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Gaza martyrs top 40,000

Ceasefire talks resume in Doha • Abbas meets Erdogan, vows to go to Gaza



DOHA/ANKARA/GAZA: The United States hailed a "promising start" to Gaza ceasefire talks Thursday, as pressure mounted for a deal to halt the spread of a war that has killed 40,000. The conflict has devastated Gaza, displaced nearly all of its population at least once and triggered a towering humanitarian crisis. Talks involving CIA director William Burns opened in the Qatari capital Doha, US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said.

It was not immediately clear if Hamas had sent any delegates to the meeting, which the Zionist entity planned to attend. "Today is a promising start," Kirby told reporters in Washington, adding: "There remains a lot of work to do." The talks were expected to continue on Friday, he said. "We need to see the hostages released, relief for Palestinian civilians in Gaza, security for (the Zionist entity) and lower tensions in the region, and we need to see those things as soon as possible," he added.

So far, there has been only one, weeklong truce in November, when Gaza fighters released 105

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Indian FM to visit Kuwait

NEW DELHI: India on Thursday announced that External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will pay a visit to Kuwait to cement the bilateral relationship. A statement by the Indian external affairs ministry said Jaishankar will pay an official visit to Kuwait on Aug 18 to meet Kuwait Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and the leadership of the state. "The external affairs minister's visit will enable both sides to review various aspects of our bilateral relations including political, trade, investment, energy, security, cultural, consular and people-to-people contacts, as well as exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual interest," the statement noted. — KUNA

Captive killed in 'revenge' attack

GAZA: Palestinian group Hamas said Thursday that a fighter in Gaza who shot dead a Zionist captive acted "in revenge" after hearing his children had died in a Zionist attack. The group said in a statement that its investigation into the Zionist man's death in captivity had found that "a conscript assigned to guard (the captive) acted against orders in revenge, after receiving news of the martyrdom of his two children in one of the enemy's massacres". A photograph released by Hamas showed a dead man covered in a bloodstained white shroud. The statement described his death as an "unfortunate incident". "Your brutality has become an imminent danger to your prisoners," Hamas added. — AFP

'Historic' deal to cut drug prices

WASHINGTON: Joe Biden shared a key economic victory with Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris on Thursday, after securing a cut on drug prices that could resonate with US voters worried about the cost of living. The 81-year-old president and 59-year-old vice president announced the deal as they prepared to make their first joint trip since Biden's seismic decision to drop out of the presidential election less than a month ago. The "historic" agreement with drugmakers will reduce the price of 10 key medicines for seniors, for conditions including diabetes, heart failure and blood clots, they said in joint statements released by the White House. — AFP

Mpox global health emergency, Kuwait monitoring situation

GENEVA: The World Health Organization on Wednesday declared the mpox surge in Africa a global public health emergency, sounding its highest possible alarm over the worsening situation. Worried by the rise in cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the spread to nearby countries, the WHO hastily convened a meeting of experts to study the outbreak.

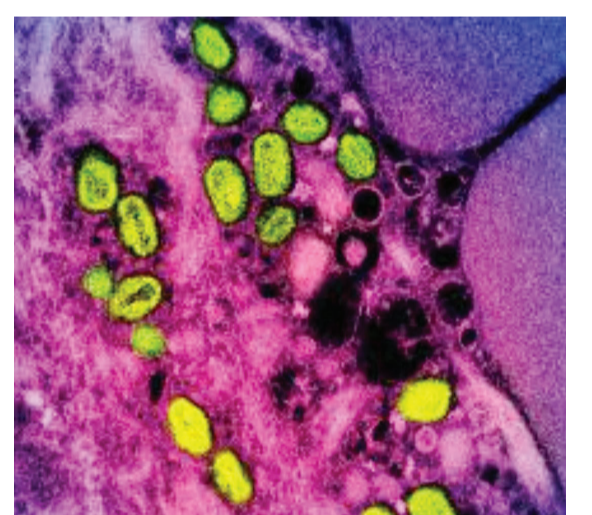
"Today, the emergency committee met and advised me that in its view, the situation constitutes a public health emergency of international concern. I have accepted that advice," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a press conference. A PHE-IC is the highest level of alarm under the International Health Regulations, which are legally binding on 196 countries.

"The detection and rapid spread of a new clade of mpox in eastern DRC, its detection in neighboring countries that had not previously reported mpox, and the potential for further spread within Africa and beyond is very worrying," said Tedros. "It's clear that a coordinated international response is essential to stop these outbreaks and save lives. 'This is something that should concern us all.' Sweden on Thursday announced the first case outside Africa of the more dangerous variant of mpox.

Kuwait's ministry of health said on Thursday that it was following up on the spread of the new mpox variant in several African countries. In a statement, the ministry affirmed that it was working with regional and international partners to monitor the situation and prepare viable responses, revealing that Kuwait's Center for Disease Control (CDC) was coordinating with several national entities in this regard.

The ministry indicated that a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test could verify infection, noting that treatment includes supportive care medicine that decreases symptoms or antibiotics for some cases.

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This undated image shows a colorized transmission electron micrograph of mpox particles (green) found within an infected cell (pink and purple) cultured in the laboratory. — AFP

Warm welcome for returning pearl divers

By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: Around 150 young divers returned from the 33rd annual pearl diving trip on Thursday. Relatives and officials welcomed them with the "Qaf-

fal" ceremony, hosted by Kuwait Sea Sports Club. The event celebrated Kuwait's seafaring heritage with displays of traditional ships, attire, tools and artwork related to pearl diving.

The ceremony included the return of diving ships, the lowering of Kuwait's flag and a focus on preserving cultural heritage. Club President Maj Gen Fahad Al-Fahad highlighted the importance of connecting the younger generation with Kuwait's history and thanked HH the Amir, the divers and their families for their contributions. (See Page 3)



KUWAIT: Returning pearl divers are welcomed during the Al-Qaffal ceremony at Kuwait Sea Sports Club in Salmiya on Aug 15, 2024.

Columbia president resigns months after campus Gaza demos

NEW YORK: The president of New York's Columbia University resigned on Wednesday, just weeks before the start of the new school year, citing the toll taken by a "period of turmoil" after she faced scrutiny for her handling of demonstrations over the Zionist-Hamas war. British-American economist Minouche Shafik is the fourth president of an Ivy League university to step down in the wake of the bitter divisions and anti-war protests that swept campuses nationwide.

The protests that roiled Columbia and other schools culminated in US Congress grilling higher education leaders about accusations of "anti-Sem-

itism" and whether enough was being done to keep Jewish students safe. Shafik, who last year became the first woman to lead Columbia, said in a letter to the university's community that she felt her tenure had "made progress in a number of important areas" but noted it was also "a period of turmoil where it has been difficult to overcome divergent views across our community".

"This period has taken a considerable toll on my family, as it has for others in our community," she said. "Over the summer, I have been able to reflect and have decided that my moving on at this point would best enable Columbia to traverse the challenges ahead." She said her resignation was effective immediately, and announced she was taking a role with the UK Foreign Secretary to lead a review of the government's approach to international development.

With the fall semester starting in just three weeks, Columbia's board of trustees named Katrina Armstrong, the dean of the medical school, as interim president. Columbia was an epicenter of the campus



Minouche Shafik

anti-war protest movement that spanned the United States and ignited heated debate about Washington's support for Israel's bombardment of Gaza. Pro-Palestinian protesters set up encampments on Columbia's campus in April while Shafik testified at a House committee investigating "anti-Semitism".

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IICO lays the foundation stone for educational projects for orphans

Charity launches Al-Lahib Educational Village in Indonesia

In my view

No room for complacency in age of Artificial Intelligence



By Yousef Alkhadhari

We are currently living through the eve of what is likely the most monumental shift human civilization has ever seen. Many are unaware of what is on the horizon, and many would simply like to stay in denial. In the coming years, many will realize that the world they have been taught to grow up in will soon be a distant memory, due to technological tidal waves which will most likely redefine everything it means to be human. Over the past two years, the world has become increasingly familiar with the term "AI", standing for artificial intelligence.

ChatGPT users in early 2023 were blown away by the ability of a computer to converse with them much in the same way a human would. A user can go to ChatGPT and simply talk about their day, they can also however ask it to write a tale in the form of a Shakespearean sonnet about a battle set in Ancient China, while incorporating elements of Greek mythology and Roman poetry, and marvel at the work being produced exactly as requested within a matter of seconds.

If that second one sounded perhaps a bit random, that was the point — these systems are capable of responding to even the most absurdly random prompts in ways that are utterly stunning. It is a testament to humanity's ability to adapt that we now look upon these things as completely normal.

The dangerous situation we now find ourselves in is that many seem to think this is where AI stops, as just a tool that can quickly write an interesting poem for you or help you with your homework, I'm sorry to disappoint, but this could not be further from the truth. Systems like OpenAI's ChatGPT, or Google's Gemini, are the result of years of incredibly complex research that has been conducted in AI labs with most people barely noticing.

A technique to which the success of practically all useful modern AI systems can be attributed, known as deep learning, led to breakthroughs in humanity's ability to create truly intelligent systems that did not need our instructions to solve issues. I would rather not bore you with too many technical details, but this method of programming completely reshaped the landscape of artificial intelligence, leading to the revolution we are now living through.

We are currently the dominant species on this planet. This is not due to our strength or speed, rather it is a result of our intelligence. Our ancestors battled other species of humans such as the Neanderthals, who were by far our superior in terms of strength, but we came out victorious because our intelligence allowed us to cooperate in large groups the way no other animal has ever been able to.

We've all watched or read stories about aliens coming across our planet. Sometimes they admire us and elevate us to explore the entire universe with them; other times they show great disdain for our species and punish us for our hubris. What I find interesting about the world today, considering what is fast approaching, is that very few stop to think, what will the world look like when a new species, vastly smarter than me or anyone I know, predicted by former Google X Chief Business Officer Mo Gawdat to be a billion times smarter than all of humanity combined by 2037, arrives on this planet?

In 1997, the then world champion chess player Gary Kasparov played against Deep Blue, a computer system designed by American technology company IBM, specifically to play chess. At this point, computer systems hadn't yet beaten the top chess player, and it was generally thought at the time that it could not be done, as human intuition would always give us a slight edge. However, it was at this pivotal moment that the chess world looked on in amazement as Deep Blue won the game, and since then, it has become evident that no human will ever again beat the best chess playing machine.

The game of Go is thought to be amongst the most complex humans have ever played. In 2015, the computer system AlphaGo made shockwaves by defeating the then European Go champion, the first time in the history of the game that a top human player had lost to a machine. The win itself was shocking enough, but even more interesting, is the fact that merely 6 months later, the system went on to defeat Lee Sedol, the world champion Go player. The system had in 6 months gone from never beating a human, to defeating the world champion.

AlphaGo even demonstrated incredible problem solving abilities and foresight, with its now infamous, move 37. Move 37 was a move made by AlphaGo in the second game against Lee, and it serves as a good illustration of what we as humanity are heading into. The move was so unorthodox, Lee the world champion had to ask for a recess to even comprehend why the system would make such a seemingly disastrous blunder. Experts watching the game were convinced this was a critical mistake. Yet demonstrating its strategic brilliance, AlphaGo had actually used the move to creatively disrupt Lee's pattern of play, and ultimately win the game.

We are creating intelligences which have already proven capable of outthinking even the most intelligent of our species. We must begin to confront what this means. If we have risen to the top of the hierarchy of this planet due to our intelligence, what happens when a more intelligent species exists? It seems clear to me that whatever it wishes to do, it will be able to do, so let us all hope that it has humanity's best interests in mind.

It seems clear that this is the most pressing challenge of our time, and by even reading this article, you have a better idea of what's coming than most. As we speak, incredible amounts of money are being poured into rapid AI advancement, at the same time a dedicated group of computer scientists and engineers across the planet are working out how we can safely enter this new future, and give rise to machines that benefit human civilization, rather than destroy it.

You may at this point be wondering what the best course of action would be for you personally, given the frankly almost inconceivable changes in the world. The truth of the matter is no one really knows what to tell you, as technological progress, especially in this area, is extremely difficult to forecast. I can't give you a specific year for when certain things will happen, although I'm confident that what I've mentioned will be in the spotlight for practically all of us by the end of the decade. For now, simply do your best.

If I can ask a small favor, try to engage more in these discussions and make those around you aware of them. Please feel free to focus on whatever it is you seek to achieve in your life, but keep in mind that change is the only constant, and the world can change in an astounding short time. I have hope that we as humanity can guide this future in a direction that results in more prosperity and joy for us all, but we must not be complacent. Let us all do the best we can, for our very future as a species is at stake.



The International Islamic Charitable Organization launches a project to provide educational materials and opportunities. — KUNA photos



KUWAIT: The International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) has laid the foundation stone for five educational, rehabilitation, and service projects for orphans in Sheikh Ali Saleh Al-Lahib Educational Village in Banten, Indonesia, in cooperation with the Indonesian-Kuwait Association. Deputy Director General for Corporate Communications at the organization Ibrahim Al-Badr said in a press statement on Thursday that the village will serve 1,150 male and female students.

There will be a dormitory for male and female students, a center for memorizing the Holy Quran, and another for vocational training that includes a computer lab and two workshops for mechanics and carpentry, with a total cost of more than one million dollars. Al-Badr added that the village aims to improve the lives of orphans and provide educational opportunities that enable them to achieve a better future.

IICO is launching this project from its strategic vision that aims to provide quality educational opportunities with high-quality out-



Ibrahim Al-Badr

comes. He stated that the vision in this context is consistent with the fourth goal of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which focuses on ensuring quality and comprehensive education for all, stressing that the authority believes that education is one of the basic needs for societies that are aspiring to grow.

He continued, "By naming this village after the late Saleh Al-Lahib, we remember with pride and reverence one of the great men in the State of Kuwait," pointing to the proceeds of his endowment that supports the construction of mosques, schools, orphanages, and vocational training centers in various parts of the world.

For his part, the general supervisor of the Indonesian-Kuwait Charitable Society, Engineer Ahmed Al-Holi, said that Al-Lahib Educational Village is added to a number of qualitative Kuwaiti charitable villages and projects in Indonesia, most notably the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Charitable Village. Al-Lahib village is located on an area of 3,173 square meters of endowment land and aims to provide educational, moral, and professional care for 1,150 male and female orphan students.

The village includes a school consisting of 12 classrooms in addition to a 12-room residence to provide a stimulating environment for them to succeed. There are also a computer lab, two mechanical and carpentry workshops, and a vocational training center to qualify them for the labor market. The village also includes a residence for 225 female students consisting of nine rooms to provide a safe and comfortable environment for them to study and a Quran memorization center that includes nine classrooms and a multi-purpose hall. — KUNA

Indians mark Independence Day



KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador Dr Adarsh Swaika addresses Indians on the occasion of India's 78th Independence Day on August 15, 2024.



Kuwait sends relief planeload to Sudan

KUWAIT: The second relief plane took off on Thursday as part of the Kuwaiti humanitarian air bridge heading to Port Sudan International Airport, carrying 27 tons of food and medical supplies and an ambulance, organized by the Kuwait Society for Relief (KSR). Chairman Dr Ibrahim Al-Saleh told KUNA prior to takeoff that this initiative comes as part of a campaign to provide aid to the Sudanese people, launched by the KSR in cooperation with eight Kuwaiti charitable societies and in line with directives of Kuwait's leadership to alleviate the urgent humanitarian needs resulting from the floods that hit northern Sudan, in conjunction with the ongoing internal conflicts.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's first new air bridge plane carrying 10 tons of relief aid arrived in Sudan on Wednesday to help those affected by the war and floods in that country. Head of delegation of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Faisal Al-Jarallah told KUNA that the new air bridge of aid planes includes tents, health equipment, and insecticides for Sudan, under the directives of Kuwait's leadership to help Sudanese who are in distress.

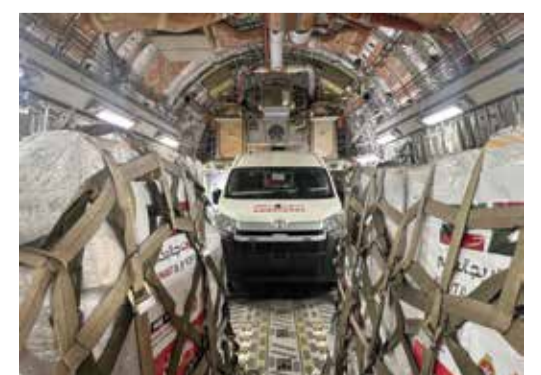
He affirmed the continuation of additional aid planes in the next period for those affected by the war as part of Kuwait's support for brothers in Sudan. The plane was received in the presence of Kuwait's Embassy staff in Port Sudan and KRCS officials. Meanwhile, acting head of Sudan Red Crescent Society Hassan



Kuwait Society for Relief's second relief plane. — KUNA photos



Abu Bakr expressed appreciation to Kuwait for this support, which shows continued cooperation between the two societies. He not-



ed that the Sudanese society would supervise distributing humanitarian aid in Nile and Northern States in the first phase. — KUNA

Local

Pearl diving trip winds up

Large crowds attend 'Qaffal' ceremony to welcome returning divers



Kuwait's seafaring heritage materials, attire, ship-making tools, musical instruments and pearl diving equipment are displayed during the event.



KUWAIT: People watch pearl diving boats as they arrive at the main beach at the end of the 33rd annual pearl diving festival.

By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: Large spectators attended the 33rd "Qaffal" and heritage season events for divers. The event was hosted by the Kuwait Sea Club under the sponsorship of the Amir His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Around 150 young men participated in the event, including Nawakhada (captains) and the divers. The event also featured a display of Kuwait's seafaring heritage materials, including a display of ships, attire, ship-making tools, musical instruments and pearl diving equipment that are commonly associated with Arab Gulf diving. There was also a display of artwork related to pearl diving made by local artists.

The ceremony began with the return of the diving ships to the Club's coast, and after the arrival of the ships successively, the Nawakhada and divers disembarked from the ships carrying their tools and their

crop of oysters as friends and family members received them on the beach. They moved to the places designated for them — opposite the platform, according to the division of their groups. During the "Al-Qaffal" ceremony, all the participants lined up on the shore. The ceremony began with the lowering of Kuwait's flag to mark the end of the diving season.

The Club's president, Major General Fahad Al-Fahad, stated that the purpose of the diving trip is not only to collect oysters and search for pearls. "It emphasizes the importance of preserving heritage and strengthening the connection of the present generation with the heritage of this dear country and its past, as well as drawing lessons and meanings from the sacrifices of parents and grandparents from the first generation," he said. He thanked His Highness the Amir and praised the efforts of the divers, their families, and the Club's Maritime Heritage Committee.



Pharaonic Nisarriya attracts wildlife lovers

KUWAIT: In northern and western Kuwait, specifically between the rocky heights of Jal Al-Zour in the desert of Kazma and the cracks of Al-Shaqaya, lives the largest owl in the Middle East — the Pharaonic Nisarriya, which has become a well-known landmark there. This owl attracts wildlife lovers, as photographers are keen to document it and monitor its settlement and reproduction, whether in Kuwait, the Arabian Gulf, or the Middle East.

Deputy Director General for Technical Affairs at the Environment Public Authority (EPA), Dr Abdullah Al-Zaidan, told KUNA on Thursday that he documented the presence of the owl in different areas in the country. It is found in abundance in the Sabah Al-Ahmad Reserve, Jal Al-Zour, and



Dr Abdullah Al-Zaidan

Al-Shaqaya, as well as in demilitarized zones west of Kuwait and other areas.

Al-Zaidan added that the cracks in these areas are a safe haven for this owl and a natural habitat for it, where it reproduces away from human activities, noting that its habitat is mostly in an open, barren area with rocky outcrops, plains, valleys, and slopes. He pointed out that it is also found in Africa and the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Oman, Iraq and Iran.

Regarding its name (Pharaonic Nisarriya), he explained that this is due to its large size, which is similar to the size of eagles and vultures, as its length is between 46 and 50 centimeters. It is also distinguished by its yellow-orange eyes, two short tufts of feathers on its ears, and a face like a cat. He stated that it is usually monogamous. He stated that this owl is a nocturnal bird that hunts at night and until dusk in an area of about five square kilometers and feeds on small creatures, including mammals, birds, snakes, lizards, beetles, and scorpions. It hunts its prey in complete silence and does not make any sound from its flight even when approaching the prey due to the nature of its special feathers.

The Pharaonic Nisarriya does not face any threats, but its natural habi-



Egyptian eagle owl. — KUNA photos



Young Pharaoh eagle owl

tats are disappearing due to urbanization, so it is listed as a species of least concern on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List. Regarding the local efforts to preserve it, he explained that there is joint cooperation between the concerned parties in this regard, as nature reserves such as the Sabah Al-Ahmad Reserve, under the supervision of the Volunteer Work Center and the Reserves Management Team and the patronage of Sheikh Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, contributed to monitoring and documenting the owl and preserving its natural habitat.

He added that these efforts include cooperation between the Public Au-

thority for the Environment and the Scientific Center, which include programs to rehabilitate wild creatures and release them in their natural habitats, including this type of owl. He stressed the importance of preserving the bird as it contributes to maintaining the ecological balance as it feeds on rodents and limits their spread. — KUNA



Female Pharaoh eagle owl in the nest.



Pharaonic Nisarriya is pictured at the Jahra Reserve, which was rehabilitated by the Scientific Center.



Egyptian eagle owl is distinguished by its yellow-orange eyes.

Personification of Kuwait's philanthropic legacy: Dr Al-Sumait

KUWAIT: If philanthropy could be embodied in a person, the late Dr Abdurrahman Al-Sumait would surely be befitting, as his legacy within the field is unsurpassed by any individual in recent history. Born October 15, 1947, in Kuwait, Al-Sumait always had the woes and troubles of the needy worldwide on his mind, and during his life, he dedicated himself to ease the suffering of people and promote welfare to all, especially to those residing on the African continent.

Al-Sumait's academic career saw him first graduate from Baghdad's College of Medicine in 1972, which was followed by a diploma in tropical diseases from the University of Liverpool in 1974, and in 1978, he specialized in internal medicine and digestive diseases while studying at McGill University in Canada. Al-Sumait worked in a hospital in Montreal, Canada, as well as the King's College hospital in London, before becoming a gastroenterologist in Al-Sabah hospital in Kuwait in 1980-83.

In 1981, Al-Sumait visited Malawi — a trip that changed his life — due to the devastating situation in this particular African country, which led him to establish the Malawi Muslims committee in cooperation with several charitable teams. He knew very well that the task was daunting; therefore, he established the Africa Muslim Committee, which was then changed to the Direct Aid organization.

Al-Sumait left medicine and embarked on a long, illustrious journey to help the poor in Africa and elevate the situation of the needy there. He made it his mission to make the Direct Aid organization a force to be reckoned with in terms of actually helping people and supervising relief aid efforts himself, which led to the betterment of millions of lives in Africa, providing education, infrastructure, facilities, mosques, and tens of thousands of drinkable water wells throughout the vast continent.

The Direct Aid organization also helped train and prepare around 4,000 teachers to spread the true notions of Islam in addition to sponsoring thousands upon thousands of orphans. Later in life, Al-Sumait earned several awards, including a medal from the GCC leaders for charitable efforts in 1986, the King Faisal award for the service of Islam in 1996, the Order of the Two Niles from Sudan in 1999, and many others.

In honor of Al-Sumait's lifelong efforts, the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah announced during the third Arab-African Summit held in Kuwait in 2013 the annual Al-Sumait Prize for the development in Africa. The one-million-dollar prize honors individuals or institutions who have made significant advances in food security, health, and education in Africa through their work or research. Despite living most of his life in strenuous situations, Al-Sumait felt pride in what he did for the less fortunate. On August 15, 2013, Dr Abdurrahman Al-Sumait passed away, leaving behind a legacy to be remembered by millions worldwide. — KUNA



Dr Abdurrahman Al-Sumait



KUWAIT: Boats are pictured along the Arabian Gulf Road.

Meteorological dept predicts more heat

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Meteorological Department said the country's weather during the weekend will be very hot during the day and hot to warm at night. Director of the Department Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi told KUNA that the country is affected by an extension of the Indian seasonal depression accompanied by a very hot and relatively humid air mass on the coastal areas.

Al-Qarawi explained that the weather during the day will be very hot with variable winds between 10 and 28 kilometers per hour. The expected maximum temperatures will be between 48 and 50 degrees Celsius, and the sea will be light-to-moderate with waves between 1 and 3 feet. Al-Qarawi said that the weather on Saturday will be very hot and relatively humid in coastal areas, with northwesterly to variable winds between 12 and 35 km/h.

The expected maximum temperature will range between 48 and 51 degrees Celsius, and the sea will be light to moderate in waves, between 2 and 5 feet. He pointed out that the weather on Saturday night will be hot and relatively humid, especially in coastal areas, with variable winds between 10 and 30 km/h. — KUNA

NBK calls to ensure 'URL legitimacy and website matching' when shopping online

Within its ongoing efforts to promote 'Let's Be Aware' awareness campaign

KUWAIT: Reflecting its active role in promoting financial literacy and inclusion among all sectors of society, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues promoting the "Let's Be Aware" banking awareness campaign introduced by the Central Bank of Kuwait, in cooperation with Kuwaiti banks and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA). NBK intensifies awareness by sharing educational content including video clips, text messages, and tips across its social media platforms and other digital channels, as well as reposting CBK's communications, aiming to raise awareness among all people and familiarize them with the various fraud schemes and required precautions.

In this context, the bank called to check website URL to ensure using the legitimate website when shopping or making any banking transactions online to avoid falling victim to fraud. NBK also stressed on never clicking any links from unknown sources, whether via e-mail or social media platforms, which

may redirect the user to clone websites, as scammers make clone web pages that look exactly like well-known shopping websites, so, it is necessary to check the URL before entering any credentials or banking information. With the ever-growing fraud threats using various techniques, NBK is keen to protect customers and increase their awareness of how to steer clear of these threats by following the tips provided across its digital channels.

The bank also affirms that it will never ask customers for personal information via e-mail, SMS or phone calls, warning them of responding to such messages representing fraud attempts to obtain their banking information to steal their money or information. NBK employs its strong customer communication capabilities as well as all its digital channels, which are the most popular among all Kuwaiti banks, to support the Central Bank's endeavors to protect customers and the national economy.

It is worth mentioning that NBK is a key support-



er and partner in all CBK's campaigns and initiatives aiming to increase financial and banking awareness among different segments of society. As a leading financial institution in Kuwait, NBK frequently organizes various activities to raise awareness on all topics related to the banking sector, as well as various training courses for its employees to enhance their experience in the areas of combating fraud and financial crime.

AFCENT band delights Bayt Abdullah kids

By Passant Hisham

KUWAIT: In hope of bringing joy to the children and easing their suffering at Bayt Abdullah Hospital, the US Embassy has partnered with the Air Forces Central Band (AFCENT) for a special musical performance. US Ambassador to Kuwait, Karen Hideko Sasahara, said, "This performance provides the children with a chance to temporarily escape their challenges and experience something uplifting. Every child deserves a bit of joy, and we hope this event brings that to them tonight."

Regarding US-Kuwait relations, Ambassador Sasahara noted that her role extends beyond just diplomacy and policy. She said, "I am here as a guest in Kuwait. I want to be a good guest and learn about the country." She expressed her eagerness to see, hear, and meet people to understand what's happening locally. "Being here tonight is both a privilege and an honor, and it's a new part of Kuwait that I am witnessing," the ambassador added.

She highlighted that the relationship between the United States and Kuwait spans many decades. While some may view it as merely a result of the liberation 34 years ago, she noted that the bond is much deeper. "Our ties go beyond that," she said, pointing out that five generations of Kuwaiti students have studied in the US. She further explained that the connection includes cultural, financial, and commercial aspects.

"Kuwaitis who have spent time in the United States often bring valuable experiences back with them. I believe Kuwait has shown its commitment to the United States, and I feel we also have a commitment to uphold towards Kuwait," she said. Dr Tala Al-Dabbous, CEO and Director of Clinical Services at Catch and Bayt Abdullah, expressed her happiness with the presence of the American "AFCENT" musical group at Bayt Abdullah Hospital. "Our top priority is to entertain our children, just as any parent seeks happiness for their kids. These children are like our own," she said.

At KACCH and BACCH Catch, she affirmed their preference for using the term 'children' over 'patient.' "Today, the 'AFCENT' team is here to bring joy and



US Ambassador Karen Hideko Sasahara takes a picture with Bayt Abdullah children, families and staff.



Bayt Abdullah children and families enjoying the musical performance.

help these kids feel like they're living a normal life. Bayt Abdullah was designed to bring all essential services and support into one place," Dabbous added.

Chip Cothran, AFCENT Band Manager, noted that the band serves as musical ambassadors of the United States, travelling across the region and connecting with diverse audiences through the universal language of music. He described their recent performance at Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice as a privilege, highlighting the joy it brought to the children, their families, and the staff. "It was an honor to have the opportunity to put a smile on their faces, rhythm in their feet, and joy in their hearts! We look forward to the next time we get to perform in Kuwait City," he said.



AFCENT band poses for a picture during the event's performance.



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'India Utsav' at LuLu Hypermarket a kaleidoscope of culture, heritage

KUWAIT: As India celebrated its 78th Independence Day, LuLu Hypermarket transformed into a tri-colored symphony of all-things-Indian during the week-long 'India Utsav' promotion. Held from August 14 – 20, the cultural and shopping extravaganza was a true celebration of the Indian spirit, showcasing the country's diversity and its unique blend of tradition and innovation. The festivities kicked off with a grand inauguration ceremony on August 14 at the Al-Rai outlet, as Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Adarsh Swaika along with LuLu Kuwait's top management, revealed the wonders of the fest amidst the melodies of a traditional Indian music band.

The 'India Science Expo & Monuments Expo' for students was a showstopper that displayed the creativity of young minds in exhibiting India's inspiring scientific advancements and architectural marvels. Winners of the expo were rewarded with exciting prizes, while all participants took home consolation prizes. The 'Future India' wall was another thought-provoking display.

As customers ventured through the hypermarket, they discovered a treasure trove of exclusive offers and discounts on products, ranging from fragrant Indian spices, groceries, meat & fish, fruits and vegetables to health and beauty, households, and fashion. The 'Indian Ethnic Fashion and Food – Couples Show' was a visual feast, bringing out the elegance of Indian attire, and the diversity of its cuisines. Selfie enthusiasts were able to snap memories against vibrant backdrops of traditional monuments and displays, while cultural programs performed by Indian school students filled the air with music and dance that kept everyone entertained.

Enticing aromas wafted from special food stalls and free sampling counters, tempting taste buds with authentic Indian flavors. LuLu Hypermarket also unveiled an array of new Indian products, catering to the diverse preferences of its customers. LuLu Hypermarket's 'India Utsav' celebration was a cultural spectacle that will be remembered and cherished by shoppers, a true celebration of India's diversity, spirit and splendor.





Protests sweep India over rape and murder of doctor

Bangladesh may seek extradition of Hasina as cases mount: Advisor

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RAFAH, Palestinian Territories: Palestinians mourn after identifying corpses of relatives killed in overnight Zionist bombardment on the southern Gaza Strip at Al-Najjar hospital in Rafah. - AFP

40,000 and counting: Gazans lose tens of thousands in war

'It is very difficult to say goodbye, because the martyrs are buried very quickly'

GAZA STRIP: With Gaza largely in ruins after more than 10 months of war, the Hamas-run territory's health ministry has struggled to count the death toll, which on Thursday surpassed 40,000. The Zionist entity has repeatedly questioned the credibility of the daily figures put out by the ministry and US President Joe Biden did so too in the early stages of the war. But several United Nations agencies that operate in Gaza have said the figures are credible and they are frequently cited by international organizations.

Two AFP correspondents witnessed health facilities enter deaths in the ministry's database. Gaza health officials first identify bodies by visual recognition from a relative or friend, or by recovering personal items. The deceased's details, including name, gender, birth date and ID number, are then entered in the health ministry's digital database. Umm Omar told AFP she did not understand "how the months have gone by" since her husband, Ibrahim Al-Shanbari, was killed in a Zionist

entity strike on northern Gaza. When he died, Umm Omar said she lost everything "in a fraction of a second", but there was little time to bury him properly, grieve or process the loss of the "kind" man that he was.

There was no funeral procession or "any of the usual mourning (rituals) because it's wartime", Umm Omar added. "It was very difficult to say goodbye... because the martyrs were buried very quickly," she said, with fighting raging across the besieged territory. To help Ella, "I ended up pretending" her father was still alive, said Umm Omar.

Still, according to her, others had it worse, "those who have lost an entire family, those who have not been able to say goodbye, or those who find their children in pieces". With more than 1.5 percent of Gaza's 2.4 million population killed during the war, many people have lost loved ones. If bodies are unrecognizable or unclaimed, staff record the death under a number, noting all available information.

Any distinguishing marks that may help with later identification, whether personal items or a birthmark, are collected and photographed.

Gaza's health ministry has outlined its procedures for compiling the death toll. In public hospitals under the direct supervision of the territory's Hamas government, the "personal information and identity number" of every Palestinian killed during the war are entered in the hospital's database as soon as they are pronounced dead. The data is then sent to the ministry's central registry on a daily basis.

For deaths in private hospitals and clinics, information is recorded on a form that must be sent to the ministry within 24 hours to be included in the central registry, a ministry statement said. The ministry's "information centre" then verifies the entries to "ensure they do not contain any duplicates or mistakes", before saving them in the database, the statement added. Gaza residents are also encouraged by Palestinian

authorities to report any deaths in their families on a designated government website. The data is used for the ministry's verifications.

The ministry is staffed with civil servants that answer to the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority as well as to the Hamas government in Gaza. An investigation conducted by Airwars, an NGO focused on the impact of war on civilians, analyzed the data entries for 3,000 of the dead and found "a high correlation" between the ministry's data and what Palestinian civilians reported online, with 75 percent of publicly reported names also appearing on the ministry's list. The study found that the ministry's figures had become "less accurate" as the war dragged on, a development it attributed to the heavy damage to health infrastructure resulting from the war. For instance, at southern Gaza's Nasser Hospital, one of the few still at least partly functioning, only 50 out of 400 computers still work, its director Atef Al-Hout said. — AFP

Ukraine, Russia claim advances in Kursk region

KYIV: Ukraine on Thursday claimed fresh advances in its cross-border offensive into Russia, where it said it had seized over a thousand square kilometers, the biggest attack by a foreign army on Russian soil since World War II. Russia said it had recaptured a first village from Ukrainian forces in the Kursk region and announced it was sending "additional forces" to the neighboring Belgorod region.

Ukraine said it now controlled dozens of settlements and Sudzha, a town eight kilometers (five miles) from the border. "We have taken control of 1,150 square kilometers of territory and 82 settlements," said top military commander Oleksandr Syrsky. Syrsky's troops launched the offensive on August 6, breaking months of setbacks for the Ukrainian army that has been battling a Russian invasion for over two years.

The top general also told President Volodymyr Zelensky his army had set up an administrative office "to maintain law and order and meet the priority needs of the population in the controlled territories". Zelensky announced "the completion of the liberation of the town of Sudzha from the Russian military".

At an Orthodox church in the centre of Sumy, the regional hub across the border from Kursk, dozens of mourners gathered Thursday to pay their final respects to six Ukrainian servicemen killed since Kyiv launched its offensive. Tearful family members of the victims received a steady stream of friends and relatives wearing black and clutching wreaths as the priest intoned a



SUMY, Ukraine: Relatives, friends and fellow soldiers mourn over a coffin during the funeral of six Ukrainian servicemen in Sumy, northeastern Ukraine, on August 15, 2024. — AFP

funeral mass and incense hung in the air. "It is hard to say goodbye to them, because we want them to live forever, to live among us as honored sons of their homeland," the priest told mourners.

"Our task is to pray for our heroic fighters and their families." Pallbearers lifted the coffins one by one for burial as a choir sang hymns in harmony. Air raid sirens echoed over Sumy as the service ended.

In Kursk, AFP reporters saw around 500 evacuees from border areas queuing for food and clothes being distributed by the Russian Red Cross. Russia says over 120,000 people have left or been evacuated.

The assault took Russian troops by surprise and triggered the evacuation of tens of thousands. The fighting killed at least 12 civilians and wounded 121 others according to Russian authorities, who have

not released a toll since Monday. Moscow scrambled reinforcement and announced the recapture of a first village in the Kursk region on Thursday. The ministry said the army had "completed destruction of the enemy and restored control of the settlement of Krupets."

The Russian army also announced measures to prevent attacks on neighboring regions, particularly Belgorod. The Russian army has prepared "concrete actions" to defend the Belgorod region from Ukrainian attacks, minister Andrei Belousov said at a meeting with officials including Belgorod region governor Vyacheslav Gladkov. They include "the allocation of additional forces."

Both Kursk and Belgorod regions have seen small incursions since Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his invasion of Ukraine. — AFP

Chartered Accountant Declares
Mrs./RABAA SAAD AL-MUHANNA
As the Restructuring Trustee of
Aman Takaful Insurance Co.
Co. K.S.C. (Closed)

By filing the final list of debts according to the procedures with the bankruptcy department on 8-8-2024.

To see the list of debts, please scan the QR Code.



Any creditor whose name is not included in the list may file a grievance in accordance with Article 111 of Law 71 of 2020.

For inquiry:

Tel. No.: 69994837 - WhatsApp No.: 69994837

International

Protests sweep India over rape and murder of doctor

Hundreds of thousands of women march through in Indian cities, demand justice

KOLKATA: Holding candles, hundreds of thousands of women marched through the night in cities across India, to protest the brutal rape and murder of a young female doctor in a hospital that has fueled anger over a lack of safety for women despite tough new laws. A 31-year-old trainee doctor was raped and murdered inside the medical college in Kolkata where she worked on Friday, triggering nationwide protests among doctors and drawing parallels to the notorious gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old student on a moving bus in New Delhi in 2012.

"We have come here to demand justice because even I have a daughter. I am scared to send her anywhere...I am scared to send my daughter to study," said Rinky Ghosh, who took part in a protest in Kolkata. "So I am here today because something ... must be done, this injustice must stop."

The doctor had retired to sleep on a piece of carpet in a seminar room in the R G Kar Medical College after a marathon 36-hour shift, given the lack of any dorms or resting rooms for doctors in the premises, her colleagues told Reuters. She was found dead on Friday. Police said she had been raped and murdered and a police volunteer was subsequently arrested in connection with the crime.

Many government hospitals in cities across India suspended all services except emergency departments earlier this week, as junior doctors sat outside in protest, demanding justice. The victim was found bleeding from her eyes and mouth, with injuries to her legs, stomach, ankles, her right hand and finger, a doctor's inquest report Aug 9 and accessed by Reuters said.

In protests called "Reclaim the Night", women marched across several Indian cities from midnight on Wednesday, on the eve of the country's 78th Independence Day, to protest against the lack of safety for women in India, especially at night. "As a society, we have to think about the atrocities being committed against our mothers, daughters and sisters. There is outrage against this in the country. I can feel this outrage," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in an Independence Day address to the nation on Thursday.

The 2012 Delhi rape case was seen as a turning point in attitudes towards women's safety in Indian society. It triggered huge protests and was the catalyst for rapid change in laws tackling crimes against women. These included fast-track courts for swifter convictions in such cases, but protesters say a decade on, the situation for women has not improved.

"This horrific incident has once again reminded us that women disproportionately bear the weight of ensuring their own safety," Bollywood actor Alia Bhatt said in a post on her Instagram page, which has more than 85 million followers. Doctors in India's crowded and often squalid government hospitals have long complained of being overworked and underpaid, and say not enough is done to curb violence leveled at them by people angered over the medical care on offer.

Crimes against women in India rose 4 percent in 2022 from the previous year, data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), released late last year, showed. — Reuters



VARANASI: Medical students shout slogans and hold posters as they protest the rape and murder of a young medic from Kolkata, in Varanasi on August 15, 2024. — AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Vietnam's top leader to visit China

BEIJING: Vietnam's top leader, To Lam, will make an official visit to China from Sunday until August 20, Vietnamese government and Chinese state media said, cementing close ties between the Communist-run neighbors. On his first foreign trip since his appointment this month as general secretary of Vietnam's ruling Communist Party, Lam is expected to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping and other officials. Despite their economic and trade links, the two nations occasionally clash over boundaries in the energy-rich South China Sea, a key waterway claimed by Beijing almost in its entirety, despite overlapping claims by several nations. Lam's visit follows an invitation from Xi and his wife, Vietnam's government said in a statement on Thursday that confirmed an earlier Reuters report on the visit. — Reuters

Navalny's wife rejects finding

LONDON: The wife of late Russian dissident Alexei Navalny said on Thursday that investigators had concluded his death in an Arctic prison colony in February was caused by a combination of diseases - a finding she rejected as preposterous. Yulia Navalnaya said she would demand a criminal investigation of her husband's death, which she considers to be murder, and that Navalny's team would continue to conduct its own investigation. Navalny, 47, died suddenly on Feb 16. The Kremlin has rejected his supporters' accusation that President Vladimir Putin had him murdered. His death certificate said he died of natural causes.

Northeastern Taiwan rattled by quake

TAIPEI: A 5.7 magnitude earthquake struck off Taiwan's northeastern county of Yilan on Thursday, the island's central weather administration said, with no immediate reports of damage. The quake shook buildings in the capital, Taipei. The quake had a depth of 9 km, the weather administration said, and was just off its northeastern shore. Subway services in Taipei continued at a lower speed immediately after the quake, authorities said. Taiwan lies near the junction of two tectonic plates and is prone to earthquakes. — Reuters

Vietnam jails prominent activist

HANOI: A Vietnamese court sentenced prominent activist Nguyen Chi Tuyen to five years in prison after finding him guilty of anti-state activities in a one-day trial on Thursday, two of his lawyers said. Tuyen, 50, had participated in environmental and anti-China protests, voiced support for other jailed activists, and wrote about Vietnam's socio-political issues on his social media accounts. The conviction is the latest in what rights groups say is the government's wide-ranging attempt to silence voices critical of the ruling Vietnamese Communist Party, which maintains tight media censorship and tolerates little dissent. — Reuters

Typhoon Ampil approaches Tokyo

TOKYO: Typhoon Ampil bore down on Tokyo on Thursday, prompting airlines to cancel hundreds of flights and railways to suspend part of their operations in the peak summer travel season. The typhoon, categorized as "strong" by the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA), was about 690 km (430 miles) off Japan's Pacific coast at 9 am (0000 GMT on Thursday), heading towards Tokyo and surrounding regions. The agency has two higher categories - "very strong" and "violent". Ampil was blowing winds of 35 meters per second (78 mph), with maximum gust of 50 meters per second (112 mph), according to the JMA. "With this typhoon approaching, we urge the public to be highly vigilant against storms, high waves and heavy rains," a JMA official told a news conference. — Reuters

Pheu Thai party picks Paetongtarn as PM candidate

BANGKOK: Thailand's Pheu Thai party has chosen 37-year-old Paetongtarn Shinawatra, the daughter of billionaire ex-PM Thaksin Shinawatra, as its candidate for prime minister, it announced on Thursday, a day after a court dismissed the incumbent premier in an ethics case. "We decide to nominate Paetongtarn Shinawatra," party secretary general Sorawong Thienthong told a press conference in Bangkok.

Lawmakers will vote Friday in parliament — where Pheu Thai heads a governing coalition — on whether to approve Paetongtarn as prime minister. "We are confident that the party and coalition parties will lead our country in helping with Thailand's economic crisis," Paetongtarn said after the announcement.

On Wednesday Thailand's Constitutional Court sacked premier Srettha Thavisin after ruling he had breached regulations by appointing a cabinet minister with a criminal conviction, plunging the kingdom into fresh political uncertainty. Pheu

Thai — the electoral vehicle of one-time Manchester City owner Thaksin — is the largest member of a governing coalition of 11 parties that includes royalist and pro-military outfits who were once its bitter rivals.

Srettha is the party's third prime minister to be kicked out by the Constitutional Court, and is leaving office after less than a year. Thai politics has endured two decades of chronic instability marked by coups, street protests and court orders — much of it fuelled by the long-running battle by the military and pro-royalist establishment against progressive parties linked to their bete noire Thaksin.

The tycoon ex-premier returned to Thailand last August from 15 years in self-exile on the same day Srettha took power in an alliance with pro-military parties previously staunchly opposed to Thaksin and his followers. The timing seemed to suggest a truce in the long-standing feud as both sides sought to see off the threat posed by the newer Move Forward Party (MFP), which won the popular vote in last year's election.

It was later blocked from forming a government. Paetongtarn was chosen ahead of Pheu Thai stalwart Chai-kasem Nitisiri, 75. The move showed "Pheu Thai's strategy to stand by the youth movement" that has Thailand,



BANGKOK: Pheu Thai party leader Paetongtarn Shinawatra (center) leaves a press conference with coalition party leaders in Bangkok on August 15, 2024. — AFP

political analyst Yuttaporn Issarachai told AFP. But he said it would be difficult to "move on from the conservative and military influence" that has dominated Thai politics for decades.

The case against Srettha was brought by 40 former senators appointed by the military junta that ousted an elected Pheu Thai government in a 2014 coup. The senate also played a crucial role in blocking the MFP after last year's elections. Senators alarmed by MFP's pledges to reform lese-majeste laws and break up powerful business monopolies refused

to endorse its then-leader Pita Limjaroenrat as prime minister, and the party was forced into opposition. The top court last week dissolved the MFP and banned Pita and its main officials from politics for 10 years.

Srettha, meanwhile, was dismissed over the appointment of Pichit Chuenban, a former lawyer associated with Thaksin. Pichit, sentenced to six months in jail in 2008 for a graft-related offence, quit the cabinet after the case was filed in a bid to save Srettha, but the court pressed ahead with the case. — AFP

Sri Lanka president faces 38 tough challengers in polls

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe faces 38 challengers in polls next month, the election commission said after nominations closed Thursday, with former ally Sajith Premadasa leading the pack. It will be the first vote since Wickremesinghe took over two years ago, after protesters furious at an unprecedented financial crisis toppled strongman president Gotabaya Rajapaksa, and the economy remains at the forefront.

"I have increased production... But it's not over yet. Life can be hard for some people. We have to stabilize the economy," Wickremesinghe told reporters after submitting his nomination.

"So what we are saying is, let's go ahead and finish this job," Wickremesinghe, 75, faces a daunting challenge from Premadasa, a 57-year-old career politician and the parliamentary leader of the opposition, as well as leftist leader Anura Kumara Disسانayaka, 55, whose National People's Power (NPP) coalition is popular among the young.

The South Asian Buddhist-majority island nation will vote on Sept 21. Premadasa vowed to tackle corruption. "Right now, 22 million people of our country are suffering from incompetence, ineptitude, mass-scale corruption, and looting of the public treasury," he said.

What started as a three-way battle became more complicated last week when the influential Rajapaksa family withdrew their support for Wickremesinghe in favor of one of their own — Namal Rajapaksa. The 38-year-old is a member of parliament and son of Mahinda Rajapaksa, a former president and prime minister, and the brother of Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

Wickremesinghe has shed his right-wing United National Party (UNP) and presented himself as an independent candidate hoping for broader support. A record 39 candidates have entered the fray, two more than in 2019, but none are women, Election Commission chairman R.M.A.L. Rathnayake said.

Many are viewed as proxies of key parties who



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's President and United National Party presidential candidate Ranil Wickremesinghe (centre) leaves the Election Commission office in Colombo on August 15, 2024. — AFP

use the airtime allocated to them on national radio to campaign. They include two Buddhist monks, one calling for the legalization of cannabis and a ban on birth control. "Please ensure you are within the law," Rathnayake said in a televised address, warning candidates to follow election rules.

"Don't influence public officers to any illegal activity to help your campaigns." Election law violations are common in Sri Lanka but prosecutions are rare. More than 17 million are eligible to cast a ballot and results are expected within a day of voting. The new president must then be sworn in within two weeks.

The previous presidential polls in November 2019 were won by Gotabaya Rajapaksa, a former army colonel described as a "terminator" by his family. He was forced out in 2022 after months of protests over his mishandling of the economy. Six-time prime minister Wickremesinghe was in political oblivion at that time as the lone lawmaker from his party in the 225-member parliament.

But, as politicians with more clout turned down requests to steer the country out of its worst economic meltdown, Wickremesinghe volunteered. Since taking over, Wickremesinghe has negotiated a \$2.9 billion bailout loan from the IMF, doubled personal taxes, frozen state employment, and cut energy subsidies. Despite the unpopular moves, he has managed to restore supplies of essentials, eliminate electricity blackouts and reopen the South Asian island nation for tourism. — AFP

Pakistan army arrests 3 more ex-officers in ISI graft case

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's military said on Thursday it had arrested three more retired officers following the arrest of former spy chief Faiz Hameed, who faces a court martial on charges of corruption and misuse of power. The arrests were in connection with the proceedings against Hameed, who formerly led premier spy agency Inter-services Intelligence (ISI), for "actions prejudicial to military discipline", the military said. In a statement, it added that the military continued to investigate some retired officers and their accomplices for "fomenting instability at the behest of, and in collusion with, vested political interests". Political parties and critics often accuse that the spy agency interferes in politics and government.

Hameed, a general, served as the ISI chief from 2019 to 2021 during the tenure of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, who is now in jail.

Khan has said he did not want to relieve Hameed of his role at the spy agency after he was transferred elsewhere by his army chief, Qamar Javed Bajwa. Khan's aides and political analysts say the tussle over Hameed contributed to a fallout between him and Bajwa, leading to his ouster in a parliamentary confidence vote early in 2022. Pakistan's military, which has directly ruled the nation of 240 million for more than 30 years in its 77-year independent history, plays an outsized role in making or breaking governments. Hameed's court-martial comes after the military said it completed an inquiry ordered by the Supreme Court into a complaint by a real estate developer.

It accused the former ISI chief of having misused his office to illegally occupy his housing scheme on the outskirts of Islamabad. In addition, the military cited "multiple instances of violation of the Pakistan Army Act" following Hameed's retirement that it said had also been established against him. — Reuters

FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 2024

US industrial production contracts sharply in July

Weekly jobless claims at one-month low; retail sales surge in July

WASHINGTON: US industrial production fell sharply in July, the Federal Reserve said Thursday, pointing to a larger-than-expected impact from Hurricane Beryl. The news is likely to add to calls for the Fed to cut its key lending rate from a two-decade high next month, as its long-running campaign against inflation continues to percolate through to the broader economy.

Total industrial output contracted by 0.6 percent in July from a month earlier, when it rose by a revised figure of 0.3 percent, the US central bank said in a statement. This was sharply below market expectations of a 0.1 percent increase, according to Briefing.com. The Fed said industrial production had been held down by the early "July shutdowns concentrated in the petrochemical and related industries due to Hurricane Beryl," which came ashore in Texas.

Meanwhile, the number of Americans filing new applications for unemployment benefits dropped to a one-month-low last week, suggesting an orderly labor market slowdown remained in place, and dashing financial market hopes that the Federal Reserve could cut interest rates by 50 basis points next month.

The manufacturing sector experienced a 0.3 percent decline due to a plunge of almost eight percent in the index for motor vehicles and parts. Excluding this component, the manufacturing index actually increased by 0.3 percent, the Fed said. Meanwhile, the mining index was unchanged, and the utilities index slumped by 3.7 percent. "Normally, manufacturing snaps back after a disaster related temporary shutdown," economists at High Frequency Economics (HFE) wrote in a note to clients on Thursday. "So the results are not as bad as they look."

The economy's resilience was reinforced by other data on Thursday showing retail sales increased by the most in nearly 1-1/2 years in July. Investors have been on edge after a jump in the unemployment rate to a near three-year high of 4.3 percent in July sparked fears that the economy was either in recession or nearing a downturn, concerns not shared by most economists. "Fed officials need not worry themselves to death about the outlook because the downside risks to the economy are fading fast with fewer job layoffs and robust consumer spending," said Christopher Rupkey, chief economist at FWD-BONDS. "The economy is not going off the rails."

Initial claims for state unemployment benefits dropped 7,000 to a seasonally adjusted 227,000 for the week ended Aug. 10, the Labor Department said. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast 235,000 claims for the latest week. The second straight weekly decline erased the increase in late July, which had boosted claims to an 11-month high. Claims had risen last month, blamed on temporary motor vehicle plant shutdowns and disruptions caused by Hurricane Beryl in Texas. Layoffs remain low by historic standards.

The labor market is slowing as businesses scale back on hiring, failing to keep up with an immigration-induced surge in labor supply. The US central bank's 525 basis points worth of rate hikes in 2022 and 2023 are curbing demand. Financial markets lowered the odds of a half-percentage-point rate reduction at the Fed's Sept. 17-18 policy meeting to 27.5 percent from 41.5 percent before the data, according to CME Group's FedWatch tool. They saw a 72.5 percent chance of a 25-basis-point rate cut, up from 58.5 percent earlier.

The Fed has maintained its benchmark overnight interest rate in the current 5.25 percent-5.50 percent range for a year. The dollar rose against a basket of currencies on the data, while Treasury prices fell.

The number of people receiving benefits after an initial week of aid, a proxy for hiring, fell 7,000 to a seasonally adjusted 1.864 million during the week ending Aug. 3, the claims report showed. The so-called continued claims are near levels last seen in late 2021, indicating that more people are experiencing longer bouts of unemployment.

A separate report from the Commerce Department's Census Bureau showed retail sales jumped 1.0 percent in July, the largest increase since January 2023, after a downwardly revised 0.2 percent drop in June. Economists had forecast retail sales, which are mostly goods and are not adjusted for inflation, advancing 0.3 percent after previously being reported as unchanged in June. Retail sales increased 2.7 percent year-on-year in July. Consumers are maintaining spending by bargain hunting and trading down to lower-priced substitutes. Receipts at motor vehicle and parts dealers rebounded 3.6 percent, reversing a 3.4 percent drop in June that was blamed on a cyberattack.



ROSEMEAD, US: People shop at a grocery store on August 14, 2024 in Rosemead, California. — AFP

Online store sales gained 0.2 percent after jumping 2.2 percent in June. Sales at gasoline stations edged up 0.1 percent. Building material and garden equipment store sales increased 0.9 percent. Sales at food services and drinking places, the only services component in the report, rose 0.3 percent after edging up 0.1 percent in June. Economists view dining out as a key indicator of household finances. Furniture store sales advanced 0.5 percent. Receipts at electronics and appliance outlets vaulted 1.6 percent. But consumers spent less at clothing retailers as well as sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument and book stores. — Agencies

Growth rebounds in welcome news for Japan's next PM

TOKYO: Japan's economy has rebounded, government data showed Thursday, in welcome news for its next prime minister following Fumio Kishida's decision to quit. The 0.8-percent expansion in the second quarter came after the world number four economy slumped by 0.6 percent in the first three months of the year.

The rise, supported by increased activity and increased capital and public investment, beat market expectations that output would grow 0.6 percent. Hiroyuki Ueno, chief strategist at SuMi Trust, pointed to improving consumer sentiment thanks to higher wages and a recovery in auto production after several scandals.

Toyota subsidiary Daihatsu in particular halted production for months from late 2023 after admitting it had engaged in safety test irregularities for years. Moody's economist Stefan Angrick cautioned that it would be "premature to conclude that Japan's economy is out of the woods."

"(The) headwinds facing the economy are substantial. Exports are struggling, and household finances are stretched," he said. On Wednesday Kishida said he would step down next month after almost three years in office after dropping out of the race to retain the leadership of his party.

His poll ratings sagged badly because of price rises that have eaten into Japanese incomes and a slew of scandals. The yen also fell sharply and the economy struggled to gain traction despite major stimulus efforts including tax cuts.



KAWASAKI, Japan: Cars are seen parked at Kawasaki Port in Kawasaki of Kanagawa Prefecture, south of Tokyo on August 15, 2024. — AFP

Kishida could in theory have governed until 2025 but analysts said he threw in the towel after losing support within the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has ruled Japan almost without a break for decades. Possible successors include digital minister Taro Kono and economic security minister Sanae Takaichi, who would be Japan's first female premier and who is popular with the right wing of the party. Other names floated in local media are Shigeru Ishiba, former party number two, and Shinjiro Koizumi, former environment minister and son of ex-premier Junichiro Koizumi.

Kishida, 67, never went to the site officially as prime minister, but visits by predecessors including Shinzo Abe angered China, South Korea and other countries that suffered under Japanese wartime occupation. Kishida won plaudits abroad while in office, siding decisively with Ukraine after Russia's invasion. With US encouragement, Kishida firmed up Japanese defense policy to counter China, hiking spending and moving to acquire "counterstrike" weapons. His leadership has been "nothing short of historic", US President Joe Biden, who hosted Kishida at the White House in April, said in a statement. — AFP

Shares soar in mpox vaccine maker Bavarian Nordic

COPENHAGEN: Shares in Danish drugmaker Bavarian Nordic, which manufactures a vaccine targeting mpox, soared Thursday after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared an mpox surge in Africa a global public health emergency.

Worried by the rise in cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the spread to nearby countries, the WHO hastily convened a meeting of experts to study the outbreak and on Wednesday said the "situation constitutes a public health emergency of international concern." Bavarian Nordic, whose vaccine has been licensed for preventing mpox since 2019, saw its shares rise more than eight percent on the Copenhagen Stock Exchange by midday on Thursday.

This built on a share price climb of 12 percent on Wednesday. On Tuesday, the African Union's health agency Africa CDC announced that over 200,000 doses of the Danish drugmaker's vaccine were to be deployed in Africa, following an agreement with the European Union (EU) and Bavarian Nordic.

A total of 38,465 cases of the disease, formerly known as monkeypox, have been reported in 16 African countries since January 2022, with 1,456 deaths. There has been a 160 percent increase in cases this year compared to the previous year, according to data published last week by the health agency.

Bavarian Nordic mainly supplies its mpox vaccine — called Jynneos in the United States and Imvanex in the European Union — to governments and international organizations, but began marketing it on the US market in April. — AFP

Slowing global jet fuel demand adds to oil market concerns

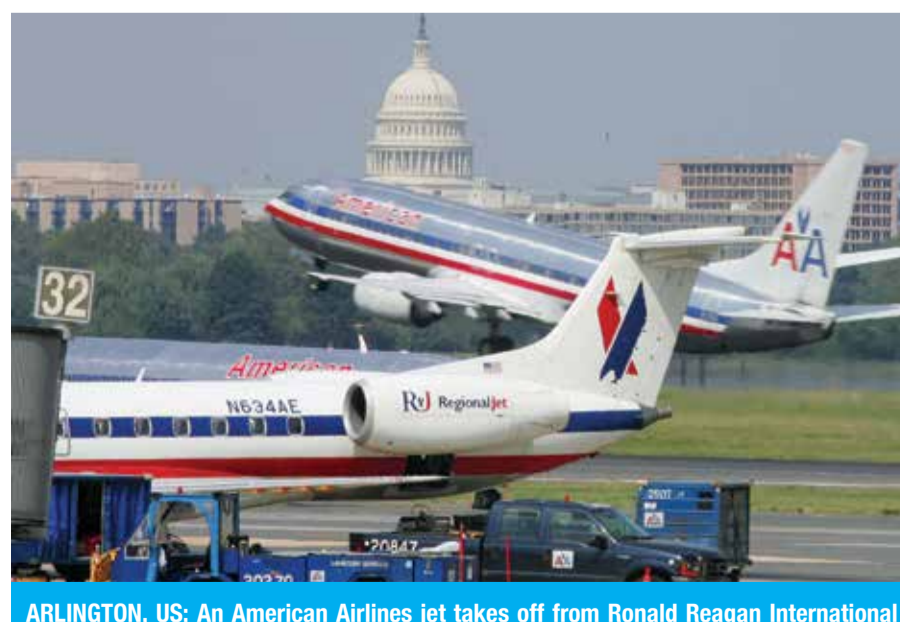
NEW YORK: Global jet fuel demand is poised to soften as a slowdown in consumer spending hits travel budgets, a shift that could weigh on oil prices in the months ahead. Global oil demand has not met expectations in the first half of 2024 due to weaker-than-forecast consumption in the US and China, the top two oil markets. Jet fuel makes up about 7 percent of global oil demand and was widely expected to be a pillar of growth this year as travel continued to rebound from the pandemic.

Global jet fuel demand averaged about 7.49 million barrels-per-day (bpd) this year through July, a nearly 500,000-bpd increase over the same period last year, according to Goldman Sachs data.

Demand will need to rise faster in the months ahead to meet the bank's growth forecast of 600,000 bpd for the year. That looks less likely, with Goldman Sachs estimates signaling demand growth from August through October at only around 400,000 bpd. Major US airline operators and travel companies

in recent days echoed worries that consumer spending is slowing as disposable incomes have shrunk, which should weigh on leisure travel. US consumer spending growth averaged just 0.3 percent in the three months through June, the slowest increase in over a year. "We see limited scope for further gains for (US) jet fuel, traditionally the most macro-driven product category, as a cooling economy weighs on demand for air travel," the International Energy Agency (IEA) said on Tuesday. Jet fuel demand in the US dropped sharply from a post-pandemic high of 1.95 million bpd in the week ended Aug 2, to just 1.6 million bpd last week, the IEA reported on Wednesday.

Weaker economic activity could also worsen a slowdown in global trade, which would cut air freight demand, Bank of America analysts said. They noted that global trade has been experiencing a slowdown over the past few years as demand in the US and Europe has shifted to services from goods.



ARLINGTON, US: An American Airlines jet takes off from Ronald Reagan International Airport in Arlington. — AFP

This week, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries cut its 2024 oil demand forecast for the first time since it was issued in July 2023, while the IEA trimmed its 2025 estimate. Both cited weaker-than-expected economic growth in China and elsewhere among the reasons for the downgrade. A global tech outage that grounded scores of flights for a few days in July has also impacted jet fuel demand. It was likely the reason that US jet fuel consumption

fell by about 10,000 bpd year-over-year in July, the IEA said.

"In sum, macro conditions for transportation fuels are deteriorating pretty quickly," Bank of America analysts said. "With this background in mind, we believe that the broader demand trends for jet fuel remain soft," they said.

Some longer-term factors, such as changes in consumer behavior and improved technology, are also hitting consumption. Improved efficiency and mileage in newer aircraft means airlines are carrying more passengers over longer distances while burning less fuel, Rystad analyst Wei Ran Gan said.

The average fuel economy of US commercial carriers rose to 65.5 seat miles per gallon in 2023, from 64.9 in 2019. Seat mile is an aviation industry term used to measure airline capacity. A post-pandemic shift in consumer preferences for shorter domestic flights over international destinations has also hurt demand, Bank of America analysts said. Meanwhile, years of trade wars between the US and China have cut air traffic between the countries to a quarter of what it was five years ago, Goldman Sachs analysts said. — Reuters

Business

China's home-price slump deepens to new 9-year low despite stimulus

New support policies fail to stabilize prices in struggling property sector

BEIJING: China's new home prices fell at their fastest pace in nine years in July, as a slew of support policies failed to stabilize prices and restore confidence in the struggling property sector. The prolonged housing market slump has weighed heavily on the world's second-largest economy and its consumers, with analysts saying Beijing's 5 percent GDP target for 2024 may be too ambitious even as other economic gauges have steadied.

New home prices fell 4.9 percent from a year earlier - the sharpest drop since June 2015 and deeper than a 4.5 percent slide in June, Reuters calculations based on National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data showed. Earlier, Reuters also reported prices fell 5.0 percent, which was due to an automated rounding off of figures. "It is increasingly looking like the property market will continue to need more policy support to establish a bottom," analysts at ING said in a note.

Beijing has been intensifying efforts to support the sector, which at its peak accounted for a quarter of the economy, including reducing mortgage rates and lowering home buying costs.

Policies play a certain role in lifting the market, but the external downturn has limited the effects of these policies, said Song Hongwei, research director of Tongce Research Institute, a real estate research company. In monthly terms, new home prices were down for the 13th straight month, falling 0.7 percent, and matching the pace of decline in June.

Among 70 cities surveyed by NBS, only two -

Shanghai and Xian - reported a rise in new home prices in monthly terms, and only Shanghai registered a price rise in the resale home market. Some property developers are resorting to unusual promotions to help clear the large numbers of unsold homes across the country. China Merchants Shekou Industrial Zone Holdings' Nanjing branch is offering apartment buyers a gift package worth 200,000 yuan (\$27,950) that includes 100 hours of total flight time toward a pilot's license and 5 percent of ownership rights to a jet. The Beijing News reported on Wednesday. A salesperson at the project told the news outlet buyers could opt for 200,000 yuan in cash if they preferred.

In late July, China's top decision-making body, the politburo, reiterated the country's commitment to supporting the completion of unfinished projects and turning unsold apartments into affordable housing. In separate data on Thursday, property sales by floor area in January-July fell 18.6 percent from a year earlier, compared with a 19.0 percent slump in January-June.

A quarterly survey released last week by China's central bank showed that 23.2 percent of residents believed that house prices would fall in the third quarter, a record high since data became available in 2013. Analysts say the real estate market needs targeted and strong support policies. "We continue to expect more housing easing measures in coming months, including more relaxation of home purchase restrictions in top-tier cities and further reduction in mortgage interest rates, among oth-



QINGZHOU, China: An employee works on a motor at a factory producing tractors in Qingzhou, in China's eastern Shandong Province on August 15, 2024. — AFP

ers," Goldman Sachs said in a research note.

"However, considering persistent property weakness related to lower-tier cities and pri-

vate developers, such easing measures will only lead to an 'L-shaped' recovery in the sector in coming years." — Reuters

Summer shock not over yet as investors brace for more turmoil

LONDON: Big investors are bracing for this summer's stock market rout to run into the autumn, fearing a broader wave of selling will follow the turmoil sparked by US recession concerns and the Bank of Japan wrong-footing currency speculators. The sudden reversal of crowded equity and foreign exchange trades that generated vicious feedback loops of price drops, volatility and hedge fund selling has eased, with world stocks almost 2 percent higher so far this week. But asset managers overseeing hundreds of billions of dollars of investments said they were more likely to carry on selling stocks than buy back in, with signs of weakness in the US jobs market and global consumer trends lowering the bar for market aftershocks.

The buy-the-dip mentality, where investors typically respond to selloffs by making recovery bets, has been replaced by fear. "It's not simply now a large financial market accident, which maybe we could describe last week as. It's broader than that," said Mahmood Pradhan, a former IMF deputy director and head of global macro at the research arm of Amundi, Europe's largest fund manager.

He expects investors, who according to Bank of America have already cut equity positions and shifted increasingly into cash, to remain cautious. Michael Kelly, head of multi-asset at PineBridge Investments, which oversees around \$170 billion of client funds, is among those to have reduced his funds' stock market positions and he may pull back further.

"It's going to be very, very volatile in the next two

months," he said. A first US rate cut, expected next month, might be too late to rescue the economy, he added. Investors' global growth expectations have fallen to eight-month lows.

A weak US employment report and a shock BOJ rate hike drove the global stock market selloff as volatility linked and trend-following hedge funds headed for the exits and anxious investors herded into government bonds. The BOJ hike wrecked billions of dollars worth of previously profitable trades where speculators had borrowed yen cheaply to buy higher-return assets like US tech stocks.

About 70 percent of that carry trade has now been unwound, JP Morgan estimates. But money flows tied to yen-related positions are tough to measure and Amundi's Pradhan said the possibility of further unwinding is making people quite risk averse. UBS European equity strategy head Gerry Fowler said hedge fund selling was likely over but slower moving mainstream investment managers often take four-to-six weeks to adjust their portfolios. Those fund managers could be the next to sell, said Edmond de Rothschild Investment Partners multi-asset portfolio manager Marie de Leyssac, but would do so based on economic data. While she doesn't see a savage US slowdown as likely, she wasn't buying stocks, instead preferring put options, which insure against equity losses by paying out when markets fall.

Pension funds would also further sell equity exposure and move into fixed income, Goldman Sachs strategist Scott Rubner said in a note, adding that the second half of September has been the worst period of the year for Wall Street since 1950.

Russell Investments chief US investment strategist Paul Eitelman said another weak U.S. jobs report would have the potential to spark fresh volatility.

Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell's speech at



NEW YORK: Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on August 14, 2024. — AFP

next week's annual Jackson Hole central bank conference and artificial intelligence giant Nvidia's Aug 28 earnings report are other market risk events.

"Volatility makes it hard to increase exposure even if you think it fundamentally makes sense," Pictet Asset Management senior multi-asset strategist Arun Sai said. Money managers' risk mandates tend to prevent them from buying equities when prices are fluctuating widely. The measure of expected volatility on Wall Street's S&P 500 and its European equivalent hit multi-year highs last week before easing but a related index continues to send warning signals. The, another options market gauge that rises when traders expect the VIX itself to be turbulent, is trading above the 100 mark, suggesting the market's wild ride is not yet over. "Until you see the VVIX get below 100 you should have it on your radar. It is the key metric at this point," Citi's head of equity trading strategy Stuart Kaiser said. — Reuters

Pakistan's Internet firewall could cost economy \$300m

KARACHI: Pakistan's economy could lose up to \$300 million due to Internet disruptions caused by imposition of a national firewall, the Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA) said in a press release on Thursday. Islamabad is implementing an Internet firewall to monitor and regulate content and social media platforms, according to local media reports. The government denies the use of the firewall for censorship.

Ali Ihsan, senior vice chairman of P@SHA, said the imposition of the firewall has already caused prolonged Internet disconnections and erratic VPN performance, threatening a "complete meltdown of business operations". "These disruptions are not mere inconveniences; but, a direct, tangible and aggressive assault on the industry's viability - inflicting an estimated and devastating financial losses estimated to reach \$300 million, which can further increase exponentially," he said in the statement.

Pakistan's telecommunication authority and Pakistan's Minister of State for Information Technology Shaza Fatima Khawaja did not immediately respond. Earlier this month, Khawaja told local media that the government did not plan to use firewalls as a form of censorship. Pakistan has already blocked access to social media platform X since the February elections in which jailed former prime minister Imran Khan won the most seats despite a crackdown and ban on his party.

The government has said the blocking was to stop anti state activities and a failure by X to adhere to local Pakistani laws. Rights activists say the blocking of X is designed to stifle critical voices and democratic accountability in the country. In its statement, P@SHA said that the government's lack of transparency around the firewall had "ignited a firestorm of distrust" among Internet users and Pakistan's global IT clients who fear their proprietary data and privacy will be compromised. — Reuters

Weary Argentines have mixed feelings as inflation eases

BUENOS AIRES: Argentines, feeling the pinch of the world's highest annual inflation rates, are feeling both hopeful and weary as monthly price increases dip to their lowest in over two years amid tough austerity measures under President Javier Milei. Inflation in July came in at 4 percent, Argentina's INDEC statistics agency reported on Wednesday, the lowest since the start of 2022. In the 12 months through July, however, inflation topped 263 percent - making it still the highest recorded in the world.

The South American country is trying to emerge from a severe economic crisis which ushered libertarian outsider Milei into power late last year as voters opted for a radical new approach to restore stability. Milei's sharp cost-cutting campaign has helped bolster the state's embattled finances, allowed the central bank to rebuild reserves, and tamped down inflation - though it has taken a heavy toll on economic activity. Poverty levels have also risen. "I am tired, but this is something different to what we have seen before, that's for sure," said Miguel Jamui, a 69-year-old retired worker, who is hopeful Milei's maverick approach will start to yield results.

Milei's policies have helped bring down monthly inflation from over 25 percent in December to now 4 percent in July, though the country has slid into recession and subsidy cuts have pushed up prices of certain services and goods. Many Argentines still feel their purchasing power is dwindling despite inflation slowing, with poverty affecting half the population and over seven million children living in poverty, according to a study released this week by UNICEF. — Reuters

Political turmoil threatens Thailand's struggling economy

BANGKOK: The political turmoil unleashed by the dismissal of Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin is likely to deal another blow to the already struggling economy, where millions of people drowning in debt have been waiting for long-delayed cash handouts.

Southeast Asia's second largest economy grew 1.5 percent in the first quarter of 2024 compared to a year earlier, slowing from the prior quarter's 1.7 percent expansion and lagging regional peers.

The tourism-dependent country of 66 million people has struggled to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and major growth engines, including an automobiles sector that is the largest in the region, are still spluttering. Tim Leelahaphan, senior economist at Standard Chartered Bank, said the political upheaval had cast doubts about the passage of the 3.75 trillion baht (\$107 billion) national budget for fiscal 2025, as well as the 500 billion baht nationwide cash handout that was a flagship Srettha policy.

"Political uncertainty and an unclear political outlook could have adverse implications for fiscal policy," he said. The caretaker deputy finance minister said on Thursday the budget would not be delayed.

Srettha's ouster by the constitutional court on Wednesday came a fortnight after his government opened registrations for a scheme to give away 10,000 baht to 50 million Thais, a key election promise of his Pheu Thai party. Over 16 million people had applied to receive the "digital wallet" handout on the day registrations opened, crashing the system but signaling huge demand for the controversial scheme among ordinary Thais hurting from the slowing

China tech giant Alibaba's profit shrinks 29%

BEIJING: Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba reported a 29 percent fall in quarterly profit on Thursday as it battles sluggish consumption during an economic slowdown. Net income attributable to shareholders came in at 24.3 billion yuan (\$3.3 billion) in the quarter ending



SAMUT PRAKAN, Thailand: A general view of the Bhumibol bridge (left) over the Chao Phraya river and an under-construction high-rise building (right) in the backdrop of Bangkok's skyline. — AFP

economy and high levels of personal debt.

Household debt stood at 16.4 trillion baht, or 90.8 percent of GDP, at the end of March, among the highest in Asia. The central bank, which had bickered with Srettha's administration over the scale of the handout, left its key interest rate unchanged at a more than decade-high of 2.50 percent for a fourth straight meeting in June. It is expected to hold the rate again when it meets on Aug. 21.

June 30, Alibaba said in a corporate filing, down from 34.3 billion yuan in the same period in 2023. Alibaba runs some of China's most popular e-commerce apps and its performance is widely considered an indicator of broader economic trends. China released another series of disappointing indicators on Thursday, despite recent government measures to boost growth.

Alibaba's revenue for the first quarter was 243.2 billion yuan, up four percent from the previous year.

But revenue from core shopping platforms Taobao and Tmall was down one percent, which Alibaba said was "primarily due to the increase in investments in user experience". "In this quarter, we continue to invest for

growth in our core businesses while reducing losses in other business units through operating efficiency," chief financial officer Toby Xu said in the filing.

Alibaba made \$5.8 billion of share repurchases in the first quarter, part of an effort to reassure investors amid narrowing profits. Its results contrasted starkly with rival shopping app operator JD.com, which announced a whopping 92.1 percent increase in profit for the past quarter.

Thursday's results come at a time when Alibaba is increasingly being challenged by Pinduoduo, another shopping app whose parent company owns internationally popular budget shopping app Temu. — AFP

Weekender

FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 2024



Turning

faces into canvases

Fouzeyah Allami's bold artistry in special effects makeup



By Faten Omar

With an innate talent for creativity and an eye for detail, Fouzeyah Allami transformed her passion into a profession where her face became her canvas. Allami, a 21-year-old professional special effects makeup artist, started her journey in 2012. At the age of nine, she started making wounds on her body using tissues, glue and items in the house to scare her brothers, until one day she bought professional makeup for it.



Kuwait Times: What inspired you to be a special effects makeup artist?
Fouzeyah Allami: I've loved drawing and creating artwork since the first grade. I often participated in art exhibitions and won first place. Art has been my passion since I was born, and I grew up in an artistic family, where every member specializes in something creative. My family, especially my mother, has been a significant source of inspiration. Over time, as I explored different forms of art, I discovered that special effects makeup is closest to my heart. I see my face as a blank canvas where I can express my emotions.

KT: What inspired you to pursue a career in special effects makeup artistry, especially in Kuwait?
Allami: I realized how rare this field is in Kuwait, and how difficult it is to find professionals in this area. That's why I'm doing my best to excel by taking on challenges, taking risks and being bold. This is what sets me apart.

KT: You were part of many plays and projects in Kuwait. Which project are you most proud of, and why?
Allami: The play Aladdin is very special to me because I had to transform the actor from a normal, innocent appearance to very evil features. I'm proud of how I was able to change him into a different person in less than an hour.

KT: Can you walk us through a typical day on set for a special effects makeup artist?
Allami: Typically, I start my day with coffee and then head to the makeup room to prepare the set. I begin by sanitizing everything, from products to brushes. Then, I start with soft glam makeup before moving on to the more complicated effects.



KT: What are some of the most challenging effects you've had to create?
Allami: One of the most challenging looks I created was when I turned my face into a cake. It took me six months to find the perfect materials to achieve this look. I needed to recreate whipped cream that wouldn't melt during shooting, and after much research, I discovered that bathroom silicone could work. I had to work quickly with it because it dries fast.

KT: How do you stay updated with the latest trends and techniques in special effects makeup?
Allami: TikTok, for sure!
KT: How do you ensure the safety and comfort of actors when applying complex effects makeup?
Allami: I ensure their safety and comfort by engaging them in conversation during the process, keeping them busy and relaxed.

KT: Can you share any memorable or funny moments from your work in the industry?

Allami: Once, I had to cosplay as Maleficent and spent hours making my face green with dramatic eyeshadow. I forgot I had a bridal makeup client in an hour. When she arrived, I was still in my Maleficent makeup, but she loved it! She was so happy with her bridal makeup — and mine too!

KT: How do you handle tight deadlines and high-pressure situations on set?
Allami: A year ago, I used to panic when I had six clients in a day. Now, I can do six clients in three hours because I believe in myself and don't let pressure affect me.



KT: What advice would you give to aspiring special effects makeup artists?
Allami: Be different. Be bold.

KT: What role do you think special effects makeup plays in enhancing storytelling in Kuwaiti cinema and theater?

Allami: Special effects makeup helps create the visual appearance of characters, making them more believable to the audience. It can transform actors, making them appear older, younger or more glamorous.

KT: Are there any particular Kuwaiti films, shows, or events that you would love to work on?
Allami: I'm currently working as the head makeup artist at The Museum Co, which is my dream job. I get to do fantasy makeup for my favorite fictional characters for The Museum shows and cosplayers.

KT: What are your future goals or projects you're excited about?
Allami: I've been working on my beauty line, and I'm excited to launch it.





The serene charm of Bnaider



Visual storytelling: Young Kuwaiti photographers capture the hidden beauty of Kuwait

By Mohamed AIDakheel

In an effort to showcase the often-overlooked beauty of Kuwait, Bnaider book offers a fresh perspective on the local landscape through a carefully curated collection of photographs. Abdulaziz AlEssa, 19, and Lulu AlAbdulmoghni, 20, aimed to fill a gap in visual representation with a focus on the serene elegance of Bnaider - an area known for its tranquil beauty but seldom captured in print.

AlEssa told Kuwait Times that his mission was to show Kuwait's beauty as its people experience it. "Something we felt was missing when compared to the pictorial richness available in similar books from other countries," he said. This sentiment fueled their dedication to the project, driving them to spend five years gathering and selecting images that not only depict the landscape but also tell the story of the community residing within it.

The process involved more than just photography. AlEssa and AlAbdulmoghni immersed themselves in the community, engaging with locals and exploring the nuances of daily life in Bnaider. Each image in Bnaider book is the result of this deep engagement, chosen not only for its aesthetic value but for its ability to convey a sense of place and moment.



(From left) Abdulaziz AlEssa, Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and Lulu AlAbduloghni with their book.

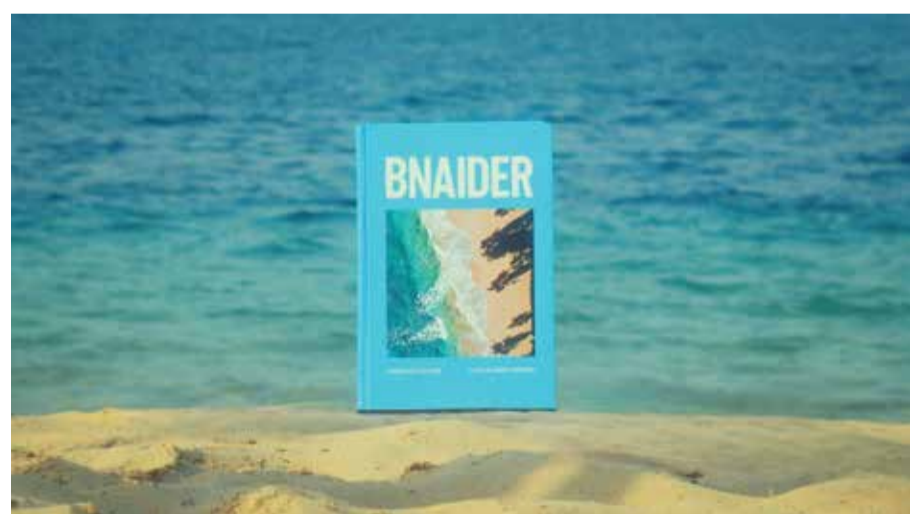
er mission: Documenting and preserving the visual beauty of the area. "In a world that's constantly changing and moving at a rapid pace, the chalet has always remained the same. We hope it always stays that way and that this book serves as a lasting piece of inspiration for future generations to keep the

preciate the thoughtful representation and the recognition of their everyday surroundings as worthy of artistic attention. The book has sparked conversations about the importance of local culture and has encouraged others to take a closer look at their own environments.

As Bnaider book continues to circulate, both creators are hopeful about its impact. They believe that this project will inspire other Kuwaiti photographers and storytellers to undertake similar endeavors, each adding their unique voice to the collective narrative of Kuwait's diverse regions.

The launch of Bnaider book is not just a culmination of years of hard work but the beginning of a new chapter in the appreciation of Kuwait's natural and cultural landscapes. It stands as a celebration of beauty found in everyday settings, encouraging everyone to explore and appreciate the subtleties of their environments.

This visual journey highlights Bnaider's unique charm and serves as a reminder of the power of photography to capture and preserve the world around us, because every captured frame is a safeguard against time - a precious keepsake that turns fleeting moments into eternal memories.



Reflecting on the selection process, AlAbdulmoghni said: "We didn't just want to fill the book with pictures; we wanted to fill it with narratives that resonate with anyone who looks at them, whether they're from Kuwait or not. Bnaider book is not merely a coffee table book; it's a story." The book also addresses a broad-

Bnaider spirit thriving," AlAbdulmoghni said. This aspect of documentation is crucial to ensure that the essence and beauty of Bnaider endure amidst the inevitable changes of the world.

Community response to Bnaider book has been overwhelmingly positive. Residents of the affluent area ap-





FROM CLASSROOM TO NEWSROOM

10 aspiring journalists reflect on positive experiences of interning at Kuwait Times



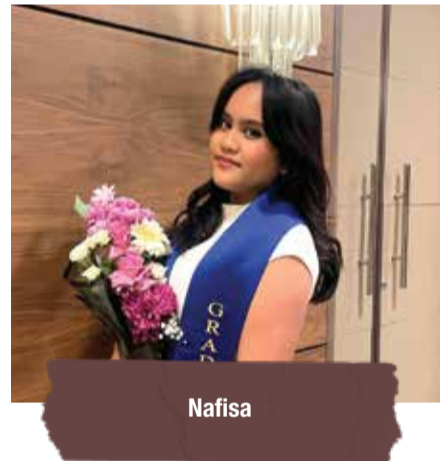
Kuwait Times warmly invites those interested in experiencing the dynamics behind the scenes of a daily newspaper to join its team, nurturing talent and supporting an inclusive environment for all for learning and growth in journalism. In the spirit of showcasing these experiences, Kuwait Times spoke with 10 individuals who were part of the team. Here's what they had to share:



Ghanima reflected fondly on her time at Kuwait Times, highlighting the excitement of each day and the valuable lessons learned. She particularly emphasized her growth in managing pressure and time constraints, crucial skills sharpened under the guidance of Nebal Snan, editor at Kuwait Times, during editing sessions. Ghanima also overcame initial nervousness about public interviews with support from fellow interns and mentors, which ultimately boosted her confidence in front of the camera.



Ali shared his challenge of navigating confidentiality policies while gathering information for articles, a hurdle he overcame with guidance from colleagues on crafting effective questions and leveraging obtained information.



Nafisa recommended aspiring interns to reach out directly to current team members via social media or email, recounting how she secured her internship through such proactive engagement with Passant Hisham, a reporter tagged in Kuwait Times' Instagram posts. Her advice underscored the friendly and supportive atmosphere among the staff.

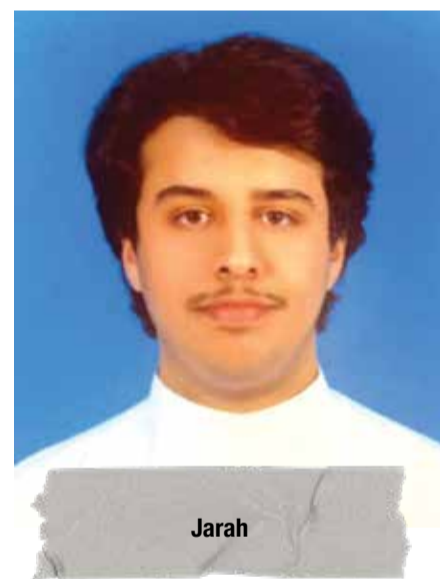


Mohsina shared her deepened appreciation for responsible journalism during her internship, where she immersed herself in rigorous fact-checking and research processes. Her experience underlined the importance of integrity and accuracy in media, crucial for promoting trust with the audience.

Ahmed highlighted Kuwait Times' inclusive culture, an expectation he held for a newspaper of its stature given its wealth of knowledge. He found it engaging to interact with diverse viewpoints, appreciating the immersive and welcoming environment as an intern. Ahmed felt valued by the staff, noting the newspaper's notable diversity not only in backgrounds but also in perspectives. He described the atmosphere as relaxed and open-minded, where his time was an enlightening introduction to the intricacies of reporting. Ahmed also expressed a profound sense of pride seeing his work published in a newspaper that reaches across the country, highlighting the gratification of contributing to public discourse and receiving recognition for his efforts.



Munirah detailed her learning journey at Kuwait Times, where she absorbed media ethics and professionalism through insightful conversations with seasoned journalists. She also stressed on the impact of editorial guidelines and reading her colleagues' work, which deepened her understanding of journalistic nuances.



Jarah found his internship inspiring, offering valuable insights into Kuwait's media landscape and the process behind news production.



Rashid described his time at Kuwait Times as both enjoyable and enriching, appreciating the hands-on experience of writing articles and columns under the supportive guidance of the team.

Aaron expressed gratitude for the opportunity to intern at Kuwait Times, noting how it enhanced his confidence and provided invaluable networking opportunities. He appreciated gaining insights into the intricate workings of a media organization, an experience that solidified his pursuit of a career in journalism.



Last but certainly not least, whose journey from curious intern to dedicated team member at Kuwait Times encapsulates the enriching experiences shared by all, is **Passant**. Now a full-time reporter at Kuwait Times, she recalled her initial curiosity and subsequent deep dive into the complexities of journalism. She appreciated the nurturing environment that encouraged learning at her own pace, noting the ongoing support from colleagues as she transitioned into a more committed role within the organization.



WHAT'S ON IN KUWAIT

Event: Intuitive abstract painting
Location: Art Space - The Scientific Center
Date: August 16, 2024

Event: Cartoon World workshop
Location: Al-Tijaria Tower - 2nd floor
Date: August 16-17, 2024

Event: Thai cooking class
Location: Cooking Club in Messila
Date: August 17, 2024

Event: Lighting and shadows in portrait photography
Location: AAB World Academy
Date: August 17, 2024

Event: Resin workshop
Location: Mall 55
Date: August 17, 2024

Event: Kids Club Art
Location: Q8 Popup Studio
Date: August 17, 2024

Event: Early morning paddle
Location: Argan Bida'a Resort
Date: August 17, 2024

Mbappe strikes on debut as Madrid beat Atalanta in UEFA Super Cup

French superstar has waited for years to play for his dream club



WARSAW: Real Madrid's team celebrates with the trophy after the UEFA Super Cup football match between Real Madrid and Atalanta BC in Warsaw. — AFP

WARSAW: Kylian Mbappe enjoyed a "great night" as he struck on his Real Madrid debut to help his new side claim a record sixth UEFA Super Cup with a 2-0 win over Atalanta on Wednesday in Warsaw. The superstar French forward has waited years to play for his dream club and after finally signing for Los Blancos this summer at the end of his Paris Saint-Germain deal, celebrated his first appearance with a goal.

Fede Valverde broke the deadlock from close range for the Champions League holders in the 59th minute after the Italian Europa League winners held their own in the first half. Madrid began to rack up the chances and Mbappe rifled home in the 68th minute after Jude Bellingham spotted his dart into space in the box to seal the victory.

"It was a great night, I've been waiting for this moment for a long time, to play with this shirt, with this badge, for these fans," Mbappe told Movistar, speaking in fluent Spanish. Madrid's triumph ensured coach Carlo Ancelotti equalled former Los Blancos coach Miguel Munoz on a joint-record 14

titles won at the helm of the club.

The Italian's first task this season is designing a system that can get the best out of his array of attacking stars. Mbappe began through the middle of Madrid's forward line, flanked by Vinicius Junior on the left and Rodrygo Goes on the right, in the first look at how he might fit into Ancelotti's plans this season.

As a result England international Bellingham played as part of the midfield trio rather than in the advanced position he began last season in to such devastating goalscoring effect. "Mbappe has the quality to score a lot of goals," Ancelotti told Movistar.

"What we have to look for is balance in the team — today we didn't have that balance." Mbappe's only chance in a tight first half arrived in the 15th minute but his shot from the middle of the box was well blocked by Isak Hien.

Gian Piero Gasperini's Atalanta, appearing in their first Super Cup after stunning Bayer Leverkusen in the Europa League final last season, came close to taking the lead when Eder Militao headed Marten de Roon's cross ahead his own bar.

Bellingham was booked for a late challenge on Atalanta goalkeeper Juan Musso on a foray forward from midfield after taking a heavy touch to control a clever ball from Vinicius. Rodrygo clipped the top of Atalanta's crossbar just before the break after being teed up by Vinicius. Madrid stopper Thibaut Courtois, who missed most of last season injured, produced a stunning one-handed save to tip over a Mario Pasalic header at the start of the second half.

Mbappe movement

Madrid broke the deadlock before the hour mark through Valverde, tapping home from close range while Atalanta's defence worried about Mbappe, who was moving with more freedom. Bellingham, increasingly influential, fed Vinicius, who cut the ball across goal for the Uruguayan midfielder to tap home.

Valverde, wearing the number eight shirt vacated by Toni Kroos who retired this summer, said he was "tremendously proud". "It's motivating to inherit the number of a player I admire a lot, I dedicate the goal to him and to my wife," said Valverde.

Vinicius should have doubled Madrid's lead when sent through on goal but Musso tipped over his effort. Swedish defender Hien blocked from Bellingham as Madrid sought a second and then Musso thwarted the former Borussia Dortmund man.

Mbappe eventually delivered it with a lethal finish after Bellingham, named player of the match, kept an attack alive and spotted the Frenchman's clever movement. The 25-year-old striker was given an ovation by Madrid's fans after Ancelotti brought him off in the 83rd minute, likely the first of many.

Mbappe said that he expected to improve in the weeks ahead, with Madrid's La Liga campaign starting on Saturday against Real Mallorca. "I am sure we will get better and me first of all — but today is a positive step," added the striker. Rodrygo said Ancelotti had told the forwards to shift their positions frequently, something evident in the second half. "The coach asked us to go changing positions a lot, or staying apart," the Brazilian told Movistar. "They were man marking, so we had to move and that's what happened during the game." — AFP

Sinner, Swiatek survive challenges over qualifiers

CINCINNATI: Cincinnati Masters top seeds Jan-nik Sinner and Iga Swiatek both secured opening triumphs Wednesday over qualifiers, with Swiatek forced to escape an attempted second-round ambush by France's Varvara Gracheva.

WTA world number one Swiatek needed six match points and more than two hours to escape with a 6-0, 6-7 (8/10), 6-2 victory to start the last major event prior to the US Open. ATP number one Sinner fought off eight break points as the top seed began the Cincinnati Open with a 6-4, 7-5 triumph over US qualifier Alex Michelsen.

Swiatek ran away with the opening set in 22 minutes but could not close out when leading 5-2 in the second. The 62nd-ranked Gracheva saved five match points and converted on her own fifth set point to take the match into a third set. Swiatek regained her poise to finally pull out the unexpectedly tight win to reach the third round. "It was not easy to finish in the second set," Swiatek said. "She started playing with freedom, with nothing to lose."

"I backed down a bit and she used her chances. I'm happy I got more proactive in the third set and played more intense," Swiatek said she kept her self-belief. "I knew I had the game to win it — I did have five match points," she said. "It was my fault that I didn't close it

out, but that happens. "I was able to play the third like I did at the start of the match. I don't want any regrets. I'm only looking forward. I'm in a peaceful place and I'm playing without expectations." Italy's Sinner, who turns 23 on Friday, has never been past the third round at the American Midwest venue but is hoping to improve on that showing this week.

Victory in just under two hours marked the 25th on hardcourt this season for Sinner, who was the first man into the third round. The top seed has not lost before the quarter-final stage of any event since Masters 1000 Shanghai last October. Teenaged opponent Michelsen went down with 42 unforced errors, his winner count of 14 exactly half of Sinner's total. "It was a tough match," Sinner said. "I needed to start feeling the conditions and getting used to them."

"I'm very happy to be into the next round. I've struggled here in past years. But today I stayed positive and that helped in the win." Sinner, who missed the Paris Olympics with tonsillitis and went out last week in the Montreal quarter-finals, said he was not at his best. "I'm not yet at 100%, but the main goal is the US Open," he said. "I have one week (after Cincinnati) to prepare in the best possible way. "The matches I can play here will help at the Open."

Sinner next plays Australian Jordan Thompson, a 6-2, 6-4 winner over Sebastian Baez.

Medvedev eliminated

Former world number one Daniil Medvedev was ousted in his second-round match, the fourth seed falling to 22-year-old Czech Jiri Lehecka 7-6 (7/2), 6-4. Medvedev also fell in the first round last week at Montreal. Ninth seed Stefano Tsitsipas played for the first time since splitting last week with his father



MASON: Iga Swiatek of Poland serves during her match against Varvara Gracheva of France during Day 4 of the Cincinnati Open at the Lindner Family Tennis Center. — AFP

as coach, with the Greek turning the tables in dramatic fashion to reach the second round 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 over Jan-Lennard Struff.

Norwegian seventh seed Casper Ruud will next face Felix Auger-Aliassime after his 6-3, 6-1 win over US qualifier Aleksandar Kovacevic. Monday's Montreal champion, Australian Alexei Popyrin, lost his opening match to France's Gael Monfils 7-5, 6-3.

Dane Holger Rune beat Matteo Berrettini 2-6, 6-1,

6-4, ending the Italian's 10-match win streak that included clay titles in Gstaad and Kitzbuehel. Briton Jack Draper worked for more than two and a half hours to stop Spain's Jaume Munar 7-5, 3-6, 7-6 (7/5).

Paula Badosa joined boyfriend Tsitsipas in the second round after defeating Cincinnati local Peyton Stearns 6-2, 7-5. Washington winner Badosa next plays 13th seed Anna Kalinskaya, a 1-6, 6-2, 6-3 comeback winner against Katerina Siniakova. — AFP