesperson for the country's commerce ministry said in a statement. The ministry said the appeal aimed to "safeguard the development rights and interests of the electric vehicle industry and cooperation over the global green transformation".

"The EU's preliminary ruling lacks a factual and legal basis, seriously violates WTO rules, and undermines the overall situation of global cooperation in addressing climate change," it said.

"We urge the EU to immediately correct its wrong practices and jointly maintain the stability of China-EU economic and trade cooperation as well



LIUZHOU, China: The photo taken on Jan 24, 2024 shows mini electric vehicles charging along a street in Liuzhou, in southern China's Guangxi province. Beijing filed an appeal with the WTO over the European Union's imposition of additional tariffs on imports of electric vehicles from China. — AFP

as EV industrial and supply chains."

Brussels said it took note of Beijing's move but was "confident" its probe and provisional measures were WTO-compatible. "The EU is carefully studying all the details of this request and will react to the Chinese authorities in due course according to the WTO procedures," a European Commission spokesperson told AFP. In Geneva, WTO spokesman Ismaila Dieng said the organization had received the Chinese request. — AFP

OpenAI worries its AI voice may charm users

SAN FRANCISCO: OpenAI says it is concerned that a realistic voice feature for its artificial intelligence might cause people to bond with the bot at the cost of human interactions. The San Francisco-based company cited literature which it said indicates that chatting with AI as one might with a person can result in misplaced trust and that the high quality of the GPT-4o voice may exacerbate that effect.

"Anthropomorphization involves attributing human-like behaviors and characteristics to nonhuman entities, such as AI models," OpenAI said Thursday in a report on safety work it is doing on a ChatGPT-4o version of its AI. "This risk may be heightened by the audio capabilities of GPT-4o, which facilitate more human-like interactions with the model." OpenAI said it noticed testers speaking to the AI in ways that hinted at shared bonds, such as lamenting aloud that it was their last day together.

It said these instances appear benign but must be studied to see how they might evolve over longer periods of time. Socializing with AI could also make users less adept or inclined when it comes to relationships with humans, OpenAI speculated. "Ex-

tended interaction with the model might influence social norms," the report said.

"For example, our models are deferential, allowing users to interrupt and 'take the mic' at any time, which, while expected for an AI, would be anti-normative in human interactions." The ability for AI to remember details while conversing and to tend to tasks could also make people over-reliant on the technology, according to OpenAI. "The recent concerns shared by OpenAI around potential dependence on ChatGPT's voice mode indicate what many have already begun asking: Is it time to pause and consider how this technology affects human interaction and relationships?" said Alon Yamin, co-founder and CEO of AI anti-plagiarism detection platform Copyleaks.

He said AI should never be a replacement for actual human interaction. OpenAI said it will further test how voice capabilities in its AI might cause people to become emotionally attached. Teams testing ChatGPT-4o voice capabilities were also able to prompt it to repeat false information and produce conspiracy theories, raising concerns the AI model could be told to do so convincingly.

OpenAI was forced to apologize to actress Scarlett Johansson in June for using something very similar to her voice in its latest chatbot, throwing a spotlight on voice-cloning tech. Although OpenAI denied the voice they used was Johansson's, their case was not helped by CEO Sam Altman flagging the new model with a one-word message on social media — "Her". — AFP

Business

NBK - Egypt grants EDECS \$93m funding to support mega project at Ain Sokhna Port

In line with bank's strategy to finance infrastructure and sustainable development projects

KUWAIT: In line with the role of the Egyptian banking sector in the country's economic development, National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt has granted EDECS International Engineering and Contracting Company credit facilities totaling \$93 million. This funding is intended to support the development of the superstructure and the infrastructure of the container terminals at Ain Sokhna Port, commissioned by the Red Sea Containers Terminals Company.

The contract was signed by Amr El-Alfy, Chief Business Officer of National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt, and Hussein El-Dessouky, Chairman and Managing Director of EDECS, in the presence of Yasser El-Tayeb, Vice Chairman, CEO, and Managing Director, along with senior management and executives from both the bank and EDECS.

Supporting the state's plans

On this occasion, Yasser El-Tayeb, Vice Chairman, CEO, and Managing Director of National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt, stated that the bank's participation in funding this major project reflects the Egyptian banking sector's role in national economic development, and aligns with its strategy to support the State's plans for financing large national projects. Ports are among the most important of these projects, as they stimulate foreign trade activity, reinforce Egypt's status as a key logistical hub in the Red Sea, and positively impact the national GDP and economic growth. Ports are vital to the economic and national security of any country. El-Tayeb emphasized that the bank's successful arrangement of such a significant facility reflects its readiness and capability to finance large-scale projects that support the State's development plans, drive production, create jobs, and contribute to achieving Egypt's Vision 2030.

Clear strategy

Amr El-Alfy, Chief Business Officer of National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt, noted that NBK - Egypt has



Amr El-Alfy and Hussein El-Dessouky in the presence of Yasser El-Tayeb along with senior management and executives from both the bank and EDECS during the signing ceremony.

pursued a clear strategy for several years to support and finance major projects, infrastructure, and sustainable development that assist the State's future plans for progress and prosperity for all Egyptians. Providing this financing to EDECS exemplifies this strategy, as the project will significantly increase Ain Sokhna Port's capacity by 1.6 million TEUs annually, positioning it as a leading seaport in Egypt.

El-Alfy further noted that this substantial financing confirms the bank's confidence in the project's feasibility and the executing company, which is one of the leading contracting firms in Egypt. This is not the first large-scale project financed by the bank; previous projects include expansions at Damietta Port, the multi-purpose terminal "Tahya Misr" at Alexandria

Port, Abu Qir Port, and the Max Port breakwaters, along with other infrastructure projects in electricity, energy, and roads. The bank is also studying several other major projects for future funding.

Strategic partnership

On his part, Hussein El-Dessouky, Chairman and Managing Director of EDECS, stated that the strategic partnership between EDECS and the National Bank of Kuwait - Egypt for the Sokhna Port container terminals project is not just a financing operation but a testament to the solid trust in the Company's technical and financial capabilities. This financing marks the beginning of a strategic partnership that will continue for many future projects in Egypt and the region.

El-Dessouky, added that this ambitious project aligns with the Egyptian Ministry of Transport's vision to transform Egypt into a global trade hub, reinforcing its status as a regional economic power. The project is more than just constructing a new port; it is a gateway to a more prosperous and interconnected future, in line with Egypt's vision. "EDECS, with over three decades of experience in marine construction and infrastructure projects, is committed to delivering the highest standards of quality, safety, and technology, ensuring that this terminal sets a benchmark for efficiency and sustainability. This project will be a milestone in the economic development of Egypt and the Middle East, building a brighter future for future generations," he concluded.

Fed has cut rates amid stock swoons before, not this time

WASHINGTON: A sharp slowdown in the US job market that touched off days of global stock-market turmoil also fueled speculation the Federal Reserve may not wait until its next scheduled meeting, in September, to cut interest rates. Indeed, an interest rate futures contract expiring later this month that tracks Fed policy expectations shot to a two-month high earlier in the week in a bet that rates would be lower by the end of August.

The odds are against it. As Chicago Fed President Austan Goolsbee said earlier this week, "the law doesn't say anything about the stock market. It's about employment and it's about price stability," referring to the Fed's double mandate to foster full employment and price stability. An increasing number of analysts are now penciling in a half-a-percentage-point rate cut for the Fed's September meeting. But few if any believe the Fed will move sooner. "Current economic data do not warrant an emergency intermeeting rate cut, and this would only ignite a new round of panic into the markets," wrote Nationwide economist Kathy Bostjancic.

Even former New York Fed President Bill Dudley, who called for the US central bank to cut rates last week even before the latest data showed the unemployment rate jumped to 4.3 percent in July, wrote this week that an intermeeting cut is "very unlikely."

In the days since the rout began, global stock markets - which had also been pummeled by worries about Bank of Japan tightening and an unwinding of yen-funded trades - have somewhat recovered. A report Thursday showing fewer Americans filing unemployment insurance claims added to a sense of relief in US markets.

Traders of short-term US interest-rate futures have for now not only all but abandoned bets on an intermeeting Fed move but have also pared expectations on the size of the first rate reduction. What had been seen as a nine-to-one chance of a half-point rate



WASHINGTON: US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell arrives to testify before the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Hearings to examine the Semiannual Monetary Policy Report to Congress at Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. — AFP

cut in September is now down to about even odds as against a quarter-point cut, rate-futures prices show. In late August Fed Chair Jerome Powell is expected to have a chance to give a fresh steer on what he thinks could be needed when global central bankers gather at the Kansas City Fed's annual economic symposium in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

For now Powell is widely anticipated to look past the stock-market swoon and stick to what he said last Wednesday, after the Fed's decision to leave the policy rate in the 5.25 percent-5.50 percent range.

"If we do get the data that we hope we get, then a reduction in our policy rate could be on the table at the September meeting," he said. In the weeks ahead, data on jobs, inflation, consumer spending and economic growth could all influence whether that reduction would be a quarter-point cut or something bigger.

On each of the eight occasions over the past 30 years that the US central bank has cut rates between policy-setting meetings, the upheaval in markets went well beyond equities. In particular, bond market indications of rapidly building disruptions to the credit flows that keep businesses humming were in plain view, a factor notably absent so far. A spin through each of them shows why those times were different. Oct 15, 1998 - The Fed, which had only just delivered a quarter-point rate cut at its meeting two weeks earlier, cut the policy rate another 25 basis points. The failure of hedge fund Long-Term Capital Management - on the heels of Russia's sovereign debt default two months earlier - was reverberating through US financial markets, blowing out credit spreads that threatened to impact investment and drag down the economy.

Jan 3 and April 18, 2001 - The Fed delivered two surprise half-point interest rate cuts early in the year after the sharp upswing in dot-com tech stocks turned into an equity rout that policymakers worried would pinch household and business spending. What had been mostly a stock market event bled into the corporate bond market through late 2000, sending high-yield credit spreads to their widest on record to that point. The two Fed cuts were in addition to two half-point cuts at its Jan 31 and March 20 meetings.

Sept 17, 2001 - The Fed cut the policy rate by half a percentage point following the attacks and the days-long closure of US financial markets, and promised to continue to supply unusually large volumes of liquidity to the financial markets until more normal market functioning was restored. High-yield bond spreads widened more than 200 basis points before the Fed's actions helped restore calm in credit markets.

Jan 22 and Oct 8, 2008 - The Fed cut its policy rate by 75 basis points at an unscheduled meeting in January as what had begun as a crisis in subprime lending the prior summer gathered steam and spread to global markets. High-yield spreads stood at their widest in five years at the time.

Then, Lehman Brothers' failure on Sept 15 ushered in a new phase of the crisis, and though the Fed skipped policy action at its meeting a day later, by early October it got together with other global central bankers for a coordinated action that included a half-point cut to the federal funds rate. Credit spreads eventually peaked near year end at what is still a record for both high-yield and investment-grade bonds.

March 3 and March 15, 2020 - The Fed cut rates by half a percentage point, and then less than two weeks later by another full point, to ease policy as global travel and commerce suddenly skidded to a near standstill in the face of government shutdowns to prevent the spread of COVID-19. While US stock indexes dropped more than 30 percent, of even greater concern was a 700-point widening of credit spreads and disruptions to the function of the US Treasury market. — Reuters

CB: French Q3 growth set to reach 0.35% on Olympic boost

PARIS: The French economy is on course to grow at least 0.35 percent in the third quarter as it benefits from a temporary boost from activity related to the Olympic Games, the central bank estimated on Friday. The central bank forecast underlying growth in the eurozone's second-biggest economy of 0.1 percent-0.2 percent for this quarter from the previous three months, when it expanded 0.3 percent on a quarterly basis.

The Olympic Games would add another quarter percentage point of growth through temporarily higher activity in hotels, restaurants and other businesses providing services impacted by the games. Payments card company Visa said earlier this week its data showed that small businesses in Paris reported a 26 percent rise in sales to cardholders during the first weekend alone of the Olympic Games compared with a year earlier.

France's central bank based its growth estimates on findings from its monthly business sentiment survey of 8,500 firms, which showed service sector companies expecting activity to pick up this month after weak activity in July with summer tourists staying away before the Olympics had started. Executives also reported slow industrial activity in July, but expected it to accelerate in August, while the construction sector expected an August slowdown after a firm July. The survey found businesses' uncertainty about the outlook eased somewhat in July after snap parliamentary elections in June and early July triggered a surge in uncertainty. The election, which President Emmanuel Macron called after his party was trounced in an early June EU parliament election, produced a hung parliament. Macron has said he would choose a new prime minister after the Olympic Games and the left-wing New Popular Front is jockeying hard to secure the post. — Reuters

Wall Street Week Ahead

Rollercoaster week leaves investors braced for bumps ahead

NEW YORK: A week of wild market swings has investors looking ahead to inflation data, corporate earnings and presidential polls for signals that could soothe a recent outbreak of turbulence in US stocks. Following months of placid trading, US stock volatility has surged this month as a run of alarming data coincided with the unwinding of a massive, yen-fueled carry trade to deal equities their worst selloff of the year. The S&P 500 is still down around 6 percent from a record high set last month, even after making up ground in a series of rallies after Monday's crushing selloff.

At issue for many investors is the trajectory of the US economy. After months of betting on an economic soft landing, investors rushed to price in the risk of a more severe downturn, following weaker-than-expected manufacturing and employment data last week.

"Everybody is now worried about the economy," said Bob Kalman, a portfolio manager at Miramar Capital. "We are moving away from the greed portion of the program and now the market is facing the fear of significant geopolitical risks, a hotly contested election and volatility that is not going away."



NEW YORK: Traders work on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) floor on August 8, 2024 in New York City. — AFP

Though stocks have rallied in recent days, traders believe it will be a while before calm returns to markets. Indeed, the historical behavior of the Cboe Volatility Index VIX - which saw its biggest one-day jump ever on Monday - shows that surges of volatility usually take months to dissipate.

Known as Wall Street's fear gauge, the index measures demand for options protection from market swings. When it closes above 35 - an elevated level that it topped on Monday - the index has taken 170 sessions

on average to return to 17.6, its long-term median and a level associated with far less extreme investor anxiety, a Reuters analysis showed. One potential flashpoint will be when the US reports consumer price data on Wednesday. Signs that inflation is dropping too steeply could bolster fears that the Federal Reserve has sent the economy into a tailspin by leaving interest rates elevated for too long, contributing to market turbulence.

For now, futures markets are pricing in a 55 percent chance the central bank will bring down benchmark interest rates by 50 basis points in September, at its next policy meeting, compared with a roughly 5 percent chance seen a month ago. "Slower payroll growth reinforces that US economic risks are becoming more two-sided as inflation cools and activity slows," said Oscar Munoz, chief US macro strategist at TD Securities, in a recent note. Corporate earnings, meanwhile, have been neither strong enough nor weak enough to give the market direction, said Charles Lemonides, head of hedge fund ValueWorks LLC. Overall, companies in the S&P 500 have reported second-quarter results that are 4.1 percent above expectations, in line with the long-term average of 4.2 percent above expectations, according to ISEG data. Walmart and Home Depot are among companies reporting earnings next week, with their results seen as offering a snapshot on how US consumers are holding up after months of elevated interest rates. The end of the month brings earnings from chip giant Nvidia, whose shares are up around 110 percent this year even after a recent selloff. — Reuters

Stellantis to cut up to 2,450 jobs at Michigan plant

NEW YORK: Auto giant Stellantis announced Friday it will cease production of its entry-level Ram 1500 Classic pick-up at a Michigan plant, and threatened to cut almost 2,500 jobs. "With the introduction of the new Ram 1500, production of the Ram 1500 Classic at the Warren (Michigan) Truck Assembly Plant will come to an end later this year," the company said in a statement.

The plant's assembly production line will reduce operations from two shifts per day to one, and will only produce its Jeep Wagoneer vehicle line at the site, the company said, adding that other activities there - such as painting - will continue on a two-shift rota. Up to 2,450 people are expected to be made redundant from October 8. Shawn Fain, president of United Auto Workers union, which represents the vast majority of the more-than 3,500 workers at the plant, called Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares a "disgrace" and "embarrassment." — AFP

Business

Russian economic growth dips in second quarter as inflation rises

Ruble weakens against dollar as Kursk attack spurs some forex purchases

MOSCOW: The pace of Russia's economic growth slowed in the second quarter of 2024, official data showed Friday, amid concerns over stubborn inflation and warnings of "overheating".

Gross domestic product (GDP) dipped from 5.4 percent in the first quarter to four percent from April to June, the lowest quarterly result since the start of 2023 but still a sign the economy is expanding. Inflation meanwhile showed no signs of easing, with consumer prices rising 9.13 percent year-on-year in July — up from 8.59 percent in June and the highest figure since February 2023, according to data from the Rosstat statistics agency.

The Kremlin has heavily militarized Russia's economy since sending troops into Ukraine in February 2022, spending huge sums on arms production and on military salaries. That spending boom has fuelled economic growth, helping the Kremlin buck initial predictions of a recession when it was hit with unprecedented Western sanctions in 2022. But it has sent inflation surging at home, forcing the central bank to raise borrowing costs.

The central bank has aggressively raised interest rates in a bid to cool what it has warned is an economy growing at unsustainable rates due to the massive increase in government spending on the Ukraine offensive. The bank raised its key interest rate to 18 percent last month — the highest level since an emergency hike in February 2022 took it to 20 percent.

The bank's governor Elvira Nabiullina said the

economy was showing signs of "overheating" and pointed to difficulties with international payments — an effect of Western sanctions — as another factor driving up inflation. Russia is set to spend almost nine percent of its GDP on defense and security this year, a figure unprecedented since the Soviet era, according to President Vladimir Putin. Moscow's federal budget has meanwhile jumped almost 50 percent over the last three years — from 24.8 trillion rubles in 2021, before the Ukraine offensive, to a planned 36.6 trillion rubles (\$427 billion) this year.

Since so much spending is being directed by the state, which is less responsive to higher borrowing costs, analysts fear interest rate rises may not be an effective tool against inflation. Consumer prices are a sensitive topic in Russia, where many people have virtually no savings and memories of hyperinflation and economic instability run deep.

Meanwhile, the Russian ruble weakened further against the dollar on Friday, according to LSEG and Moscow stock exchange data, with some traders saying that Ukraine's surprise attack in Russia's Kursk region was one of the factors behind the fall. Trading in major currencies shifted to the over-the-counter (OTC) market, obscuring pricing data, after Western sanctions on the Moscow Exchange and its clearing agent, the National Clearing Centre, were introduced on July 12.

By 1130 GMT the ruble was 2.7 percent down at



MOSCOW: Muscovites crowd the counter of a Soviet bank to change their rubles into foreign currency in Moscow in this file photo. — AFP

89.00 against the dollar, according to LSEG data, which can serve as a guide for OTC rates. One-day ruble-dollar futures, which still trade on the Moscow Exchange, were down 0.8 percent at 86.44. However, some traders said that in the actual OTC market, dominated by sanctioned Russian banking giants such as Sberbank, the ruble's moves were more moderate, with Sberbank bidding at 85.00 to the dollar.

Russian forces are battling Ukrainian troops for a fourth day after they smashed through the border in the Kursk region in one of the biggest Ukrainian attacks on Russia since the war began in February 2022. "Perhaps this is a justified reason, for example, for foreign banks remaining in Russia to buy currency," said a dealer at a large Russian bank. The ruble has been on a weakening streak since the attack began. — Agencies

PPP project cycle

By Hassan Abdulrahim

Having covered, so far, such essential features for understanding PPP projects as their concept, benefits and limitations, their various models, how to create and enable the environment in which they are best working and their risks and how these risks are identified and allocated between the public and private partners. This section of, Visionary Consulting Company's Executive Guide, covers another important issue of PPP projects, that is the "PPP Project Cycle", from identifying suitable projects to managing operational issues.



1. Project identification

Identifying an infrastructure project typically starts with a government's planning process. Once a priority project is selected, its suitability for PPP implementation versus traditional procurement must be assessed using specific criteria:

Project Scale: The project must be large enough to justify the high transaction costs of PPPs. Due to their complexity, PPP projects are costly to prepare, so they should be substantial enough to warrant these expenses.

Infrastructure needs: There must be a long-term, predictable need for the infrastructure. Signing a long-term contract, like 20 or 30 years, only to find out after a few years that the infrastructure is no longer needed, would be detrimental.

Private sector performance: The project should have clearly defined output arrangements to effectively monitor the private sector's performance.

Local capacity: Assessment of whether local private sector organizations have the capacity to manage long-term projects. If local capacity is limited, an interest and willingness from international investors are considered. A preliminary value-for-money (VfM) qualitative assessment is essential to determine if a PPP would deliver more value. As with any infrastructure project, a pre-feasibility analysis in the identification phase is crucial. This involves collecting basic information regarding the project scope and objectives, assessing technical, legal, and financial viability, and evaluating the need for public financial support. Based on these considerations, determine whether a project has the potential to be developed as a PPP, and obtain internal clearance to proceed with the preparation phase.

2. Project preparation

The project preparation phase begins with the development of the project's business case. This phase involves several critical steps:

Feasibility study: The project's viability is confirmed through a full-scale feasibility study, which extends the pre-feasibility study from the identification phase.

Technical studies: The project's output requirements are determined, and technical feasibility is confirmed. Key questions include whether established technologies can deliver the project objectives and estimating probable capital and operational costs.

Socio-economic benefits: The project's impact on job creation and economic growth is assessed. An evaluation of whether the economic benefits exceed the economic costs is undertaken to ensure that the project makes sense in socio-economic terms.

Financial analysis: A financial model to simulate different scenarios based on various assumptions is developed. Consequently, an estimation of the number of users, potential revenue, expected returns is undertaken plus an evaluation of the project's bankability. The project's fiscal sustainability is reviewed to ensure affordability for the government, alternatives to minimize government financial demands are explored in addition to the determination of whether government subsidies are necessary.

Legal and regulatory review: Potential legal and regulatory challenges are evaluated such as the clear legal basis for a PPP structure and potential regulatory constraints that could delay the project.

Environmental and social impact: Potential adverse effects are also considered, such as population resettlement and increased carbon emissions, while compliance with social and environmental standards are warranted. Market-sounding activities, like road shows, gauge investor interest. The VfM analysis to confirm if PPP is the best procurement method is further refined. Some countries use a public sector com-

parator (PSC) to quantitatively compare PPP costs with traditional procurement. However, due to data requirements and methodological limitations, not all countries employ this approach.

At the conclusion of the project preparation phase, all the information required to seek approval to proceed to the transaction phase should be available. This approval is crucial to confirm political buy-in and avoid spending transaction costs on projects unlikely to succeed.

3. Project transaction

The transaction phase is guided by the principles of competition, fairness, and transparency. These conditions are essential to attract private investors and ensure satisfactory results for the public authority. Bidding Documents: Documents are prepared, including a draft PPP contract that outlines roles and responsibilities.

Procurement strategy: Evaluation criteria and the level of bidder interaction allowed during the transaction are defined. The project is publicized with a pre-bid conference and procurement notice.

Pre-qualification: A request for qualification (RFQ) is issued to select companies with the capacity to handle the project. This process ensures that only companies capable of delivering the project are selected, resulting in a limited pool of pre-qualified bidders, usually four to seven. This number maintains competitive pressure while facilitating interaction with bidders and increasing their chances of success, encouraging them to invest in the bidding process. The bidding process begins after pre-qualification. A full set of bidding documents, including the draft PPP contract, to pre-qualified bidders is sent. A conference is organized to allow bidders to seek clarifications, then, bidders submit their proposals. In a single-stage process, technical and financial proposals are submitted simultaneously. In a two-stage process, bidders submit technical proposals first, discuss them, potentially amend bidding documents, then submit both technical and financial proposals. The evaluation phase follows the bidding process. If financial criteria for selection is used, technical proposals are opened first and assessed on a pass/fail basis. If accepted, the corresponding financial proposals, are reviewed against criteria like lowest tariffs for users or lowest cost to the government.

Alternatively, financial and technical criteria are combined for evaluation, though this increases the risk of subjective assessment and corruption. After evaluation, a preferred bidder is selected, final negotiations to clarify remaining issues are initiated and the contract specifics are updated.

No material changes should be made to the contract agreed upon during the bidding phase to ensure fairness. Lenders may pressure for contract changes, threatening to withhold financing if their requests are not met, jeopardizing the process. Once the contract is finalized, it is submitted for public authority approval, financing agreements are finalized, and ensuring conditions are fulfilled. The project reaches "financial close" when funds are disbursed to implement the project.

Unsolicited proposals

Projects can also be proposed directly by the private sector, this is called unsolicited proposals. While this can bring innovative solutions, it can divert attention from national priorities, increase corruption risks, and require mobilizing internal resources for assessment. To introduce competition, methods like the Swiss challenge invite competing proposals, with the initial proposer given a chance to match them.

4 Project management

Successful management of a PPP project requires clear procedures and resources for:

Performance monitoring: Reporting requirements are established for the government to stay informed of progress and identify issues early.

Continuous adjustments: Protocols for renegotiation due to unforeseen events are developed. Dispute resolution: Disputes are settled quickly and fairly to maintain project momentum.

Contract termination: End-of-contract issues like termination payments and asset conditions are addressed. Effective management ensures the project delivers its intended benefits and maintains the trust of both public and private partners. The PPP unit can support the implementing agency in managing complex issues, establishing efficient communication channels, and enforcing penalties if required. By developing clear procedures for project management and allocating sufficient resources, PPP projects can be successfully managed throughout their operational phase.

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

E-commerce tycoon Huang tops China's rich list

BEIJING: E-commerce tycoon Colin Huang has become China's richest man, an index showed Friday, capping an ascent for the former Google employee whose shopping site Temu has sucked in consumers with its low prices and all-powerful algorithms. Huang, the founder of PDD Holdings — which owns Temu and Chinese retail app Pinduoduo — is now worth \$48.6 billion, the Bloomberg Billionaires Index said.

He overtakes Zhong Shanshan, the boss of beverage company Nongfu Spring who had topped the list since April 2021, as the world's 25th wealthiest person and the richest in China.

Close behind them is Ma Huateng, known as Pony Ma — head of tech giant Tencent, whose WeChat is often described as China's "everything app". And in fourth place is Zhang Yiming, founder of Bytedance, which owns the massively popular TikTok video sharing platform.

Huang, born in 1980 in the eastern Chinese city of



Colin Huang

Ghana opens new gold refinery

ACCRA: Ghana opened a new gold refinery, the first of its kind in West Africa, to bring more value from the natural resource and solidify its standing as continent's top gold producer. The Royal Ghana Gold Refinery is set to become only the second in Africa to achieve the prestigious London Bullion Market Association (LBMA) Good Delivery Bar Certification.

The state-of-the-art refinery, located in Accra, was commissioned on Thursday by Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia, who hailed it as a "historic achievement... towards economic transformation and industrialization." The refinery, a partnership with the Bank of Ghana and Rosy Royal Minerals Limited, has the capacity to refine up to 400 kilograms of gold per day.

This amounts to an annual capacity of 120 tons, sufficient to process all of Ghana's gold production,

which averages around four million ounces per year. Currently, Ghana's gold is exported in unprocessed form, meaning the country misses out on significant revenue that could be retained through local refining. Finance minister Mohammed Amin Adam said while gold accounts for approximately 96 percent of Ghana's minerals exports, the raw state of the commodity limits the country's revenue potential.

"The new refinery opens many doors for economic transformation by creating jobs that will have a multiplying effect on the local economy," he said.

Ghana is Africa's leading gold producer, with the precious metal accounting for over half of the country's total exports. In the first half of 2024, gold exports soared, driven by a surge in global gold prices and increased production. The spike in prices, which saw gold reach a record \$2,338 an ounce in the second quarter, contributed to gold exports totaling \$5bn, or 54 percent of the country's total exports. Illegal mining has been a major problem of the West African country as it tries to address environmental degradation and pollution of water bodies. — AFP

Nigerian businesses count losses from inflation protests

LAGOS: Days after hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets across Nigeria to protest against inflation and other economic hardships, clothing seller Michael Nwankwo is still counting the cost of the business he lost. At least 22 people died, according to Amnesty International, in the demonstrations that started on Thursday last week and ebbed over the weekend after a crackdown by security services. Rallies were largely peaceful in the commercial hub of Lagos. But many businesses rolled down the shutters and customers stayed home as a precaution,

traders said. "I don't even really know how to quantify the loss, because each day you do not open you lose prospects to make money." Nwankwo said at his shop in the city's Marina market. Doris Nkiriuka Anite, Nigeria's Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, said on Saturday the unrest was costing the economy more than 500 billion naira (\$324.68 million) a day.

Adewale Oyerinde, head of the Nigerian Employers' Consultative Association, said the protests would have a longer-term impact. "When you stall the production process, businesses can't produce, they can't sell, and the shock feeds back into the economy. If things are destroyed, they will still have to find resources to repair them," he added. Activists had originally called for "#10DaysOfRage" in online messages after data showed annual inflation hit a 28-year high of 34.19 percent in June. Protests eased following a tough police response and a call for a pause by President Bola Tinubu. — Reuters



IKEJA, Nigeria: A bus driver watches from his vehicle as protesters march during a mourning vigil in Ikeja, Lagos, on August 9, 2024. — AFP

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 2024

Third suspect detained over Taylor Swift Vienna concert plot

Austrian police have detained a third alleged Islamic State group sympathizer over a plot to carry out a suicide attack at a Taylor Swift concert in Vienna, authorities said Friday. The United States provided the tip of the threat to this week's "Eras" tour concerts which have been cancelled, the US administration said.

Austrian police on Wednesday arrested suspects aged 19 and 17 over a plot to kill "a large number of people" at one of the three gigs, which were meant to start Thursday, according to authorities. Interior Minister Gerhard Karner said that "an 18-year-old Iraqi close to the main suspect and who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group was arrested" in Vienna on Thursday.

The main suspect, a 19-year-old Austrian with North Macedonian roots,

had allegedly confessed, saying he "intended to carry out an attack using explosives and knives", according to domestic intelligence agency (DSN) head Omar Hajjawi-Pirchner.

The second suspect, a 17-year-old Austrian of Turkish and Croatian origin, had been hired by a facility company that was to have worked at the Ernst Happel Stadium where Swift was to perform, said Hajjawi-Pirchner.

Chancellor Karl Nehammer said there were "concrete and detailed" plans to commit a "bloodbath". The White House on Friday confirmed the United States had provided intelligence to Austria to thwart the plot.

"We work closely with partners all over the world to monitor and disrupt threats," National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters.

The Austrian army's intelligence service was warned of a looming attack 10 to 15 days prior by two unspecified countries that helped it foil the plot, news agency APA had reported.

Swift was set to perform three shows from Thursday to Saturday as part of her mega record-breaking "Eras" tour. The European leg of the sold-out tour began in Paris in May and has taken in Sweden, Portugal, Spain, Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, Germany and Poland.

Her next concerts are at Wembley stadium in London from next Thursday and authorities have said they will go ahead. In Austria, the shows had been expected to bring in some 100 million euros (\$109 million) and

gather 170,000 fans, according to APA estimates.

Swift has not yet commented on the decision to cancel the Vienna shows but said she was "completely in shock" after a deadly attack in Britain on July 29 at a Swift-themed dance class. Three girls were killed and five people seriously wounded in the mass stabbing at the class in Southport, England. — AFP



US singer and songwriter Taylor Swift performs on stage at the Groupama Stadium as part of The Eras Tour, in Decines-Charpieu, eastern France, on June 2, 2024. — AFP



Fans of US singer Taylor Swift - swifties - stand and sing around the Swiftie Tree in Cornelius Strasse street.

Taylor Swift fans try to lift their spirits in Vienna

A small street in Vienna became a place of "healing" for hundreds of fans of US mega-star Taylor Swift on Thursday, after organizers cancelled her shows because the authorities had uncovered an Islamist attack plot. Hundreds of Swifties gathered at Vienna's Corneliusgasse - dear to Swift's fans for its resemblance to her hit "Cornelius Street" - to chant the pop star's songs.

Republic to attend a show, was hanging some of her friendship bracelets onto the branches of a tree located on the street.

Doubkova said she felt she "didn't come here for nothing" after experiencing the "uplifting" vibe and strong sense of "community" among the fans, some of whom were donning sequined dresses and cowboy boots - just like Taylor. Dilyara Joldassova, a 23-year-old engineer, and two of her friends had travelled all the way from Kazakhstan for the concert.

They learned about the cancellations while strolling through Vienna's Prater amusement park late on Wednesday. "My heart is really broken. Everything went grey," she told AFP.

But "safety comes first", she added. she was relieved "everyone is safe" and could gather to feel the "healing atmosphere". All the events surrounding this week's three cancelled concerts seem set to go ahead as planned, with police stepping up their presence and reinforcing security measures.

Museums and free hamburgers

Despite the disappointment, all Swifties interviewed by AFP said they understood the organizers' decision. "I can't even imagine what it would have been like if the attack had happened and I'd ended up telling the story of how we'd survived - if, in fact, we had survived," Bernadett Bordas told AFP in Budapest.

The 26-year-old Hungarian employee, who had planned to travel to the concert by bus with her sister, said she had been looking forward to the event "for more than 10 years". "I was counting down the days, playing all the concerts over and over again on the Internet," she said. Hungarian David Banyai had already arrived in Vienna after a six-hour train ride, and was gearing up for the concert - just to find out that it wouldn't happen. "I admit I was a bit scared because I've heard of other attacks on concerts by Islamists," said the recent university graduate.

He was thinking of the deadly November 2015 attack on the Bataclan concert hall in Paris and the 2017 fatal bombing in Manchester, England, after a show by pop star Ariana Grande.

As Taylor Swift looks set to wrap up her sold-out European tour in London on August 20, her fans don't know whether they will ever be able to see their idol on stage again. In the meantime, Vienna businesses have been trying to soften the blow. One restaurant chain provided hamburgers and drinks to anyone with a concert ticket and several museums offered free admission until Sunday. — AFP



A fan of US singer Taylor Swift - a swiftie - presents her beaded bracelets near the Swiftie Tree in Cornelius Strasse street in Vienna, Austria. — AFP photos



Fans of US singer Taylor Swift - swifties - fix their beaded bracelets at the Swiftie Tree.



A fan of US singer Taylor Swift - a swiftie - fixes her beaded bracelets at the Swiftie Tree.

They wanted to lift up their spirits after missing out on their idol's concerts, which some of them had been waiting for all year. On Wednesday, Austrian officials announced they had foiled a suicide attack by an Islamist, who confessed he had planned to kill "a large number of people" at one of Swift's concerts this week.

"I didn't believe it at first, but when I realized it, I was devastated," Veronika Doubkova told AFP. The 23-year-old student, who had travelled from the Czech

Secretive Albanian island braces for the Trump treatment

Once a Cold War base that would have been the pride of James Bond villains, an Albanian island is set for an overhaul after Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump unveiled plans to re-vamp its wild beauty. The daughter of former US president Donald Trump and her partner want luxury villas to go up on the island of Sazan that for decades served as a garrison with bunkers, fallout shelters and a warren of tunnels designed to withstand a nuclear attack.

The base epitomized the paranoia rampant during the four-decade rule of Albania's Stalinist strongman Enver Hoxha after World War II. "The island was dotted with 2,840 bunkers with heavy machine guns and other automatic weapons," Ylli Mecaj - a former soldier stationed at Sazan - told AFP.

"There were also kilometres of tunnels and underground installations, fallout shelters to house ammunition and food reserves," the 78-year-old retired naval officer added. During the socialist era, more than 2,000 people lived on the island base - outfitted with a cinema, school, and hospital - that was designed to last for months if cut off from the rest of the country. The base fell into ruin following the collapse of the communist government in 1991.

Dilapidated base

The downfall of the communist regime set off years of chaos in Albania, with an economic collapse in 1997 sparking a brief civil war that saw military depots and armouries emptied, including on Sazan. For now, the island is peppered with wild mulberry and fig trees set against the sea's turquoise waters, while the former military installations are dilapidated shells. Big changes could be on the way for the island, which was only reopened to the public in 2015.

News first broke in March that Ivanka Trump and her husband were pursuing ambitious development plans on Sazan and a separate project in the Serbian capital Belgrade. The Trump family has a long history of embarking on luxury projects around the world. Some critics have accused the power couple of leveraging

their time in the White House to secure overseas business deals.

But the Albanian government has sought to bolster the economy through tourism, prompting a building boom along large swaths of the coast. The Kushner-backed development is still in the planning stages and needs further government approval before ground can be broken on dozens of villas set amid the

has been coveted over the centuries by the Venetians, Greeks, Italians and Germans, among others. Still classified as a military zone, the island has seen just a trickle of Albania's tourist onslaught every summer.

Daily boats bring visitors to walk along Sazan's winding paths and admire the island's only inhabitant - a small grey donkey. Few official details have emerged

An abandoned ex-military command building on a hilltop on the island of Sazan, near the Albanian city of Vlora, on Mediterranean coast. — AFP photos



rocks of Sazan. But excitement is already palpable in some quarters. "We can't wait for this to start because it triggers chain reactions for the city's economy," said the mayor of Vlora, Ermal Dredha, whose city looks across the water to Sazan.

Vlora, in southwestern Albania, has been one of the largest beneficiaries of Albania's tourism surge, with apartment blocks and resorts now crowding its shores that attract millions of visitors a year. The scene stands in stark contrast to Sazan island, where the Trumps are the latest in a long line of foreigners who have sought a foothold.

Trump zone

Situated at the entrance of Vlora bay at a strategic point where the Adriatic and Ionian seas meet, the tiny island

about the future luxury development.

In an interview published in July, Ivanka Trump said the island's isolation brought its own unique challenges.

"The logistics of even getting the building materials to an island are no joke, but we will execute on it," she said. "The best architects and the best brands" were involved in the project. After years of neglect, Sazan's impending makeover will likely leave little of its former James Bond romance - for better or worse. "Sazan is no longer Sazan. There are no more weapons, no cannons, no anti-aircraft machine guns, no ships, the bunkers are in ruins," said Mecaj. "It is open to whoever wants to occupy it." — AFP



An abandoned ex-military barracks on a hilltop on the island of Sazan.



A boy looks through a window of an abandoned school on the island of Sazan.



Tourists walk near a rusty military crane in the port on the island of Sazan.



Tourists disembark a boat moored in a port on the island of Sazan.

Lifestyle

Tightrope walker marks Twin Towers stunt, 50 years on



Renowned French high-wire artist Philippe Petit marked the 50th anniversary of his famous walk between New York's Twin Towers with a performance in a Manhattan cathedral, accompanied by live music from Sting. Petit walked between the spires of the World Trade Center skyscrapers, 1,350 feet up, on August 7, 1974.

A photographer captured the feat with the New York skyline in the background as Petit - without a harness - made the crossing. Now aged 74, he partly recreated his gravity-defying stunt Thursday in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, about seven miles north of the former Twin Towers which were destroyed in the attacks of September 11, 2001.

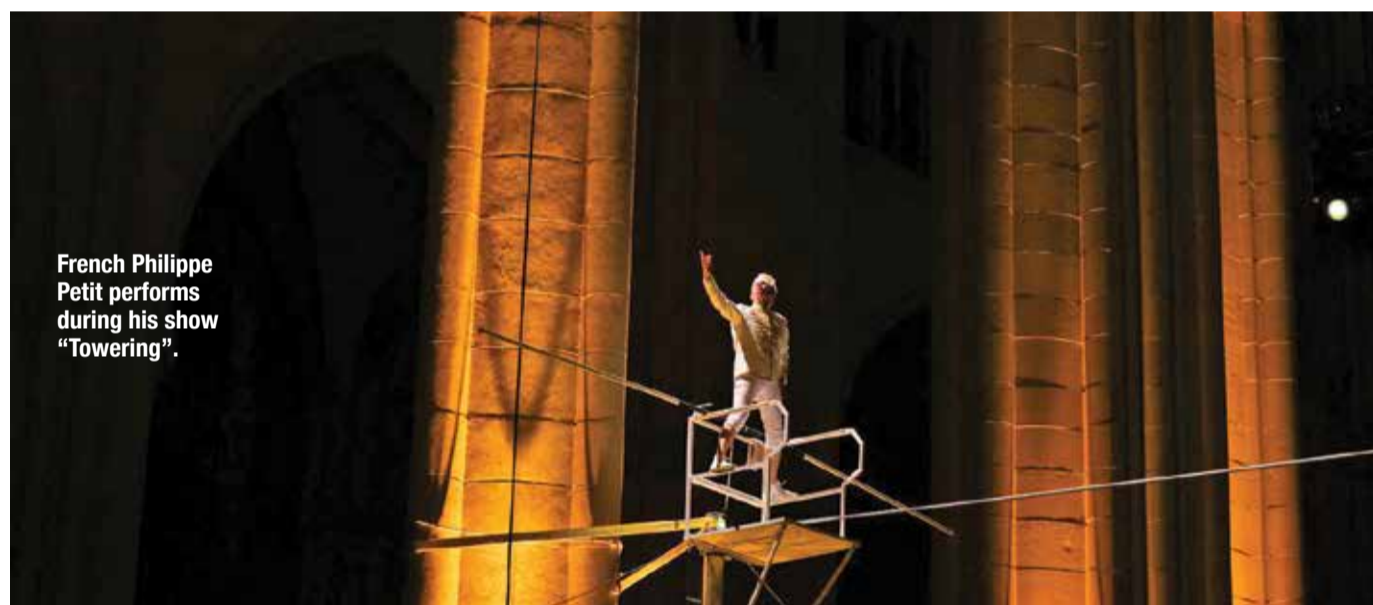
"Of course, my illegal walk between the towers was the most important mo-

ment of my life at the time, and now I look back and I have done something like 100 high wire walks all over the world," Petit told AFP. In the reconstruction, Petit was met by a police officer as he completed his walk.

The New York Times, which called Petit's Twin Towers walk the "art crime of the century", reported that in 1974 after 45 minutes of "knee bends and other stunts," Petit turned himself over to waiting police. He was charged with disorderly conduct and trespass, but the charges were dropped in return for a free aerial performance in a city park. A feature film, "The Walk" starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt, and the Oscar-winning documentary "Man on Wire" tell the story of the famous stunt. — AFP



French Philippe Petit (right) stands alongside British musician Sting, during his show "Towering".



French Philippe Petit performs during his show "Towering".



'Miseries of the Balkhash': Fears for Kazakhstan's magical lake

Seen from the sky, with its turquoise waters stretching out into the desert expanses in the shape of a crescent, you can see why they call Lake Balkhash the "pearl of Kazakhstan". But pollution, climate change and its overuse are threatening the existence of one of the most unique stretches of water in the world. One side of the Balkhash — the biggest lake in Central Asia after the Caspian Sea — has salt water, but on the other it is fresh. In such a strange environment, rare species have abounded. Until now. "All the miseries of the Balkhash are right under my eyes," fisherman Alexei Grebennikov told AFP from the deck of his boat on the northern shores, which sometimes has salty water, sometimes fresh.

"There are fewer and fewer fish, it's catastrophic, the lake is silting up," warned the 50-year-old. A dredger to clear the little harbor lay anchored, rusted and unused, off the industrial town of Balkhash, itself seemingly stuck in a Soviet timewarp. "We used to take tourists underwater fishing. Now the place has become a swamp," said Grebennikov. In town, scientist Olga Sharipova was studying the changes. "The Balkhash is the country's largest fishery. But the quantity of fish goes down when the water level drops, because the conditions for reproduction are disrupted," she told AFP.



A general view of Balkhash lake in the town of Balkhash. — AFP photos

And its level is now only a meter from the critical threshold where it could tilt towards disaster. There was an unexpected respite this spring when unprecedented floods allowed the Kazakh authorities to divert 3.3 million cubic meters of water to the Balkhash. The Caspian also got a six-billion-cubic-meter fill-up.

China 'overusing' water
But the few extra centimetres has not changed the long-term trend. "The level of the Balkhash has been falling everywhere since 2019, mainly due to a decrease in the flow of the Ili River" from neighboring China, said Sharipova. All the great lakes of Central Asia, also

known as enclosed seas, share a similar worrying fate. The Aral Sea has almost disappeared, the situation is alarming for the Caspian Sea and Lake Issyk-Kul in neighboring Kyrgyzstan.

Located on dry lands isolated from the ocean, they are particularly vulnerable to disturbances "exacerbated by global warming and human activities", according to leading scientific journal Nature. Rising temperatures accelerate evaporation, as water resources dwindle due to the melting of surrounding glaciers. These issues are compounded by the economic importance of the Balkhash, which is on the path of China's Belt and Road Initiative, a massive infrastructure

project also known as the New Silk Road.

A 2021 study by Oxford University scientists published in the journal "Water" concluded the lake's decline resulted from China's overuse of the Ili River which feeds it for its agriculture, including cotton. "If the hydro-climatic regime of the Ili for 2020–2060 remains unchanged compared to the past 50 years and agriculture continues to expand in China, future water supplies will become increasingly strained," the study said. Beijing is a key economic partner for Kazakhstan but it is less keen to collaborate on water issues.

"The drafting and signing of an agreement with China on the sharing of water

in transborder rivers is a key issue," the Kazakh Ministry of Water Resources told AFP. "The main objective is to supply the volumes of water needed to preserve the Balkhash," it said.

Heavy pollution

The water being syphoned away adds to "pollution from heavy metals, pesticides and other harmful substances", authorities said, without citing culprits. The town of Balkhash was founded around Kazakhstan's largest copper producer, Kazakhmys. Holidaymakers bathing on Balkhash's municipal beach have a view of the smoking chimneys of its metal plant.

Lung cancer rates here are almost 10 times the regional average, which is already among the highest in the country, health authorities said. Despite being sanctioned for breaking environmental standards, Kazakhmys denies it is the main polluter of the lake and has vowed to reduce pollution by renewing its equipment. "Kazakhmys is carrying out protective work to prevent environmental disasters in the Balkhash," Sherkhan Rustemov, the company's ecological engineer, told AFP. In the meantime, the plant continues to discharge industrial waste into another huge body of water, right next to the lake. — AFP



A man jumps into the water of Balkhash lake in front of Kazakhmys copper smelting plant.



People enjoy the Balkhash lake in the town of Balkhash.

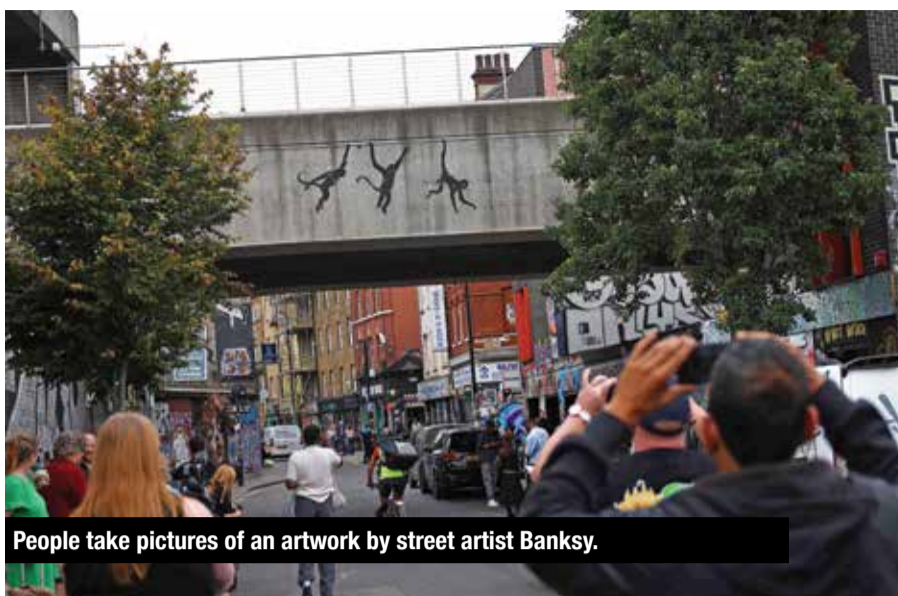


A worker analyses a sample as part of a fish research in a laboratory in the town of Balkhash.

Lifestyle



A Banksy artwork, depicting elephants, painted on the side of a building in west London.



People take pictures of an artwork by street artist Banksy.



A pedestrian looking at a stencilled Banksy artwork, depicting a mountain goat and falling rubble at the top of a pillar, on the side of a building in Kew Gardens, west London. - AFP photos

Banksy unleashes animals on London, but what do they mean?

A goat, two elephants, three monkeys, a wolf, two pelicans and a cat. Six Banksy murals which have appeared in London have left many pondering the meaning behind the elusive street artist's latest work. It began with the mountain goat on Monday, appearing to be perched on a ledge with rocks falling off and depicted in Banksy's signature stencil style on a wall in Richmond, west London.

Next came two elephant heads, peering out of two blocked out windows on the side of a house in affluent Chelsea, followed by three monkeys which appear to be hanging from a railway bridge near east London's Brick Lane. The silhouette of a wolf, howling at the sky, appeared on a satellite dish atop

a heavily graffitied building in Peckham, southeast London, on Thursday. Banksy has posted pictures of each on his Instagram account.

London's Metropolitan Police said the satellite dish had been reported stolen within hours of being unveiled. Pictures in local media showed it being removed by a person who had their face covered with a mask. Two other murals depicting silhouettes of two pelicans over a fish shop and a stretching cat have also appeared.

Theories swirled on social media as to the meaning of the works, by an artist who has highlighted themes such as war and climate change in his previous work. Some speculated they could be related to the riots and racist attacks

that have swept the country in the past week, others to the idea that humanity is seeding its own downfall.

"I think it's actually a mountain gazelle from Palestine. So I think that work has to do with Palestine," Daniel Lloyd-Morgan, a 60-year-old artist told AFP. "Banksy is trying to get us to think and reflect about the ecological crisis that really threatens humanity," university professor Fawaz Gerges told AFP as he admired the latest work. "His focus seems to be on animals, on trees, on oceans and it's an overarching theme of his in the past few months," he added.

"Nice one Banksy. I see this as a critique on the wild and chaotic behavior currently erupting across the UK. Far

right thugs on the prowl," one user "barrybrexiter" commented on Banksy's Instagram post. Another "leticia_vega" wrote "Humanity is not going to last ... animals will be taking over."

The Bristol-based artist's last mural, also in London, depicted green paint sprayed across the side of a building to mimic the foliage of a real, heavily pruned tree that stands a few meters in front of it. Many took that mural as speaking to a need to preserve nature. In December, Banksy depicted three drones on a stop sign, again in Peckham. It was stolen very shortly after it went up. - Agencies



A pedestrian stops to look at an artwork by Banksy depicting a big cat looking up toward a hole in a disused advertising billboard, in northwest London, on Aug 10, 2024.



This photograph shows an empty lot where an artwork by Banksy depicting a howling wolf, painted on the side of a satellite dish, before it was stolen in south London.



People gather to look at an artwork by Banksy depicting two pelicans catching fish, painted on top of a fish and chips shop in Walthamstow, northeast London.

Swimming trunks: Transparent tank shows paddling pachyderms



An Asian elephant sprays water with its trunk at Fuji Safari Park.



Asian elephants swim in a pool with transparent sides at Fuji Safari Park.

Paddling with chunky legs and using their trunks as a snorkel, the elephants at Fuji Safari Park in Japan are taking a dip in their summer swimming pool - with each graceful movement visible thanks to a special see-through tank. Visitors are often surprised to discover that elephants can swim, but the hefty creatures are very good at it, zoo manager Daisuke Takeuchi told AFP on Thursday. The park's six Asian elephants swim daily in the summer months, sometimes entering the 65-metre (210-foot) canal - the length of five buses parked in a line - together.

"Especially on hot days, they can't wait to get in the water, so when the water is ready, they rush in energetically and splash," Takeuchi said. The park, within sight of Mount Fuji in central Japan, installed the pool with transparent sides in 2015, and elephant keepers from Laos clean it and change the water daily. Japan's scorching summers are getting hotter, and last month the country saw its warmest July since records began.

To cool down in the heat, elephants

spray water on their bodies and flap their large ears like a fan, so the main purpose of bathing is to remove parasites and dirt from their skin. Elephant expert Sanjeeta Sharma Pokharel, assistant professor of Asian and African Area Studies at Kyoto University, said elephants use their "remarkable" instinctive swimming skills to migrate across habitats by crossing rivers.

"But swimming may not be their daily activity, until and unless circumstances demand it," such as during floods, Sharma Pokharel said. Elephants also use bodies of water when they have leg or other injuries, a habit which "helps in reducing the strain due to their body weight", she added. Using their trunk to breathe means they can swim long distances, and "in the wild, they have no choice but to swim in search of food", Takeuchi said. "But in our zoo, rather than searching for food, they swim for fun, and because their bodies get cooler and it feels good to cool down, they happily enter the water." - AFP



An Asian elephant swims in a pool with transparent sides at Fuji Safari Park in Susono city of Shizuoka Prefecture.



Asian elephants swim in a pool with transparent sides at Fuji Safari Park.



Asian elephants are seen at Fuji Safari Park in Susono city of Shizuoka Prefecture. — AFP photos

Sports

City grab Community Shield

Man City edge Man United in a marathon shoot-out 7-6

LONDON: Erik ten Hag said Manchester United must feel the pain of a Community Shield defeat on penalties to Manchester City to fuel them for the beginning of the Premier League season. United looked set to repeat their FA Cup final win over the English champions in May, which helped save Ten Hag's job as manager, when Alejandro Garnacho opened the scoring at Wembley on 82 minutes. However, Bernardo Silva's header forced the game to penalties, where City edged a marathon shoot-out 7-6.

"When the performance is right and when you lose everyone feels this. It hurts in your stomach," said Ten Hag. "You have to feel pain and we have to hurt. We have to take this belief into the league. City have won the Premier League for a record four consecutive seasons but it is the first time in that run that they have won the season opener after defeats to Leicester, Liverpool and Arsenal in the past three years.

"To start the season with a title is good. We are really pleased," said City boss Pep Guardiola. "It is nice to play this game because it means you won something in the previous season." Now we see how the players come back. The target now is not to win the Premier League, it is 'OK next game try and win it'. This is what we have to do." City were severely hampered by the absence of a series of key players due to their late return to pre-season after competing at Euro 2024 and the Copa America. The England trio of Kyle Walker, John Stones and Phil Foden, as well as Spain midfielder Rodri are yet to return to training following their efforts in reaching the final of Euro 2024.

By contrast, Ten Hag showed his desperation to win more silverware by thrusting teenager Kobbie Mainoo straight back into the heart of the action after his starring role for England in Germany. Despite also leaving Kevin De Bruyne and Silva on the bench, City controlled the game early on with the electric Jeremy Doku causing havoc down the left. James



LONDON: Manchester City's Belgian midfielder #17 Kevin De Bruyne holds aloft the trophy as the team pose after winning the English FA Community Shield football match between Manchester City and Manchester United at Wembley Stadium, in London on August 10, 2024. — AFP

McAtee was one of the City youngsters given his chance to shine and was inches away from making his mark with a curling effort that came back off the post midway through the first half.

United rue missed chances

United were being starved of possession but still managed to create the better of the chances. Amad Diallo should have gone for goal himself rather than trying to square to Bruno Fernandes with the goal gaping as half-time approached. Fernandes started in an unfamiliar centre-forward role due to the ab-

sence of Rasmus Hojlund through injury and a lack of match fitness for Joshua Zirkzee.

The United captain thought he had opened the scoring with a stunning strike on the hour mark that was ruled out for offside. Garnacho was introduced for the final half-hour and brought more pace and invention to the United attack. The Argentine teed up Marcus Rashford, who could only hit the post with just Ederson to beat. Garnacho thought he had won the game as he jinked inside the City defense and fired low into the corner.

However, City rallied and leveled in the final min-

ute of the 90 when Oscar Bobb's cross was headed in by Silva. The Portuguese midfielder was then the first to miss in the shoot-out as his effort was saved by Andre Onana. Sancho, though, experienced more penalty woe at Wembley after missing in the final of Euro 2020 for England. His spot-kick was brilliantly saved by Ederson, who then fired in himself to keep City alive. Evans gave City the chance to win it when he blazed over. And it was a tale of redemption for Manuel Akanji, whose saved penalty cost Switzerland in their Euros quarter-final against England, as the centre-back stroked home the winner. — AFP



Kuwait skating players take a group photo with some officials. — KUNA

Kuwait's skating players bag awards at Malaysia tournament

KUALA LUMPUR: Kuwait's speed skating players, of different ages, have obtained a number of awards at the Malaysian skating championship organized by the Malaysian Federation for one day. Adeb Sulei-

man and Omar Mohammad ranked first in the 1000-m and 333-m contests of (A and B) adult and young categories, respectively. Hussein Al-Ansari came first in the young group (A). Abdullah Al-Shatti and Abdulrahman Waleed had the first positions each in the 500-meter races of the (B and A) adult category.

Fahad Al-Abdullah and Bader Al-Sarraf won the first places each in the 500-m races in the (B and A) young group, respectively. Kuwait's Ambassador to Malaysia, Rashed Al-Saleh, congratulated the Kuwaiti team on this progress, which shows the development of this sport. Head of Kuwaiti delegation

Meshal Fulaitah said achieving this accomplishment was because of the preparations of players, referring to the camp held in Malaysia for this event.

Speaking to KUNA in a statement, Fulaitah said the Kuwaiti skaters made outstanding performances in the contests. He noted that the aim of partaking in this tourney is to get prepared for the Asian Winter Games due in China in February. Both the ambassador and Fulaitah took part in, along with Malaysian officials, distributing prizes. Speed skating is a type of winter sport and one of the main contests in the Winter Olympic Games. — KUNA

Hometown of Algeria boxer in gender row erupts in joy

TIARET: The poor, rural hometown of Algerian boxer Imane Khelif erupted in joy on Friday as she won gold at the Paris Olympics in the face of a major gender controversy. Cheers of Khelif's name and the country's famous chant "one two three, viva l'Algerie" broke out in Biban Mesbah, a town of around 6,000 people. "It's Algeria's victory," her father, Omar Khelif, told reporters as he watched the fight on a giant screen along with the rest of the village around 300 kilometers southwest of Algiers.

Villagers fired shots into the air in honor of 25-year-old Khelif's first Olympic medal following her victory over China's Yang Liu in the women's 66kg final. The jubilation also spread to the capital Algiers, where crowds invaded the city centre, celebrating the victory with fireworks and a chorus of car horns. Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune joined the celebrations on social media site X, saying: "We are all proud of you, Olympic champion Imane, your victory today is Algeria's victory and your gold is Algeria's gold."

'Strong woman'

Ahead of Khelif's fight, hundreds of volunteers turned out in Biban Mesbah to help prepare for the big night. Despite scorching temperatures of 46 degrees Celsius, the men carried out a vast clean-up operation while dozens of women were busy cooking a giant couscous. "We agreed to give the village a new face and breathe new life into it, with the victory of Imane Khelif," her cousin Mounir Khelif, 36, told AFP.

"We all helped each other, some bringing couscous, others oil and vegetables, while those who couldn't help with provisions helped with the preparation," said Amina Saadi, 52, a mother of six. "We are all united behind Imane Khelif, who has honored Algeria, that's the least we can offer her", she said. The boxer has been the victim of a social media hate campaign that portrays her as a "man fighting women". "I'm a strong woman with special powers. From the ring, I sent a message to those who were against



PARIS: Gold medalist Algeria's Imane Khelif poses on the podium during the medal ceremony for the women's 66kg final boxing category at the Roland-Garros Stadium, in Paris. — AFP

me," she said Friday after her win.

The gender controversy ignited in the French capital when Khelif defeated Angela Carini in 46 seconds in her opening bout, the Italian reduced to tears and abandoning the fight after suffering a badly hurt nose. Algerians from all walks of life have showed their solidarity with Khelif, irritated that her father was forced to show her birth certificate to journalists to prove she was born a girl. — AFP

Khelif's international career took off with her participation at the COVID-delayed Tokyo Olympics in 2021, where she finished fifth in her weight class. In 2023, she made it to the semi-finals of the world championships in New Delhi. But then she was disqualified following gender eligibility testing by the International Boxing Association, which is not recognized by the International Olympic Committee and is not running the sport in Paris.

From a family of limited means, she spoke before the Games of the difficulty of her life in "a village of conservative people" in semi-desert surroundings. Imane said that her father initially found it difficult to accept her boxing. "I came from a conservative family. Boxing is not a widely practiced sport by women, especially in Algeria," she told Canal Algérie a month before the Games, smiling readily and her voice soft. In an interview with UNICEF, she said she used to sell scrap metal and her mother sold homemade couscous to pay for bus tickets to a nearby town. — AFP

Joy in Pakistan village as local hero Nadeem spears Olympic gold

MIAN CHANNU: Dozens of villagers gathered in front of the modest home of Pakistani athlete Arshad Nadeem to watch the hulking javelin thrower take part in the Olympic Games final late Thursday. The event was broadcast live by a digital projector onto a screen hanging on the back of a truck in his farming village near the small city of Mian Channu in Punjab province.

As the javelin soared through the sky in Paris to a new Olympic record and a gold medal for Nadeem, thousands of kilometers away the cheers of the villagers rang into the night. "He did a great throw and created history. We are proud of him," said Nadeem's 35-year-old brother, Muhammad Azeem.

Men danced to the celebratory beat of a drum and others clapped and chanted slogans as it became clear he had won. The women, meanwhile, sat crowded around a small TV inside Nadeem's home. "He had promised me that he would play well, go abroad, win a medal and make Pakistan proud," his mother Raziah Parveen said straightforwardly. Despite practicing with rickety equipment and with little access to the gyms and training grounds his international competitors have, Nadeem had given Pakistan its first Olympic gold medal in 40 years.

"He belongs to Mian Channu. He belongs to a small village and raised the Pakistani national flag at the international level," said Rasheed Ahmed, Nadeem's former coach who first spotted his talent. The son of a retired construction worker, 27-year-old Nadeem is the third of eight siblings and — like most Pakistanis — was first drawn to cricket.

"I made Arshad switch from playing cricket to javelin at a time when no one knew what the javelin was," said Shahid Nadeem, Arshad's older brother. "He took that stick to the Olympics, set a new record and won gold," he told AFP as the family celebrated. Retired local sports official Parvaiz Ahmed Dogar told AFP of the difficulties they faced to get professional training for Nadeem. "The athletes used to use wooden sticks with a rope tied around it as a javelin. Those wouldn't even land on the tip," Dogar recalled. — AFP

Ethiopia's Tola wins marathon as China sweeps diving golds

PARIS: Ethiopia's Tamirat Tola broke the Olympic record to win the men's marathon on Saturday as China completed an unprecedented clean sweep of all eight diving medals. New Zealand's Lydia Ko upgraded to a gold in the women's golf while Victor Wembanyama's France prepared to take on the mighty USA in a dream basketball final. Tola dominated the marathon on the sun-drenched streets from central Paris to Versailles as Eliud Kipchoge's bid for a third straight gold went up in smoke.

The 22-year-old delivered a masterclass in solo front running to clock a time of 2hr 06min 26sec, 21 seconds clear of Belgium's Bashir Abdi, the bronze medalist from Tokyo, with Kenya's Benson Kipruto taking bronze. "I'm happy today. I was 2022 world champion and now I'm Olympic champion," said Tola. "It's the greatest day in my life. This was my goal." Former world record holder Kipchoge, the 39-year-old Kenyan who won golds in the 2016 Rio Games and in Tokyo in 2021, pulled up late in the race.

In scenes captured by an AFP reporter in the crowd, Kipchoge turned to fans and handed over his shoes, bib and socks to supporters, receiving a rapturous reception. Later Saturday, China underlined their total domination of Olympic diving by winning their eighth gold out of eight events, as Cao Yuan triumphed in the men's 10m platform. The Chinese also swept the board in the table tennis for the sixth time in Olympic history, with China's women overpowering Japan in the team event.

France target mighty USA

The star-studded US basketball team, led by LeBron James and Stephen Curry, were made to sweat by Serbia in Thursday's semi-final before an exhilarating fourth-quarter comeback, with Curry scoring 36 points. The four-time defending champions will be favorites to beat France in a repeat of the gold medal match at the Tokyo Games in 2021.

But James, going for his third Olympic gold, knows it is unlikely to get any easier against the host nation, who can boast NBA Rookie of the Year Wembanyama. "Super competitive. Obviously, this is Wemby's (Wembanyama's) first Olympics, but that team has been playing together for quite a while," he said. "They've been feeding off the crowd, so we look forward to that match-up." At Le Golf National, New Zealander Ko completed the set of Olympic gold medals during a tense final round, with Germany's Esther Henseleit finishing two shots behind. The former world number one won silver at the 2016 Rio Games and bronze in Tokyo.

US track domination

The Stade de France will play host to a packed program of athletics on the penultimate day of sporting action in Paris, with the United States seeking to extend their dominance. The pressure is on world champion Jakob Ingebrigtsen, who goes in the 5,000m after a disastrous miscalculation in the 1,500m final cost him not only his title but also a medal. France have a chance of winning their first medal of the athletics competition when Gabriel Tual goes in the men's 800 meters, facing the world's fastest man this year, Djamel Sedjati of Algeria.

Sedjati, Tual, and 20-year-old Kenyan Emmanuel Wanyonyi have been rewriting the list of the fastest-ever times in the two-lap event. If conditions are good, David Rudisha's world record of 1min 40.91sec that he set in the 2012 London Olympics final could be at risk. The high jump pits Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim against Italy's Gianmarco Tamberi after the two shared gold in one of the most memorable moments of the Tokyo Games. As the football wraps up, Emma Hayes' US women take on Brazil in the women's football final at the Parc des Princes. The team are resurgent under new coach Hayes, the English coach who won a stack of trophies during her time as Chelsea boss. — AFP

Sports

Argentina stun All Blacks

Creevy rolls back the years, lifts Pumas

WELLINGTON: Stalwart Agustin Creevy scored the decisive try as an inspired Argentina stunned New Zealand 38-30 in their Rugby Championship Test in Wellington on Saturday. The Pumas scored four tries to three to notch just their third-ever win over New Zealand, with 39-year-old hooker Creevy putting the visitors in front when he crossed late in the game to hand All Blacks coach Scott Robertson his first defeat.

Robertson's tenure opened with two tense home wins over England last month but he conceded "we weren't good enough" as they faltered late against the committed Pumas, after leading 20-15 at half-time. Argentina won the physical exchanges in the second half, their forward pack superbly led by flanker and captain Pablo Matera. Matera said his team never felt out of the contest as they produced a second win over the All Blacks on New Zealand soil — having achieved the feat for the first time two years ago in Christchurch.

"I kept pushing the boys, trying to give them energy, because I knew we had a big chance today and we had to take it," Matera said. "We had a great week of preparation, we had a plan and we stuck to it, even when the score wasn't in our favor and got the win." Creevy believed his team have it within them to repeat the result when the teams meet again at Auckland's Eden Park next week. "We talked during the week about hitting first, we did that," he said. "It's personal — I'm 39, to win in New Zealand is so important for me and the whole team."

'Not good enough'

"Now we need to calm down and win next week,

we have never won two games in a row (against New Zealand) so we are going for that." Robertson offered no excuses for the mistake-ridden display. "We weren't good enough. It started from the kick-off, we couldn't get off the back fence," he said. "We would get ahead, but made too many errors. What we are training and doing are two different things. We couldn't execute the plan."

Pumas fly-half Santiago Carreras kept the scoreboard ticking over, landing seven of eight shots at goal for an 18-point haul, including a penalty in the dying minutes to extend Argentina's lead to eight points and seal a famous victory. All Blacks fly-half Damian McKenzie kicked 15 points and set up two tries but his side were guilty of too many mistakes against opponents who feasted on errors.

It continues a nightmare run of results for the All Blacks at Wellington's Sky Stadium venue, where they haven't won any of their last five Tests, dating back to 2018. They began well enough, with McKenzie landing an early penalty before he set up a sweeping try to lock Sam Darry through an audacious chip 10m from his own tryline. Lucio Cinti responded with a try for Argentina after midfield partner Santiago Chocobares sliced through the defense on the halfway line. McKenzie and Carreras traded penalties before McKenzie's deft pass put Waikato Chiefs team-mate Anton Lienert-Brown outside a defender to score.

Winger Mateo Carreras lifted the Pumas with five points on the stroke of half-time, pouncing when a high kick was batted back loosely by the All Blacks to dart over. Argentina snatched the lead two minutes after the interval when lock Franco Molina



WELLINGTON: Argentina's Agustin Creevy celebrates scoring a try during the Rugby Championship match between New Zealand and Argentina at Sky Stadium in Wellington on August 10, 2024. — AFP

powered over from a lineout drive for his first Test try. Winger Mark Tele'a crossed to put the All Blacks 30-25 ahead nearing the final quarter. But Argenti-

na finished the stronger, with Test centurion Creevy powering over next to the posts in one of the highlights of his 18-year career with the Pumas. — AFP

Dominant South Africa crush Australia; Rugby Championship begins

BRISBANE: World champions South Africa scored five tries to one as they crushed Australia 33-7 in the opening match of the Rugby Championship in Brisbane on Saturday. After leading 21-0 at half-time with three converted tries, they crossed twice more in the second period as the Wallabies ran out of steam in the face of a fierce South African assault. The only Australia try came late in the match when the Springboks were reduced to 13 men following yellow cards to Malcolm Marx and Marco van Staden. Australian coach Joe Schmidt said the first half onslaught had taken its toll on his side.

"They dominated possession and territory in the first half which sapped the strength out of the boys a little bit," Schmidt said. "But the team hung in there and fought back - it would have been great to get a little more out of it but we've got a benchmark. "It wasn't a massive shock to us where the Springboks would be and it's somewhere we have to build towards." It was the Springboks' first win at Suncorp Stadium since 2013 and only their fourth ever victory in Brisbane. They went into the match as the firm favorites, ranked number one in the world compared with the Wallabies at nine.

And it was soon clear where the ascendancy lay, with the Wallabies appearing stunned by the strength and size of the South African forward pack. South African captain Siya Kolisi said the Springboks were determined to put their poor Australian record be-



BRISBANE: South Africa's Kwagga Smith (center) is tackled by Australia's Carlo Tizzano (right) during the Rugby Championship match between Australia and South Africa at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane on August 10, 2024. — AFP

hind them. "It was a big thing for us to win this game, we know this is a fortress for Australian rugby," Kolisi said of Suncorp Stadium. "We prepared well and gave them the respect they deserved and I'm proud of the way the boys played. "We know with these two matches we can't win the championship, but these two matches could lose us the championship."

Class divide

The Wallabies, under new coach Schmidt, started

2024 with two wins over Wales and one over Georgia, but they found the step up in class far too much to handle. Their scrum was destroyed and their normally reliable line-out also struggled. Their discipline also deserted them, conceding 14 penalties and one crucial yellow card to Andrew Kellaway in the first half. South Africa had all the early possession and it was no surprise when they opened the scoring after just 10 minutes when captain Siya Kolisi crashed over after a cleverly worked line-out move. — AFP



COLUMBUS: Jacen Russell-Rowe #19 of the Columbus Crew hurdles over Dany Rosero #5 of Sporting Kansas City during the second half of the Leagues Cup 2024 match at Lower.com Field on August 09.

lan took advantage, with goals from Panama's Yoel Barceñas in the 34th minute and Mexico's Brian Rubio in the 43rd. Poland's Mateusz Klich answered for United in the 74th minute but the MLS side couldn't find an equalizer. After playing to a 1-1 draw at New England, New York City won 7-6 on penalties to reach a last-16 matchup against Liga MX's Tigres on Tuesday. New York's Santiago Rodriguez scored on

a penalty kick in the 35th minute but Bobby Wood answered in the 40th for the Revolution.

FC Cincinnati also advanced thanks to penalties, defeating Santos Laguna 6-5 after playing to a 1-1 draw. Honduran striker Anthony Lozano gave Santos Laguna the lead in the fifth minute but Argentine forward Luca Orellano equalized for Cincinnati in the 11th. Next in Cincinnati's path will be a home match Tuesday against the Philadelphia Union, who blanked visiting Montreal 2-0. Striker Tai Baribo put the Union ahead 1-0 in the first minute of first half stoppage time and netted a clincher six minutes into second half stoppage time to see Philadelphia through.

St. Louis City advanced by eliminating Portland 3-1 after a scoreless first half. German striker Cedric Teuchert opened the scoring in the 51st minute for St. Louis but the Timbers answered in the 54th thanks to Argentine defender Claudio Bravo. St. Louis took a 2-1 lead on German midfielder Marcel Hartel's goal in the 83rd minute and American Simon Becher added an insurance tally in the 88th. Also moving into the round of 16 was Toluca, which got an equalizer from Mexico's Edgar Lopez in the sixth minute of second-half stoppage time for a 2-2 draw before winning 5-4 on penalties over the Houston Dynamo. Visiting Toluca opened the scoring on Jesus Angulo's goal in the 39th minute but Ezequiel Ponce answered for Houston in the 41st. — AFP

Fears of violence as English football season returns

LONDON: Authorities are eyeing the start of the English football season this weekend with trepidation, following riots which have rocked towns and cities across the country. Dozens of teams in the English Football League — below the high-profile Premier League — start playing their first games from Saturday afternoon, including in cities that have seen disorder. The unrest followed a knife attack that killed three children.

But officials have blamed far-right elements — some with links to England's decades-old football hooligan scene — for orchestrating the violence which saw mosques and immigration-linked sites torched and police targeted. Tommy Robinson, a notorious anti-Muslim agitator with a string of criminal convictions including for football-related offences, has been accused of helping to fuel the unrest through constant social media posts about the events.

Crowds at some gatherings were heard chanting his name — which is actually a pseudonym borrowed from an infamous Luton Town Football Club hooligan in the 2000s. The prospect of thousands gathering Saturday for games in towns and cities including Middlesbrough, Hull and London has prompted concern that unrest could flare again after two nights of relative quiet. More than 80,000 fans are also expected at Wembley on Saturday when Manchester City and Manchester United play for the FA Community Shield.

'Tarnish'

Prime Minister Keir Starmer, an avid football fan, conceded Friday that the start of the new season "added into the mix" of challenges facing police. "Whatever the challenge, we have to rise to it," he insisted to UK broadcasters. The UK Football Policing Unit (UKFPU) said forces nationwide were collaborating to ensure that "all relevant intelligence" was shared ahead of the football games.

A UKFPU spokesperson said it was being updated about arrests during the recent unrest and the possibility of banning those people from football stadiums. Courts make Football Banning Orders after a football-related criminal conviction or following a police request to keep individuals from attending matches and even nearby places in some cases. They have been extended in recent years to cover convictions for online hate crime linked to the sport and convictions for selling or taking Class A drugs.

Chief Constable Gavin Stephens, who heads the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) overseeing the UKFPU, urged people not to "tarnish football with the violence that we've seen." "Football brings communities together," he told a media briefing. "Yes, some of these violent thugs attach themselves to the fringes of it, but not everywhere, not all clubs, and certainly not for the totality of football." — AFP

MLS Crew, Inter Miami in Leagues Cup showdown

WASHINGTON: Diego Rossi scored two goals to spark the reigning MLS champion Columbus Crew over Sporting Kansas City 4-0 on Friday and into a Leagues Cup showdown against Inter Miami. The Crew, as 2023 league winners, had a bye into the knockout rounds to advance, which features MLS and Liga MX Mexican sides in a World Cup-style tournament. Uruguayan forward Rossi scored in the 44th and 57th minutes to give the Crew a 2-0 edge.

US defender DeJuan Jones added a goal in the 77th and French midfielder Dylan Chambost netted a final goal in the 79th minute. The Crew will play at home in the round of 16 on Tuesday against defending Cup champion Inter Miami, who ousted Toronto on Thursday to advance. Mazatlan eliminated 10-man host DC United 2-1 to book a last-16 date against Cruz Azul, which beat Orlando City 5-4 on penalty kicks after a goalless draw.

A red card on US midfielder Jared Stroud in the 27th minute left DC United a man down and Mazat-

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

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

Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

Hospitals

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

Change of Name

I, Darvuri Haribabu, holder of Indian Passport No. S0588642, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that I have changed my name from Darvuri Haribabu to Daruru Haribabu (given name) and Daruru (surname).
(5647#, 11/08/2024)

I, Alinul Eslan S/o Mohammad Aqil holder of Indian Passport No. T8767560 having permanent address H.No. 473-A Faithful Ganj, Cantt. Kanpur-208004, UP, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my

name will be read as given name Alemul and surname Eslam.
(5646#, 09/08/2024)

I, SANJNA JAYARAM, Holder of Indian Passport No. U0190400 having permanent address: 129 Old Cement Line Austin Town Vivek Nagar, Bengaluru Pin:560047, Karnataka, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) Sanjana Jayaram.
(5645#, 08/08/2024)

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Fans await action-packed new football season of 'Dawri Zain'

Zain continues to support the biggest local competition for the 3rd year running

KUWAIT: Football fans in Kuwait are eagerly tuning in for an action-packed new season of the Zain Premier League (Dawri Zain). The 63rd edition of the topflight competition officially kicked off last Thursday, with Zain continuing its support for the third consecutive year in strategic partnership with the Kuwait Football Association (KFA).

Zain is the Official Sponsor of the KFA's competitions for the 2022-2026 seasons, including the two most thrilling local football leagues: the Zain Premier League (Dawri Zain), won by Kuwait SC last season, and the Zain First Division League, won by Yarmouk SC last season. Under this part-



nership with the KFA, Zain also extends its support to the most cherished cup of them all: HH the Amir Cup, won by Qadisiya SC last season, along with HH the Crown Prince's Cup.

Biggest prize pool

This season, Zain continues to deliver on its promise to support athletes, players, and fans with cash prizes, dedicating the biggest prize pool in the local league's history with a total of over KD 60,000 per season. With this contribution, the company strives to recognize exceptional athletes and motivate them to excel, providing fans with top-tier performances. The 2024-2025 season's



From last season's Excellence Awards.



Kuwait SC players lift the Dawri Zain trophy.



Qadisiya SC players celebrate winning HH the Amir Cup.

prizes from Zain include: Player of the Season (KD 10,000), Best Player in the Round (KD 500 per round), Season's Top Pro Scorer (KD 5,000), and Season's Top Local Scorer (KD 5,000).

The prizes also include Season's Best Goalkeeper (KD 5,000), Season's Best Coach (KD 3,000), Season's Rising Star (KD 2,000), and Best Photo of Season (KD 1,000). For the Zain First Division League, the company presents a Best Player in the Round prize (KD 200 per round). The Kuwait Football Association recently formed a special committee to oversee and outline the criteria on which the prize winners will be selected. The committee is membered by former players, coaches and experts: Thamer Enad (committee head), Jamal Mubarak, Faisal Bourguba, Waleed Ali and Mubarak Al Wugayan.

Enhanced broadcasting with SHASHA Sports

SHASHA Sports, the league's exclusive broadcaster, continues this season to provide an exceptional broadcasting experience for Dawri Zain. SHASHA uses the latest streaming technologies to air matches and analysis studios throughout the season via its digital platforms, available on a wide range of smart devices. This brings new experiences for fans to enjoy the day to day action and writes a new chapter for Kuwaiti sports media.

In its debut season (2023-2024) as the exclusive broadcaster of Dawri Zain, SHASHA achieved record viewership, with a total of 7.3 million views by the penultimate round. The two most exciting matches between Qadisiya SC and Arabi SC were the most watched, attracting nearly 1.5 million views. Committed to delivering high-quality experiences, SHASHA Sports has brought in European specialists for match coverage and production, ensuring world-class broadcasting. The platform also features extensive match analysis with local pundits and experts like Musaad Al Fouzan, enriching the viewing experience for fans across Kuwait and the GCC.



Fans await action-packed new season.



One of Zain's fan zones.

At the end of every season, Zain holds a prestigious Excellence Awards ceremony to recognize top athletes. The league's very best players are awarded on stage for their top performance after winning the affection of thousands of fans throughout the season. Last season, Zain presented its Excellence Awards to Mohammed Daham (Player of the Season), Bader Al Mutawa, Yousef Nasser, and Mohammed Daham (co-winners of Season's Top Local Scorer), Hamza Khaba (Season's Top Pro Scorer), Saud Al Houshan (Season's Best Goalkeeper), Nabeel Maloul (Season's Best Coach), and Muath Al Osaima (Season's Rising Star). These awards underscore Zain's commitment to supporting distinguished athletes. By recognizing top performers, the company aspires to encourage players to pursue excellence, promising an even more thrilling season for fans to enjoy.

Thrilling season ahead

Dawri Zain's previous season was highly competitive, with a total of 132 thrilling matches played and 400 goals scored. Building on this excitement, the new season features 10 top-tier clubs that will compete for the championship title: Kuwait SC (led by Nebojsa Jovovi), Qadisiya SC (led by Mohammed Al Meshan), Yarmouk SC (led by Goran Matkovic), Tadamon SC (led by Joao Mota), Khaitan SC (led by Florin Motroc), Fahahil SC (led by Firas Al Khateeb), Arabi SC (led by Nasser Al Shatti), Kazima SC (led by Mohammed Duhailees), Salmiya SC (led by Ante Mise) and Nasser SC (led by Dhafer Al Adwani).

Additionally, 5 teams compete in the Zain First Division League: Sulaibikhat SC, Shabab SC, Sahel SC, Jahra SC, and Burgan SC. Zain wishes all clubs

participating in the Zain Premier and First Division Leagues all the best of luck and looks forward to an exciting, action-packed season.

Private sector's role

Zain firmly believes that the private sector has a key role in contributing to the success and growth of the local sports sector. The company makes this belief a reality by supporting the biggest nationwide sports competitions like this one. This partnership with Kuwait's topflight football competition reflects Zain's leading role in supporting the local sports sector. The company's comprehensive corporate social responsibility strategy aims to support local athletes across disciplines to empower them to shine in the biggest local, regional, and international sporting arenas.