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Amir calls for good governance

New ministers take constitutional oath before Sheikh Mishal



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, with the attendance of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, receives HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah and four newly appointed ministers on Aug 26, 2024. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Four newly appointed ministers took the constitutional oath on Monday before HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who urged them to place national interests "above all" and help improve government performance. HH the Amir also called on the four ministers to help face challenges to achieve the aspirations of the Kuwaiti people and work hard to find practical solutions to all issues.

The four ministers were added to the Cabinet on Sunday, while two ministers were dropped in the first reshuffle of the government formed in May after HH the Amir suspended the National Assembly. The new ministers include Noura Al-Fassam

as finance minister, replacing Anwar Al-Mudhaf, who served in the Cabinet for just over seven months. They also include Khalifa Al-Ajeel as a new minister of commerce and industry, replacing Omar Al-Omar, who stayed in the Cabinet as minister of state for communications affairs.

Nader Al-Jallal, minister of higher education, and Abdullatif Al-Meshari, minister of state for housing and minister of state for municipality affairs, also took the oath before HH the Amir. Jallal replaces outgoing education and higher education minister Adel Al-Adwani. The reshuffle also affected the portfolios of five other ministers. The Cabinet membership increased to 15, in addition to HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwait plans 5G-A rollout

KUWAIT: The Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority introduced Monday new frequencies to prepare for the rollout of the 5G-Advanced network, which provides the world's most sophisticated communications services. Acting CITRA Chairman Abdullah Al-Ajmi revealed Kuwait will phase out 3G services by June 2025 and redirect resources to enhance and expand 4G and 5G services. He added 5G-A technology will bolster the country's leadership in adopting the latest technologies. — KUNA (See Page 2)

MEW warns of power cuts

KUWAIT: The ministry of electricity, water and renewable energy said on Monday that power cuts might occur in non-residential areas due to emergency repairs at some power-generating stations. — KUNA

Five held for smuggling drugs

KUWAIT: The public prosecution said on Monday it interrogated five suspects for smuggling drugs and sent them to jail pending further investigations. Three of the men are Kuwaitis, including two airport customs officers, one of whom allegedly accepted a bribe of KD 10,000 to facilitate the entry of the drugs into the country.

Ex-minister referred to court

KUWAIT: A former minister was referred to the criminal court on Monday over allegations of corruption amounting to over KD 4 million. Trial is expected to begin as early as next week.

Gang forging iqamas arrested

KUWAIT: The interior ministry arrested a gang involved in selling forged residencies and other illicit activities, it said on Monday. Investigating teams apprehended three individuals — Kuwaiti, Egyptian and Lebanese — who were involved in selling and falsifying residencies under the guise of a goods transportation company. The so-called company was recruited "employees" among laborers in the country, transferring residencies to issue driving licenses. — KUNA

Kuwait signs 15-year Qatar gas deal



KUWAIT: (Left) HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Qatari Minister of State for Energy Affairs and Managing Director and CEO of QatarEnergy Saad Al-Kaabi on Aug 26, 2024. (Right) KPC CEO Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah and Kaabi shake hands during a signing ceremony at KPC headquarters on Aug 26, 2024. — KUNA



By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: In a significant move that underscores the strength of the energy sector in the region, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and QatarEnergy announced their second long-term sales and purchase agreement for the supply of up to 3 million tons per year of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Kuwait, which was signed on Monday. Building on the foundation laid by their initial agreement signed in

2020, this new contract solidifies the ongoing strategic cooperation between the two companies and further strengthens the future of energy cooperation between the two nations.

The agreement aims to leverage the strengths and expertise of both companies and addresses the growing global demand for cleaner energy solutions. Through this deal, KPC seeks to transition towards cleaner energy sources through LNG use, which will help reduce emissions and improve domestic air

quality. In addition, it will secure a stable supply of energy resources while meeting Kuwait's growing energy demand in the power sector.

KPC CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah stated: "This second long-term agreement with QatarEnergy within a short period of time confirms our long-standing collaboration with our Qatari brethren to provide a cleaner source of energy plays in line with our Energy Transition 2050 strategy."

Continued on Page 6

73 killed after militant attacks in Balochistan

QUETTA: At least 73 people were killed in Pakistan's province of Balochistan when separatist militants attacked police stations, railway lines and highways and security forces launched retaliatory operations, officials said on Monday. The assaults were the most widespread in years by ethnic militants fighting a decades-long insurgency to win secession of the resource-rich southwestern province, home to major China-led projects such as a port and a gold and copper mine.

"These attacks are a well thought-out plan to create anarchy in Pakistan," Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said in a statement. Pakistan's military said 14 soldiers and police and 21 militants were killed in fighting after the largest of the attacks, which targeted buses and trucks on a major highway.

Balochistan's chief minister said 38 civilians were also killed. Local officials said 23 of them were killed in the roadside attack after armed men checked passengers' IDs before shooting many of them and torching vehicles. "People were taken off buses and



QUETTA: A man mourns the death of his father, who died in a separatist militant attack, at a hospital on Aug 26, 2024. — AFP

killed in front of their families," Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti said in a televised press conference.

In Musakhail district, between 30 and 40 gunmen stopped 22 buses, vans and trucks one after the other on a highway connecting Punjab with Balochistan, senior official Najibullah Kakar said. "Vehicles traveling to and from Punjab were inspected, and individuals from Punjab were identified and shot," he told AFP.

Rail traffic with Quetta was suspended following blasts on a rail bridge linking the provincial capital to the rest of Pakistan. Militants also struck a rail link to neighboring Iran, railways official Muhammad Kashif said.

Continued on Page 6

Gazans flee new Zionist evacuation orders amid strikes

CAIRO/GAZA: The Zionist entity issued new evacuation orders for Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip late on Sunday, forcing more families to flee, saying its forces intended to act against Hamas and others operating in the area. In recent days, the Zionist entity has issued several evacuation orders across Gaza, the most since the beginning of the war, prompting an outcry from Palestinians, the United Nations and relief officials over the reduction of humanitarian zones and the absence of safe areas.

The Zionist military campaign has killed at least 40,435 people in Gaza, mostly women and children. More than 10 months of war have left large parts of Gaza in ruins, ravaged its healthcare system and sparked a dire humanitarian crisis and warnings of famine. A batch of polio vaccines entered Gaza on Sunday, Zionist authorities said.

Continued on Page 6



Local

Kuwait-based high school students secure patent for healthcare robot

V-Doc has the potential to impact millions around the world

KUWAIT: In a groundbreaking leap for healthcare, a group of high school students may have just developed a solution to one of India's most pressing challenges: the lack of rural health infrastructure. Their innovative project, V-Doc (Village Doctor), has the potential to impact millions in India and around the world. While the obvious benefits of providing basic healthcare services to millions across the country and ensuring regular health checkups are already revolutionary, V-Doc offers much more.

The project aims to enhance government health records by building individual health profiles, provide regular access to medication in isolated communities, improve epidemic detection and control by monitoring vital health data from entire communities, and allow for early detection of chronic lifestyle diseases. Behind V-Doc are four Grade 12 students: Fadel Kandapath, Zaid Aboobacker, Adnan Sabeer and Ali Hamza Ahmad - the teenage masterminds behind this project poised to transform rural healthcare delivery. The team recently secured their first patent, marking a significant milestone in their journey.

At the heart of their project is the Biomedical Autonomous Rural Medic, or BARM. This cutting-edge robot is equipped with an array of medical sensors designed to autonomously gather vital health data, including temperature, blood pressure, lung capacity, pulse, blood oxygen levels, height and weight. But BARM doesn't stop there; it can also process and forward blood and urine samples for further testing, providing comprehensive diagnostics in areas with limited healthcare access.



Adnan Sabeer



Zaid Aboobacker



Ali Hamza Ahmad



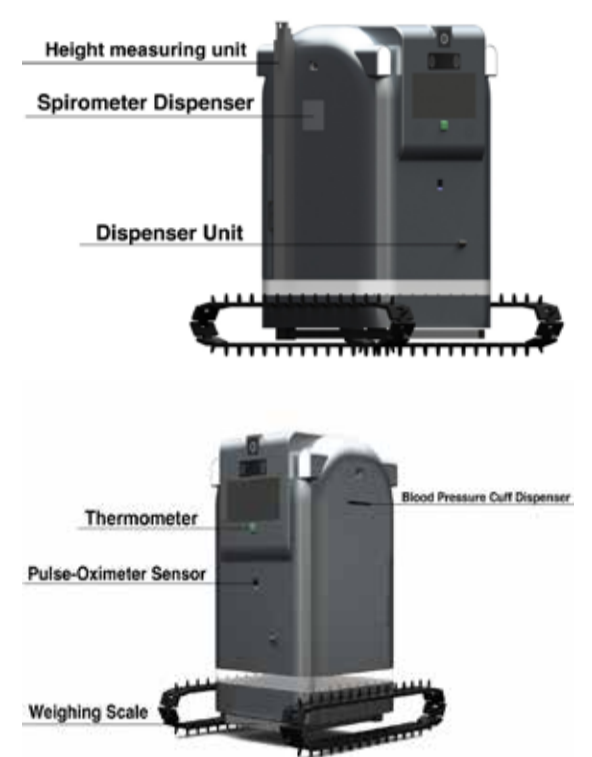
Fadel Kandapath

What sets BARM apart is its ability to navigate rural settings independently. Using a combination of stereo cameras, 3D and 2D LIDARs, HD cameras, and an inertial measurement unit, the robot can move around villages, conducting regular check-ups on residents. It pays particular attention to the elderly and chronically ill, ensuring that the most vulnerable members of rural communities receive consistent medical attention.

The journey of V-Doc began at a science & technology event in Kuwait, where the students were studying at the time. Competing in the open category against professionals, their initial prototype, though rudimentary, secured third place. This achievement sparked the group's interest,

eventually evolving into the full-fledged V-Doc project. Recognizing the potential of their innovation, each student took on a distinct role to drive the project forward.

Fadel, the lead design engineer, focused on creating detailed CAD models and drafting the technical documents necessary for the patent. Zaid, the business director, managed crucial contacts — including the patent agent — and conceptualized the ecosystem surrounding their invention. Adnan translated the 3D CAD models into patent sketches and ensured proper formatting for the patent application. Ali, the procurement manager, sourced the sensors and hardware needed to bring BARM to life. Their hard work



and dedication paid off on July 27, 2024, when they secured their first patent. Currently, the team is in the developmental stage and actively seeking funding to bring their vision to life.

Center organizes 'First Gulf Law and Arbitration Week'

MANAMA: The Gulf Commercial Arbitration Center announced on Monday that it will organize the "First Gulf Law and Arbitration Week" during the period from January 26 to 30, 2025, in Bahrain, with strategic participation from the Federation of Gulf Chambers, the Gulf Engineering Union, the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority, and LexisNexis, a global publishing, information, and legal analysis company.

Secretary General of the Gulf Commercial Arbitration Center, Dr Kamal Al-Hamad, said in a press statement that the first law and arbitration week for the GCC countries, which will be held over five days, includes more than 20 dialogue sessions in which more than 30 leading figures will speak. He added that it will also include honoring the most prominent Gulf figures who served the law, commercial judiciary, arbitration, advocacy, and legal affairs sectors from the legislative, executive, and judicial authorities in the GCC countries in appreciation of their efforts.

Al-Hamad explained that the ministers of the GCC countries, most notably the ministers of energy, transport, investment, trade, finance, and housing, were addressed to shed light on major and gigantic projects in all sectors, especially the energy, transport, logistics, real estate, and urban development sectors, to participate in the week's activities and events. Senior executives from the public and private sectors and a group of legal experts from the International Bar Association, the World Bank, and global arbitration centers were also addressed as keynote speakers.

He considered that this step is a new start for the center after its recent celebration of the 30th anniversary of its establishment, as it is expected that no less than 1,000 international leaders in law and arbitration will participate to support and localize the arbitration industry in the GCC countries. Al-Hamad considered that this event aims to bring together specialists in economics and investment in addition to law, scholarly arbitrators, and industry leaders from the GCC countries.

This historic event comes as a pivotal forum to enhance the investment and economic environment through cooperation and exchange of knowledge and addressing the unique legal challenges within the GCC for investors and businessmen from the G20 countries. In this regard, he stressed the importance of the pioneering role played by the Gulf Commercial Arbitration Center in creating a regulatory and attractive environment for investment through settling disputes, spreading the arbitration culture, and facilitating the practice of business in the Gulf region.

Al-Hamad stated that the center provides all judicial guarantees to protect and encourage investments, which would enhance the safe investment climate in the Gulf countries, facilitate the business environment, and support local and foreign investors to operate their businesses and expand their investments.

The Gulf Commercial Arbitration Center was established in 1993 with the aim of settling commercial disputes that arise between Gulf-Gulf or Gulf-foreign parties operating within any of the GCC countries, provided that both disputing parties agree to resort to arbitration. The center, which is headquartered in the Bahraini capital, Manama, began its operations to support the growing commercial sector in the region in 1995. — KUNA



Officials take a group photo. — KUNA photos

CITRA launches new frequencies, targets 5G tech

KUWAIT: The Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) announced on Monday the launch of new frequencies in preparation for the inauguration of the advanced fifth generation (5G-A) technology, which is the latest and highest-level technology in the



An experimental broadcast of the advanced fifth generation technology.

telecommunications network sector.

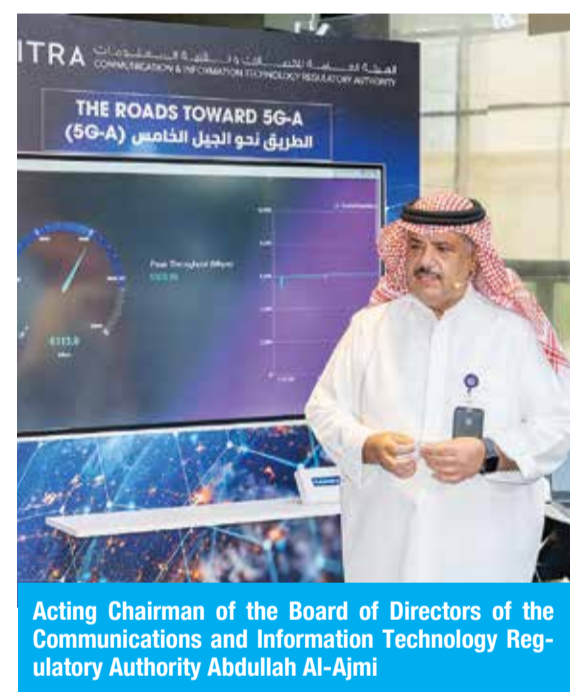
Acting Chairman of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) Abdullah Al-Ajmi said in a press statement during a trial show organized by the Authority to launch these frequencies that the third generation telecommunications network services will be stopped within a maximum period of June



2025 and that they will be used to support and develop fourth and fifth generation telecommunications technologies.

Al-Osaimi added that the advanced fifth-generation technology will enhance the state's leadership position in adopting the latest modern technological developments and represents a qualitative leap in supporting contemporary digital services, applications, and continuous improvement of the user experience of mobile telecommunications network services.

He explained that this modern technology will support increasing the capacities of mobile telecommunications networks, allowing a larger number of fifth-generation subscribers to enjoy



Acting Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority Abdullah Al-Ajmi

high-quality services, noting that this technology is a step towards enabling the use of modern applications related to the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, 3D video, and cloud services.

He pointed out that these developments will support the needs and applications of smart cities and facilitate the transfer of data at ultra-high speeds in future projects, reaching 10 gigabits per second, thus benefiting various government, industrial, and commercial sectors, in addition to individuals. Al-Ajmi said that users can experience the advanced fifth-generation technology for three days at the Burj Al-Hamra Mall opposite Gate No 5. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Vehicles drive during a heavy dust storm in Kuwait City on August 26, 2024. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



New ministers take constitutional oath



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, with the attendance of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who presented their highnesses with the newly appointed ministers. The Ministers took the constitutional oath on occasion of their appointments. They include: Khalifa Abdullah

Dhahi Al-Ajeel swore in as Minister of Commerce and Industry; Abdullatif Hamed Hamad Al-Meshari (Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs); Dr Nader Abdullah Mohammad Al-Jallal (Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Acting Minister of Education) and Noura Suleiman Al-Fassam (Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs). — KUNA



Noura Suleiman Al-Fassam



Khalifa Abdullah Dhahi Al-Ajeel



Abdullatif Hamed Hamad Al-Meshari



Dr Nader Abdullah Mohammad Al-Jallal

MoH underscores role of nutritionists

Ministry of Health enhances level of healthcare



Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi receives a delegation from the Nutrition Workers Association.

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi stressed keenness to provide the necessary support to workers in the field of therapeutic nutrition and feeding, which contributes to improving the quality of health services provided to citizens and residents in Kuwait. In a press statement on Monday, after receiving a delegation from the Union of Nutrition Workers in the public and private sectors, Minister Al-Awadhi expressed his deep appreciation for the prominent role played by nutritionists.

He pointed out the importance of studying the proposals submitted by the union and working to enhance cooperation between all concerned parties to achieve common goals in improving the level of health care. During the meeting, which was attended by the Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Munther Al-Hasawi's views were exchanged on issues related to the profession of therapeutic nutrition, and emphasis was placed on the vital role of nutritionists in promoting community health and preventing diseases.

Specialized Dental Center

In another development, the Minister of Health af-



Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi takes a group photo during the inspection tour. — KUNA photos



Part of the inspection tour of Al-Jahra Specialized Dental Center.

firming the Ministry's interest in enhancing the level of health care in all specialized centers, stressing the need to join efforts to overcome existing challenges and improve health services provided in line with the aspirations of citizens and residents in the country. This came in a statement by Minister Al-Awadhi

following an inspection tour of Al-Jahra Specialized Dental Center on Monday, accompanied by Assistant Undersecretary for Dental Affairs Dr Ahmad Asad, as part of his keenness to follow up on the progress of work in specialized health facilities and closely monitor the level of services provided to visitors.

Al-Awadhi stressed the importance of overcoming obstacles that hinder the daily workflow, affirming the Ministry's keenness to support medical and technical cadres and provide all necessary supplies to ensure the provision of high-quality health services. He pointed out the need to place the needs of visitors at the forefront of the Ministry's priorities and work to meet their requirements to ensure the provision of an integrated and distinguished health service.

The minister began his tour by meeting with the medical, technical, and administrative staff at the center, where he reviewed the achievements made by the center in addition to the challenges facing the medical and administrative staff in performing their duties to the fullest extent. He also conducted a field tour inside the center's various departments, where he interacted with visitors and listened to their comments and suggestions about the services provided. He also met with a number of employees working at the center and listened to their opinions about the work environment and the challenges they face in providing health care. — KUNA

Abu Dhabi Ports, TASNEEF open 2 offices in Kuwait

KUWAIT: The Abu Dhabi Ports and the Emirates Classification Society (TASNEEF) announced on Monday the opening of two offices in Kuwait (SAFEEN-Kuwait) and (TASNEEF Maritime) to enhance maritime transportation cooperation, facilitate trade flow, and develop logistical services in the region. On this occasion, UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Matar Al-Neyadi said, in a ceremony held by the UAE embassy, that the opening of the two offices aims to achieve the vision and aspiration of wise leaderships of both countries.

He continued that this step is meant to enhance cooperation and integration in various fields and strengthen economic and investment relations by improving the connectivity between local, regional, and international markets. Al-Neyadi praised the efforts of Abu Dhabi Ports Group and TASNEEF in entering the Kuwaiti market and taking advantage of the benefits that this market offers, providing distinguished and diverse services to local, regional, and international clients and traders.

Noting that SAFEEN-Kuwait office is part of AD Ports Group, which is a major driver of global trade. Industry and logistics services, as it includes key business sectors such as ports, economic cities, free zones, maritime and shipping services, as well as logistics and digital services. With SAFEEN as the first office in AD Group in the Gulf Cooperation Council states, he mentioned that the group has expanded its global markets, opening in 50 countries with a portfolio of more than 33 international ports and terminals.



Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Kuwait Dr Matar Hamed Al-Neyadi

He said that UAE hosts many Kuwaiti companies invested in various sectors, as UAE's markets are open to increasing these investments with the private sector in Kuwait. He expressed his wishes to advance the maritime and logistics sectors to new levels of prosperity, progress, and leadership, which represent the backbone of global trade. On his part, the Executive Vice President of the Emirates Classification Society, Waleed Al Tamimi, said in a press release that Kuwait is the second market to enter after Indonesia, highlighting Kuwait's importance as fertile ground for opportunities and achievements.

The Abu Dhabi Ports Group was established in 2006 and specializes in managing and operating local and international ports. The TASNEEF Maritime is one of the companies under the Emirates Classification Society, which was established in 2012 as the first Arab maritime classification society and is registered as one of the global organizations with the International Maritime Organization. — KUNA



Presentation by Emirates Classification Society. — KUNA photos



Part of the audience.

Local

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KISR creates unique environment to develop talents



Manager of the Energy Efficiency Technologies Program at KISR Dr Fotouh Al-Ragom

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) creates a unique environment and ground to develop science and talents in the country, said a KISR official on Monday. Speaking to KUNA, Manager of the Energy Efficiency Technologies Program at KISR Dr Fotouh Al-Ragom — who recently was chosen as the 2024 Association of Energy Engineers (AEE) Energy Managers Hall of Fame Inductee — said that this honor reflected Kuwaiti scientists' talents in the global arena.

She affirmed her great pride in being chosen by the American association, noting that the selection was based on her achievements in the field of energy management, whether in the field of research or invention. Dr Al-Ragom, who has many accolades, including a 2013 research on production hydrogen via separating water molecules through chemical means, indicated that KISR played a crucial role in allowing her to pursue science excellence through research and experimentation.

Such support would help in finding solutions to challenges facing the region and world within energy, water, and environment protection, which in turn would contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), she added. KISR had contributed immensely in decreasing the state's financial burdens, especially within power generation and lessening electrical grid overload in Kuwait, she said. Dr Al-Ragom stressed the need to boost the capabilities of KISR, taking strategic steps to increase the institute's budget and financially support research and development (R&D) budgets through public and private sector involvement and contribution. — KUNA

Kuwaiti researcher's report published in scientific journal

KUWAIT: A critical study of Al-Qasimi theater written by Kuwaiti researcher Nermin Youssef Al-Houti has been accepted for publication in the 19th edition of Interdisciplinary Research Studies and research in humanities' quarterly scientific journal of the American University of Beirut. Dr Nermin Al-Houti is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Dramatic Arts of Kuwait.



Nermin Youssef Al-Houti

Kuwaiti Rahma Charity inaugurates school for girls in Yemen

ADEN: Rahma Charity opened Idris School for girls in Yemen, Marib City, with a total cost of KD 330,000 donated through the Kuwait by Your Side campaign. Speaking to KUNA on Monday, CEO of Tawassul human development establishment, Raed Ibrahim, described the school as a two-story building with some 12 classrooms and facilities built over a 4,500 square meter land plot.

The project, overseen by Rahma International, holds a capacity of 1,000 students split in two periods, morning shift and night shift, he explained,

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: This picture shows a building housing the Central Bank of Kuwait headquarters (right) and the Kuwait's Grand Mosque - the largest mosque in the country (centre-right). — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait charity provides support, assistance to Rohingya refugees

Charitable Development Society, UNHCR ink deal



Tanmia Charity and UNHCR sign an agreement worth \$180,000 to help Rohingya refugees.



Officials take a group photo after signing of the agreement. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Charitable Development Society announced on Monday the signing of the fourth cooperation agreement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide support and assistance to Rohingya Muslim refugees, worth \$180,000. Chairman of the Society's Board of Directors, Dr Nasser Al-Ajmi, affirmed to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) the keenness on this humanitarian file for Rohingya Muslim refugees in cooperation and strategic partnership with the High Commissioner, which cares for 37 camps out of 44 refugee camps there.

Al-Ajmi said that the society has sought for the fourth consecutive year to contribute to providing basic requirements for refugees, most notably those related to health, securing shelter, drinking water, and distributing sewage stations in light of the spread of epidemics and diseases. He explained that the proceeds of previous and current agreements were able to meet the needs of 450,000 refugees out of 950,000 refugees, with a total amount estimated at \$1.1 million.

He added that Rohingya refugees do not only suffer from a refugee problem but also from hardship, praising the officials in the country for facilitating humanitarian missions to provide relief to those affected by crises and wars, as well as the cooperation of Kuwaiti charitable societies and organizations in delivering donations to those entitled to them.

For her part, UNHCR Representative in Kuwait Nisreen Rabiaan said in a similar statement to KUNA that the fourth agreement will meet the

needs of about 60,000 families of Rohingya Muslim refugees, adding that various aids for basic needs have been paid for. Rabiaan noted the pioneering role of Kuwait in providing relief to the world's afflicted, including the people in the Gaza Strip and Sudan, in addition to its interest in those affected by the crisis in Rohingya and other countries that need humanitarian and charitable support.

She stressed the commission's keenness to consolidate the relationship with the charitable sector in Kuwait, including Tanmia Charity, which is one of the most prominent donors and contributors through its office in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, in addition to the "Kuwait by Your Side" campaign, which includes various Kuwaiti associations and organizations, including the Charitable Organization, Kuwait Zakat House, Al-Rahma International, Namaa Charity, and other Kuwaiti charitable organizations.



Nisreen Rabiaan



Salma Al-Mutairi



Dr Nasser Al-Ajmi

In turn, the representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs in the Charitable Societies Department, Salma Al-Mutairi, confirmed the Ministry's keenness to provide support and remove obstacles facing the efforts of Kuwaiti charitable societies and organizations that dedicate the country's pioneering role in humanitarian affairs, especially cooperation between international bodies that would raise charitable work in the country.

Al-Mutairi pointed out that the Ministry continues to facilitate all Kuwaiti charitable works in cooperation with various official bodies, indicating that it recently issued licenses for two Kuwaiti charitable societies and a foundation with the aim of continuing charitable work. The signing of the agreement was attended by representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Ministry of Social Affairs, a number of Kuwaiti charitable societies and organizations, and those interested in humanitarian affairs. — KUNA



Opening of Idris School with Kuwait donation.



Australia gives workers 'right to disconnect'

Russia hits Ukraine's power grid

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DEIR EL-BALAH: Displaced Palestinians prepare to leave the perimeter of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip. — AFP photos

Gaza patients flee hospital after Zionist evacuation order

Zionist track record of attacking hospitals leaves Gazans in panic despite promises of safety

DEIR EL-BALAH: War-weary Palestinians on Monday pushed wheel-chair-bound and bed-ridden patients through the streets of central Gaza, evacuating a hospital in a frantic bid to stay ahead of feared Israeli bombardment.

The Zionist military had told people the day before to "evacuate immediately" a part of Deir el-Balah city because it planned to "act with force against Hamas and terrorist groups" there. Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital sits in the middle of the area described in the warning, setting in motion a rapid exodus even though the Zionist military said medical facilities would not be affected by its operations.

Speaking to AFP on Sunday from her hospital bed outside the facility, Tamam Al-Raei said she did not know where to seek safety. "I have a war injury, I have broken bones and have had an amputation, and I have been receiving treatment for that," she said. "But now they're telling us to evacuate Al-Aqsa. Where do we go? Where do I get treatment?"

All around her, families tried to flee, the wealthiest among them hiring donkey-drawn carts to transport their be-

longings. Others carried patients in their arms, including one teenager who had lost the use of his legs and was clutching a bag of intravenous fluid. The Zionist military said on Monday it was targeting "terror operatives" in Deir el-Balah and working to dismantle the "remaining terrorist infrastructure" of Hamas.

'Panic and fear'

"As part of these efforts, a temporary local evacuation of the population in eastern Deir el-Balah ... was carried out, for their protection," the military said in a statement. "It should be emphasized that the evacuation efforts did not include the evacuation of hospitals and medical facilities in the area." Gaza's hospitals have been raided by Zionist forces numerous times during their campaign to destroy Hamas. The entity has accused Hamas of using hospitals in Gaza as a cover for military operations, claims the militants have rejected.

Memories of past violence in and around hospitals made it difficult to reassure patients and medical workers that Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital would be

safe, said Gaza health ministry spokesman Khalil al-Daqran. "The citizens, patients and some of the medical crews were struck with panic and fear as a result of the announcement that the areas surrounding the hospital are operational areas," Daqran said. "Therefore, a large number of patients left the hospital."

'Nowhere to go'

Throughout Gaza, hospitals including Al-Aqsa Martyrs have faced crippling shortages of the fuel they need to function after the territory's only power plant went out of service and the Zionist entity cut the electricity supply in the early days of the war. Gaza's 2.4 million people, nearly all of whom have been displaced at least once, have only 16 hospitals still functioning, all of them partially. The health situation became even more dire after authorities this month announced Gaza's first polio case in 25 years.

Families fleeing Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital on Sunday were concerned primarily for their physical safety as they tried to adhere to repeated evacuation orders. "We have nowhere to go, we have no



A Palestinian medic prepares to evacuate premature babies from the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital following new Zionist evacuation orders.

refuge," Maha Al-Sarsak told AFP, describing how her family had already fled multiple cities before reaching the hospital, only to leave yet again. Iyad al-Jabir,

medical director of the hospital, said his teams were not going anywhere. "We are staying," he said. "We will continue to treat patients and the wounded." — AFP

Bedouin women recount harrowing attack by settlers

RAHAT: Lamis Al-Jaar says she can hardly sleep at night after hardline Zionist settlers violently assaulted her and four other members of her Bedouin family, sparking outcry across the country. On August 9, the 22-year-old got lost while driving with her young daughter, two sisters and a niece from the Bedouin city of Rahat in the south of the Zionist entity towards Nablus, a large Palestinian city in the occupied West Bank.

The women say that when they asked a man for directions, they unwittingly set in motion what Zionist police would later describe as a "serious attack"—one that heightened concerns about rising settler violence and spurred an outpouring of support for the family. The man they approached sent them down the wrong road, then blocked their car when they tried to turn around, allowing a dozen assailants to descend on the vehicle, throwing stones and brandishing weapons.

Lamis, a teacher's aide in a kindergarten, was certain she was going to die. She told AFP how one of the men threatened her daughter Elaf, just two and a half years old, "with the barrel" of his firearm. Her sister Raghda Al-Jaar, a 29-year-old assistant in a dentist's office, said the men shattered the car windows and sprayed its occupants with tear gas. Raghda recounted telling the assailants that she and her family were citizens of the Zionist entity, but when one of the men realized she was calling the police he threw a rock at her and shouted: "You will not leave here alive!"

Despite being outnumbered, the group managed to flee and were eventually rescued by Zionist police and soldiers. Police said they had "accidentally entered" Givat Ronen, an outpost of the Jewish settlement of Har Bracha, south of Nablus.

Religious nationalists

The area is run by members of the so-called hilltop youth, religious nationalists whose goal is settling all the biblical land of the Zionist entity, and who sometimes also clash with Zionist security forces. Bedouins in the Zionist entity are descendants of Muslim shepherds who once roamed freely across desert expanses far beyond the country's current borders.

Like other Arab minorities in the

Zionist entity, they say they often face discrimination. Rahat, where the Al-Jaar family lives, is home to one of the biggest concentrations of Bedouins. During the interview with AFP, which took place at the home of their father Adnan Al-Jaar, Lamis and Raghda described their injuries: fractured fingers and back pain for Lamis and a head injury for Raghda, whose left leg is also in a cast. Two days after the attack, Zionist President Isaac Herzog called Adnan Al-Jaar to tell him he was "shocked" by the violence and that "all citizens of (the Zionist entity) deserve equal and decent treatment", his office said.

Adnan Al-Jaar, a 59-year-old truck driver who like his daughters switches easily between Hebrew and Arabic, told AFP such outreach "makes us feel good", even though he fears the crime, like other instances of violence, could go unpunished. The police have so far announced the arrest of five suspects, four of whom remain in custody while the fifth is under house arrest.



WEST BANK: Zionist settlers walk outside a tent in the occupied West Bank in this file photo. — AFP

Chorus of support

The attack against the Al-Jaars occurred against the backdrop of worsening violence in the West Bank. Zionist settlements in the territory are illegal under international law, and the United Nations considers them an obstacle to peace with Palestinians. But settlements have grown under all governments, both left and right, after the Zionist entity occupied the West Bank in 1967, and they have increased significantly since the formation in December 2022 of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's current government.

Netanyahu appointed several far-right ministers who support the annexation of the entire West Bank, an agenda they have pursued even more aggressively since the outbreak of war between the Zionist entity and Hamas in the Gaza Strip on October 7. The violence meted out to the Al-Jaars nevertheless appears to have shaken the Zionist entity, and myriad voices have denounced it.

Centre-right opposition lawmaker Matan Kahana visited the Al-Jaar home to show solidarity, saying he was "reassured that the majority of the (Zionist) people condemn this act". Rabbi Benny Lau, known as a moderate Orthodox figure, posted a photo on Facebook of his meeting with Adnan Al-Jaar, accompanied by a message emphasizing the aspirations of "the millions ... who want to live together". Amit Segal, a television personality known for his right-wing views, condemned the remarks of a far-right parliamentarian whom he accused of colluding with "supporters of terrorism" by trying to shift blame for the August 9 attack onto the victims. — AFP

Zionist minister says would build synagogue at Al-Aqsa compound

JERUSALEM: A far-right Zionist minister sparked fresh outrage on Monday by saying he would build a synagogue at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque compound if he could, once again challenging government policy. National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir told Army Radio that if it were possible he would build a synagogue at the Al-Aqsa compound, known to Jews as the Temple Mount.

The Al-Aqsa compound is Islam's third holiest site and a symbol of Palestinian national identity, but it is also Judaism's holiest place, revered as the site of the second temple destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. "If I could do anything I wanted, I would put a (Zionist) flag on the site," Ben Gvir said in the interview.

Asked several times by the journalist if he would build a synagogue at the site if it were up to him, Ben Gvir finally replied: "Yes." Under the status quo maintained by Zionist authorities, Jews and other non-Muslims are allowed to visit the compound in Zionist-annexed east Jerusalem during specified hours, but they are not permitted to pray there or display religious symbols.

In recent years, the restrictions at the compound have been increasingly flouted. Since taking office in December 2022, Ben Gvir, as national security minister has visited the disputed holy site at least six times, drawing severe condemnations. The Al-Aqsa mosque compound is administered by Jordan, but access to the site itself is controlled by Zionist security forces.

Ben Gvir told Army Radio that Jews should be allowed to pray in the compound. "Arabs can pray wherever they want, so Jews should be able to pray wherever they want," he said, claiming that the "current policy allows Jews to pray at this site". Jordan hit back at Ben Gvir's latest remarks. "Al-Aqsa and the holy sites are a pure place of worship for Muslims," Jordanian foreign ministry spokesman Sufian Qudah said in a statement. "Jordan will take all necessary measures to stop the attacks on the holy sites" and "is preparing the necessary legal files to take action in international courts against the attacks on the holy sites," Qudah said. — AFP

International

Russia hits Ukraine's power grid

At least four people dead in Russia's largest attack on Ukraine in weeks

KYIV: Russia fired hundreds of drones and missiles at Ukraine on Monday, killing at least four people and battering the country's already weakened energy grid, officials said. Moscow's largest attack in weeks on Ukraine triggered widespread blackouts and came after Kyiv claimed new advances in its offensive in Russia's Kursk region.

In response to the strike, President Volodymyr Zelensky urged European nations to help down drones and missiles over his nation battered by more than two years of war. "If such unity has worked so well in the Middle East, it should work in Europe as well. Life has the same value everywhere," he added, apparently referring to the US helping the Zionist entity shoot down Iranian projectiles.

State-owned electricity supplier Ukrenergo announced emergency power cuts to stabilize its system following the barrage, while train schedules were disrupted. Residents in the capital Kyiv rushed to take shelter in metro stations early on Monday, as AFP reporters heard the booms of what appeared to be air defenses. "We are always worried. We have been under stress for almost three years now," said 34-year-old lawyer Yulia Voloshyna, who was taking shelter in the Kyiv metro.

"It was very scary, to be honest. You don't know what to expect," she added. Since invading in February 2022, Russia has launched repeated large-scale drone and missile attacks on Ukraine, including punishing attacks on energy facilities. The Russian defense ministry confirmed it hit energy facilities in a statement but argued

they were being used to aid Ukraine's "military-production complex".

Railways hit

The attacks early on Monday killed at least four people and injured over 20 others across the country, officials said. Two others were killed in later strikes during the day, according to authorities. NATO member Poland said its airspace was violated during the barrage, probably by a drone. "We are probably dealing with the entry of an object on Polish territory. The object was confirmed by at least three radiolocation stations," Operational Commander of the Armed Forces General Maciej Klisz told reporters.

Army command spokesman Jacek Goryszewski said "it is highly likely that it could have been a Shahed-type drone" of Iranian design, used by the Russian army. "But this has to be verified," he told AFP, adding that it could not be ruled out that the drone had already left Polish territory. The army said it was conducting searches for what was "probably an unmanned aerial vehicle" around 30 kilometers (18 miles) into Polish territory from the Ukrainian border.

Zelensky said Russia hit Ukraine with more than 100 missiles and around 100 Iranian-designed attack drones in total, and called for European air forces to help down them in the future. "In our various regions of Ukraine, we could do much more to protect lives if the aviation of our European neighbors worked together with our F-16s and together with our air defense," Zelensky said in an address. Andriy Yermak, Zelensky's chief of staff, said the attack showed Kyiv



KYIV: People take shelter in the Teatralna metro station during a Russian air attack, in Kyiv, on August 26, 2024. — AFP

needed permission to strike "deep into the territory of Russia with Western weapons."

Strike on Kramatorsk

The aerial barrage came after a safety advisor working for the Reuters news agency, Ryan Evans, was killed in a missile strike on a hotel in eastern Ukraine late

Saturday. Six of the agency's crew covering the war were staying at the hotel in Kramatorsk, the last major city under Ukrainian control in the Donetsk region.

The Kremlin said there was "still no clarity" about the strike when asked about Zelensky's assertion that the attack was carried out "deliberately". "I will say it again.

The strikes are against military infrastructure targets or targets related to military infrastructure," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. Zelensky separately announced on Sunday his forces were advancing in the Russian region of Kursk, more than two weeks after Kyiv launched its surprise incursion across the border. — AFP

Macron denies Telegram founder's arrest is 'political'

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron on Monday denied any political link to the arrest of Telegram founder Pavel Durov as the tech tycoon spent a second day in French custody following his surprise arrest at a Paris airport. Numerous questions have been raised about the timing and circumstances of Durov's detention.

Sources close to the case said Durov is accused of failing to curb the spread of illegal content on Telegram, which has over 900 million users. The company has dismissed the accusations. Born in Soviet times into a family of academics in Leningrad, now known as Saint Petersburg, Durov spent his childhood in Italy before building up Russia's then biggest social network VKontakte (VK) in his early 20s. He set up Telegram after leaving Russia a decade ago and Forbes magazine estimates his current fortune at \$15.5 billion.

Writing on the X social media platform that he



Pavel Durov, CEO and co-founder of Telegram.

was addressing "false information" concerning the case, Macron said Durov's arrest "took place as part of an ongoing judicial investigation." "It is in no way a political decision. It is up to the judges to rule on the matter," he wrote in a highly unusual comment on a legal case. Durov, 39, holds a French passport in addition to his Russian nationality.

'Nothing to hide'

A investigating magistrate extended the Durov's detention on Sunday, according to a source close to the investigation. The initial detention for questioning

can last up to 96 hours. When this period ends, the magistrate can either free Durov or press charges and remand him in custody. Durov, who has been based in Dubai in recent years, arrived in Paris from the Azerbaijani capital Baku, and was planning to have dinner in the French capital, a source close to the case said.

He was accompanied by a bodyguard and a personal assistant who always travel with him, added the source, asking not to be named. One key question is why Durov flew into France when he would have likely been aware he was wanted in the country. "Perhaps he had a feeling of impunity," said a source close to the case, asking not to be named. Russian President Vladimir Putin was in Baku on a state visit to Azerbaijan on August 18 and 19 but Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov denied the pair had met.

Durov is accused of failing to take action to curb the criminal use of his platform. France's OFMIN, an office tasked with preventing violence against minors, issued an arrest warrant for Durov in a preliminary investigation into alleged offences including fraud, drug trafficking, cyberbullying, organized crime and promotion of terrorism, another source said. Telegram said in response that "Durov has nothing to hide and travels frequently in Europe." "Telegram abides by EU laws, including the Digital Services Act — its moderation is within indus-

try standards," it added. "It is absurd to claim that a platform or its owner are responsible for abuse of that platform."

'Enforce the law'

Telegram has positioned itself as a "neutral" alternative to US-owned platforms, which have been criticized for their commercial exploitation of users' personal data. It also plays a key role since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, used actively by politicians and commentators on both sides of the war.

But critics accuse it of hosting often illegal content ranging from extreme sexual imagery to disinformation and also narcotics services. Kremlin spokesman Peskov said Moscow had received no information from France on why Durov was detained, saying "we do not know concretely what Durov is accused of". Elon Musk, who leads the Tesla car group and X, formerly Twitter, posted the hashtag #FreePavel on his platform and commented in French, "Liberte Liberte! Liberte?" (Freedom Freedom! Freedom?).

Macron said that while France is "deeply committed to freedom of expression and communication" such freedoms are "upheld within a legal framework, both on social media and in real life". "It is up to the judiciary, in full independence, to enforce the law," he said. — AFP

Kuwait signs 15-year Qatar gas deal...

Continued from Page 1

Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs and President and CEO of QatarEnergy Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi said: "This is a new long-term partnership between KPC and QatarEnergy that constitutes a central element in supporting Kuwait's sustainability goals, particularly in the electricity generation sector. It also reflects our commitment to support the future

needs of all our clients, foremost of which is KPC."

The agreement was signed at KPC's Head Office in Kuwait by Sheikh Nawaf and Kaabi in a ceremony attended by senior executives from both companies. The agreement is set to be effective for 15 years, with deliveries to Al-Zour Refinery's LNG import terminal beginning in 2025. Under this agreement, up to three million metric tons of LNG will be supplied. This initiative aligns with KPC's 2040 strategy, emphasizing sustainability by adopting LNG as a cleaner energy source. The use of LNG is expected to significantly reduce emissions and enhance domestic air quality, contributing to a more sustainable energy future for the region.

data services to stop militant coordination. "They launch attacks, film it and then share it on social media for propaganda," he said.

General Li Qiaoming, commander of China's People's Liberation Army Ground Forces, and Pakistan's army chief Asim Munir met on Monday, though a Pakistani military statement released after the meeting made no mention of the attacks. European Commission spokesperson Nabila Massrali said the EU condemned the attack.

On Sunday night, armed men blocked a highway, marched passengers off vehicles, and shot them after checking their identity cards, a senior superintendent of police, Ayub Achakzai, told Reuters. As many as 35 vehicles were set on fire on the highway in the area of Musakhail. "The armed men also not only killed passengers but also killed the drivers of trucks carrying coal," said Hameed Zahir, deputy commissioner of the area.

Militants have targeted workers from Pakistan's eastern province of Punjab whom they see as exploiting their resources. In the past, they have also attacked Chinese interests and citizens in the province, where China runs the deepwater port of Gwadar, as well as a gold and copper mine in its west. The BLA said its fighters targeted military personnel traveling in civilian clothes. Pakistan's interior ministry said the dead were innocent citizens.

Six security personnel, three civilians and one tribal elder made up the ten killed in clashes with armed militants who stormed a station of the Balochistan Levies in the central district of Kalat, police official Dostain Khan Dashti said. Officials said police stations had also been attacked in two southern coastal towns, but the toll had yet to be confirmed. — Agencies

Gazans flee new Zionist evacuation...

Continued from Page 1

UN agencies have planned a mass inoculation drive after the first case there in 25 years was confirmed. The Deir Al-Balah municipality says Zionist evacuation orders have so far displaced 250,000 people. In a statement posted on X, the Zionist military ordered residents in certain zones to move immediately to the west, as the area they are in is "considered a dangerous combat zone". Zionist military strikes killed at least seven Palestinians on Monday, medics said. Two were killed in Deir Al-Balah, where around a million people were sheltering, two at a school in the Al-Nuseirat camp and three in the southern city of Rafah, near the border with Egypt.

Seven others were killed in two separate Zionist strikes, five in a car in Khan Younis and two people at a school in Gaza City, medics said. Later on Monday, a Zionist strike on a tent on the coast in Gaza City killed six Palestinians and wounded several other people, medics told Reuters. The new orders forced many families and patients to leave Al-Aqsa Hospital, the main medical facility in Deir Al-Balah, where hundreds of thousands of residents and displaced people had taken shelter, for fear of bombardments. The hospital is close to the area covered by the evacuation notice.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said in a statement on X on Sunday night that an explosion approximately 250 m away from the MSF-supported Al-Aqsa Hospital triggered panic. "As a result, MSF is considering whether to suspend wound care for the time being, while trying to maintain life-saving treatment." From around 650 patients, only 100 remain in the hospital, with seven in the intensive care unit, it said, citing Gaza's health ministry.

"This situation is unacceptable. Al-Aqsa has been operating well beyond capacity for weeks due to the lack of alternatives for patients. All warring parties must respect the hospital, as well as patients' access to medical care," it added. The armed wings of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad said fighters clashed with Zionist forces with anti-tank rockets, mortar bombs, and sniper fire in several areas across Gaza.

Gaza's ministry of health called for the 100 patients inside the hospital, and the medical teams who had remained to care for them, to be protected. In a separate statement, it said Zionist military strikes



GAZA: Palestinians evacuate patients from the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip following renewed Zionist evacuation orders on Aug 26, 2024. — AFP

have killed at least 30 Palestinians and wounded 66 others across the enclave in the past 24 hours.

Sawsan Abu Afesh said she and her children had now been displaced 11 times. "I left half of my children behind me near my furniture and I am now with my little ones and my daughter, only God can help us...I have no money for transportation. I will go to area 17 where my family is staying on my foot. I took my kids and three are left behind. No idea where," the woman said.

The escalation comes with little hope of an end in sight to the war as diplomacy by mediators, Qatar, Egypt and the US has so far failed to close the gap between the Zionist entity and Hamas, whose leaders traded blame over the lack of an accord. Mediators held meetings in the Egyptian capital on Sunday but reported no breakthrough in months of protracted negotiations to end the Gaza war as the fighting raged on.

A key sticking point has been the Zionist entity's insistence that it keep control of several strategic areas, including the so-called Philadelphi Corridor along the Gaza-Egypt border, to stop Hamas from re-arming, something the group has refused to countenance. Cairo, which has been mediating the talks alongside Qatar and the United States, made clear on Monday it would not support continued Zionist control of the corridor, according to state-linked media. Egypt "reiterated to all parties that it will not accept any (Zionist) presence" along the corridor, Al-Qahera news reported, citing a high-level source. — Agencies

73 killed after militant attacks...

Continued from Page 1

Police said they had found six as yet unidentified bodies near the site of the attack on the railway bridge. Officials said militants also targeted police and security stations in Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province by area but least populated, killing at least 10 people in one attack. The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) armed militant group took responsibility for the operation they called "Haruf" or "dark windy storm". In a statement to journalists they claimed more attacks over the last day that have not yet been confirmed by authorities.

The group said four suicide bombers, including a woman from the southern port district of Gwadar, had been involved in an attack on the Bela paramilitary base, Pakistani authorities did not confirm the suicide blasts, but the provincial chief minister said three people had been killed at the base. The BLA is the biggest of several ethnic insurgent groups battling the central government, saying it unfairly exploits gas and mineral resources in the province, where poverty is rife. It wants the expulsion of China and independence for Balochistan.

Monday was the anniversary of the death of Baloch nationalist leader Akbar Bugti, who was killed by Pakistan's security forces in 2006. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif vowed that security forces would retaliate and bring those responsible to justice. Bugti, the chief minister, said more intelligence-based operations would be launched to weed out militants. He hinted at curtailing mobile

International

Australia gives workers
'right to disconnect'

Law allows people to ignore unreasonable out-of-hours contact from employers

SYDNEY: Australia gave millions of workers the legal right to "disconnect" on Monday, allowing them to ignore unreasonable out-of-hours contact from employers, to the distress of big industry. People can now "refuse to monitor, read, or respond to" their employers' attempts to contact them outside work hours — unless that refusal is deemed "unreasonable".

The law is similar to legislation in some European and Latin American countries. Unions welcomed the legislation, saying it gave workers a way to reclaim a level of work-life balance. "Today is a historic day for working people," said Michele O'Neil, president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions. "The union movement has won the legal right for Australians to spend quality time with their loved ones without the stress of being forced to constantly answer unreasonable work calls and emails," she said. "Australian unions have reclaimed the right to knock off after work."

But the reforms got a cool welcome from Australian industry. "The 'right to disconnect' laws are rushed, poorly thought out and deeply confusing," the Australian Industry Group said in a statement. "At the very least, employers and employees will now be uncertain about whether they can take or make

a call out of hours to offer an extra shift," said the country's peak industry group.

The law, enacted in February, came into force for medium-sized and large companies as of Monday. Smaller companies with fewer than 15 employees will be covered from August 26, 2025. "We encourage workplace participants to educate themselves on the right to disconnect and take a commonsense approach to applying it within their workplace," said the head of Australia's workplace relations regulator, Fair Work Ombudsman Anna Booth.

Under the law, workers may be ordered by a tribunal to stop unreasonably refusing out-of-hours contact, and employers likewise may be ordered to stop unreasonably requiring employees to respond, it said. The question of what is reasonable will "depend on the circumstances", the Fair Work Ombudsman said in a statement.

Deciding factors may include the reason for the contact, the nature of the employee's role, and their compensation for working extra hours or being available, it said. France introduced the right to disconnect in 2017, hoping to tackle the "always on" culture facilitated by smartphones and other digital devices. — AFP



MELBOURNE: People row a boat up Melbourne's Yarra River taking advantage of the winter sun on August 19, 2024. — AFP

Afghanistan's new
morality law to be
'gently' enforced

KABUL: Afghanistan's Taliban authorities said Monday a recently ratified morality law would be enforced "gently", after the international community and Afghans voiced concern over new restrictions. Women must cover completely and not raise their voices in public, according to a 35-article law announced Wednesday by the justice ministry.

It imposes wide-ranging stipulations from behavior to dress and social interactions, including rules on men's clothing and beard length as well as bans on homosexuality, animal fighting, playing music in public and non-Muslim holidays. The United Nations, rights groups and Afghans have expressed concern that the law could lead to increased enforcement of rules on behavior and lifestyle, many already informally in place since the Taliban authorities took power in 2021 and implemented a strict interpretation of Islamic law — or sharia.

"I must make it clear that force and oppression won't be used while implementing these rules," said deputy government spokesman Hamdullah Fitrat in a voice message shared with AFP. The rules "would be implemented very gently, informing people's understanding, and guiding them", he said.

The European Union added its voice to the chorus on Monday, saying it was "appalled" by a decree that "confirms and extends severe restrictions on the life of Afghans". "This latest decision is another serious blow undermining the rights of Afghan women



KANDAHAR: Afghan women walk through a market in Kandahar on August 24, 2024. — AFP

and girls, which we cannot tolerate," said a statement from EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell.

Borrell urged the Taliban to put an end to such "systematic and systemic abuses against Afghan women and girls," warning they may amount to gender persecution — a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The Taliban government has consistently dismissed international criticism of their policies, including condemnation of restrictions on women the UN has labelled "gender apartheid".

The law sets out graduated punishments for non-compliance — from verbal warnings to threats, fines and detentions of varying lengths — enforced by the morality police under the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice. Roza Otunbayeva, head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, has called the law a "distressing vision for Afghanistan's future, where moral inspectors have discretionary powers to threaten and detain anyone based on broad and sometimes vague lists of infractions". — AFP

Japan scrambles jets
after Chinese aircraft
'violated' airspace

TOKYO: Close US ally Japan said it scrambled fighter jets on Monday after a Chinese military aircraft "violated" its airspace in a further escalation of regional tensions. The two-minute incursion into Japanese airspace by the Y-9 surveillance aircraft at 11:29 am (0229 GMT) was the first by a Chinese military plane, local media reported.

The aircraft "violated the territorial airspace off the Danjo Islands in Nagasaki Prefecture", prompting Japan to deploy "fighter jets on an emergency basis", Japan's defense ministry said. It said steps such as "issuing warnings" to the aircraft were taken. Broadcaster NHK reported that no weapons, such as flare guns, were used as an alert.

The defense ministry released a photograph of what it said was the plane. Deputy foreign minister Masataka Okano summoned China's acting ambassador late on Monday and "lodged firm protest", as well as calling for measures against a recurrence, the foreign ministry said in a statement. The Chinese diplomat said in response that the matter would be reported to Beijing, according to the ministry. There was no immediate official comment from Beijing.

Beefed up

China's growing economic and military clout in the Asia-Pacific region and its assertiveness in territorial disputes — in particular Taiwan — has alarmed the United States and its allies. Japan, staunchly pacifist for decades, has ramped up defense spending with US encouragement, moving to acquire "counter-strike" capabilities and easing rules on arms exports.

Tokyo is also providing funding and equipment such as patrol vessels to countries across the region and agreed in July on a deal with the Philippines allowing troop deployments on each other's soil. Japan and South Korea have also moved to bury the historical hatchet. Tokyo is also part of the Quad alliance with the United States, Australia and India, a grouping seen as a bulwark against Beijing. Yee Kuang Heng, a professor at the University of Tokyo, said the Y-9 in Monday's incident "was likely probing Japan's air defense network, collecting electronic intel such as Japan's radar signals and coverage".

Tense incidents

Japanese and Chinese vessels have been involved in tense incidents in disputed areas, in particular the Senkaku islands in the East China Sea



IN THE AIR: A Chinese military Y9 intelligence-gathering aircraft that Japan's defense ministry said "violated" Japanese airspace is seen in this handout photo by Japan's Ministry of Defense. — AFP

known by Beijing as the Diaoyus. The remote chain has fueled diplomatic tensions and been the scene of confrontations between Japanese coastguard vessels and Chinese fishing boats.

Tokyo has reported the presence of Chinese coastguard vessels, a naval ship and even a nuclear-powered submarine, in the area. Two non-military aircraft from China — a propeller-powered plane and a small drone — were forayed into airspace near the Senkaku islands in 2012 and 2017, according to NHK.

'Control measures'

The Danjo Islands, the site of the latest incident, are a group of small islets also located in the East China Sea off Japan's southern Nagasaki region. Beijing claims the South China Sea — through which trillions of dollars of trade passes annually — almost in its entirety despite an international court ruling that its assertion has no legal basis.

China said it took "control measures" on Monday against two Philippine Coast Guard ships that had entered waters near the disputed Sabina Shoal in the South China Sea. Multiple confrontations have taken place in recent days around the shoal, located 140 kilometers (90 miles) west of the Philippine island of Palawan and about 1,200 kilometers from Hainan island, China's nearest major landmass.

Both sides have in recent months stationed coast guard vessels near Sabina, where the Philippines fears China is about to build an artificial island. US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan is due to visit Beijing for three days from Tuesday and will meet China's foreign minister Wang Yi in a bid to manage bilateral tensions ahead of US elections in November. — AFP

Knife attack fuels
bitter German
immigration debate

SOLINGEN: Vivienne Vetter is furious at what she says is an unchecked flood of refugees into her German city of Solingen, blaming it for a deadly knife rampage by a Syrian man. But Turkish man and Solingen local Kadir Ayten is more concerned Friday's attack at a festival will widen social divisions and cause Germans to become ever more wary of foreigners.

The differing reactions highlight how the attack that killed three and wounded eight is fueling an already bitter debate about immigration policy, and could further boost the resurgent far right. Vetter, who is originally from Poland but has lived in Germany for two decades, expressed anger at recently arrived migrants in Solingen who she said "don't learn German". "They take away childcare places, take away daycare places, take away money, take away flats," the 26-year-old who works in the elder care sector told AFP, adding she herself was struggling to find an affordable apartment. "If they would integrate, I wouldn't have a problem with it," she adding, noting she lives just minutes' walk from the scene of the attack.

She was among a crowd of Solingen residents who had turned out Monday to see Chancellor Olaf Scholz visit the site of the attack, with many venting their frustration at government asylum policy. While Scholz pledged to tighten immigration rules, Solingen mayor Tim Kurzbach appealed for calm: "It's not just about Solingen — it's about our country".

The refugee center housing the alleged attacker, a 26-year-old Syrian who had reportedly arrived in Germany around two years ago, was around just 300 meters (980 feet) from where the violence took place. A former tax office building, it has been housing migrants since December 2022 as Germany struggled to find space for the huge numbers of refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine.

'Turning point'

For Solingen resident Wolfgang Matthes, the attack — which the Islamic State group has claimed responsibility, a claim which has yet to be verified — will mark a "turning point in controlling people who come to our country". "The government has to toughen asylum policy," added the 61-year-old.

It is not the first time that Solingen, an ethnically diverse city of about 160,000 people, has experienced tensions between its different communities. Far-right extremists set fire to a house of a large Turkish family in 1993, killing three girls and two women. But like in other parts of Europe, tensions have more recently centered on rising immigration.

The debate in Germany flared anew last year due to an uptick in illegal migration when initial asylum applications rose more than 50 percent. But while some were quick to blame rising numbers of migrants for Friday's tragedy, others saw it as an isolated incident and were more worried it could worsen already heightened tensions in multicultural places like Solingen. These tensions were on display at the weekend following the attack, with left-wing groups and the youth organization of the far-right AfD party staging rival demonstrations.

Turkish man Ayten, a taxi driver who has been living in Germany for some 20 years and is Muslim, described the attack as a "huge shame". "Such things can divide society. People will be more fearful of foreigners," the 46-year-old said. The attack had "nothing to do with Islam", he added.

Resul Salihu, an 18-year-old Serbian who has lived all his life in Solingen, said it was wrong to blame migration for the tragedy and "generalize" about everyone who comes to Germany. He also expressed fears people could be encouraged to vote for the AfD, which backs anti-immigrant policies and is expected to make gains at key regional polls in eastern Germany Sunday. "People are motivated by fear, because of that fear they might turn to (parties) with more extreme policies," he said. — AFP

Pakistani singles
defy tradition, search
for spouses in person

LAHORE: Dozens of young singles gathered this week to meet potential marriage partners in Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore, the first attempt by a UK-based matrimonial app to help people find spouses in person in the conservative Islamic country. Typically, marriages in Pakistan are arranged by parents who look for suitable matches for their children from within their communities or the extended family. Dating apps are generally stigmatized and gender segregation socially and at work remains common in the country of 240 million people.

The Lahore event was organized by Muzz, formerly Muzzmatch, which says its app is based on Islamic etiquette. The app is restricted to Muslim users, and, in a nod to traditional values, gives the option of blurring pictures except for specific matches and allows for chaperones to oversee meetings.

Other smaller events are also emerging in the country to challenge traditional matchmaking norms. Despite criticism online in the past for the app, the Muzz event was attended by about 100 people. Aimen, a 31-year-old woman who did not want to be further identified, said she used the app on the recommendation of her US-based brother. "I used the app for two weeks, but then I saw an ad for this event and thought, why not meet people in person?" she told Reuters. She said that her mother would have accompanied her as a chaperone but couldn't attend because of ill-health.

Muzz, launched in 2015 in the Britain, which also has a sizeable Muslim population, has over 1.5 million users in Pakistan, its second-largest market after Morocco. Moaz, a 27-year-old man, said he has been using Muzz for a year and that he was hopeful of finding a wife through the app. "I do get matches, but they have different priorities," he said adding that girls on the app expect him to involve his parents from the beginning. "That is not (immediately) possible," he said, stressing the need of getting to know someone before taking the next big step.

Annie's Matchmaking Party, another Lahore event last week, used an algorithm to match 20 young professionals after a selection process and invited them to the meet. Noor ul Ain Choudhary, the 30-year-old organizer, faced criticism online that her event promoted a "hookup culture". She countered that it aimed to provide a safe space for singles to meet and connect. "In Pakistan, we've had two options: biased arranged marriages or time-consuming dating apps with no guarantees. Safety during meetings is also a concern," she said. — Reuters

TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2024

Zain Great Idea opens up investment and growth opportunities for entrepreneurs

Leading tech startup accelerator program returns in all-new edition



Zain, Zain Ventures, and Rasameel officials with ZGI alumni and entrepreneurs.

KUWAIT: Zain has announced the launch of an all-new edition of its leading tech startup accelerator program, Zain Great Idea (ZGI). This year, the program is delivered in strategic partnership with Rasameel Investment Company, and continues its decade-long mission of opening doors to sustainable growth and investment opportunities for entrepreneurs and innovators in Kuwait.

The launch of this year's initiative was announced at Zain's headquarters in Shuwaikh, attended by Waleed Al-Khashti, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer of Zain Kuwait; Dakhil Al-Dakhil, CEO of Rasameel Investment Company; and Haya Al-Mana, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Expert at Zain Kuwait, along with a number of entrepreneurs and representatives from the local entrepreneurship community.

Waleed Al-Khashti commented: "For more than 14 years, Zain Great Idea has been a unique success story, establishing itself as one of the most impactful business accelerators locally and regionally. It has provided numerous opportunities for hundreds of ambitious entrepreneurs and startups, connecting many with leading tech companies and organizations in places like Silicon Valley, to gain first-hand experience."

Al-Khashti added, "Through this program, we aim to empower Kuwait's tech startup ecosystem and foster an innovation-driven environment that creates tangible economic and social impact. This step also translates Zain's strategic plans as a business that seeks promising opportunities for diversification and sustainable growth in a highly competitive market. Additionally, Zain may acquire shares in the ZGI startups to boost their potential and commercialization drive."

Al-Khashti continued, "This year, Zain Ventures, the venture capital arm of Zain Group, will explore investing in the tech startups participating in ZGI, particularly those whose operations align with our strategic directions. These include fintech, digital innovations, and e-services."

He further stated, "Many of the startups that participated in previous editions of ZGI have successfully raised millions of dollars in investments, enabling them to enter the market and offer their services to a broad range of clients across various sectors. In addition, several have expanded to neighboring regional markets, achieving remarkable successes that we are proud of. Today, many of these ZGI alumni return as partners and consultants in the latest edition of the program to share the experiences they have gained in the business world with the newcomers."

Dakhil Al-Dakhil, CEO of Rasameel Investment Company, affirmed the company's interest in supporting startups in the Kuwaiti market and around the world to grow their operations and profitability, as well as in supporting entrepreneurs and helping them enhance their investments performance across levels. He added that this support reflects the significant importance of partnerships between companies across different sectors to achieve common goals. He mentioned that Rasameel Investment Company is also working on implementing several digital initiatives, noting the launch of the myRasameel platform in a refined form that aligns with technological advancements. This aligns with the company's strategy to digitize its operations to achieve optimal operational performance in all the markets in which it operates. He also pointed out that the company has recently worked on supporting several startups to share in their success and expand their services and markets, including BNCHR+, Baims, and Mushtari, which are three companies that participated in previous cycles of the ZGI program and benefited from the program's acceleration process.

Al-Dakhil praised Zain's efforts in continuing the Zain Great Idea accelerator program, which helps young entrepreneurs and innovators to learn about the latest digital developments to utilize them in their startups.



Waleed Al-Khashti, Dakhil Al-Dakhil and Haya Al-Mana at the press conference.

- Program in strategic partnership with Rasameel Investment Company
- Intensive bootcamp in Kuwait in collaboration with leading global academic institutions
- International accelerator program offers a chance to learn business dynamics in the heart of Silicon Valley
- Registration is open at zaingreatidea.com till Sept 21

zain great idea



Scan here to register in ZGI

'Ecosystem Enabler of the Year' award

Last year, ZGI was recognized with the E-Business Award as the 'Ecosystem Enabler of the Year' from the prestigious Entrepreneur Middle East magazine. The program was awarded during an awards ceremony in Dubai acknowledging the Zain's ever-growing endeavors in accelerating the regional tech startups ecosystem and empowering entrepreneurs in Kuwait and the region.

Registration and bootcamp

Aspiring entrepreneurs can now register for ZGI 2024 at zaingreatidea.com. The program is open to anyone with an ambitious idea, project in its early stages, or startup operating in the market. Sectors of interest include fintech, e-commerce, AI, digital solutions, edtech, and more. The deadline for applications is Sept 21.

After the registration period ends, participants who meet the criteria will be invited to a special orientation session to introduce them to the program's plan, objectives, and stages, as well as the schedule

for workshops, mentoring sessions, and discussions during a bootcamp, which is one of the program's key stages. The bootcamp is a significant phase of ZGI, lasting three weeks and providing participants with a wealth of information and essential skills for the success of any tech company. This is done through interactive workshops, training programs, one-on-one mentoring sessions, and discussions with founders and executives, all aimed at sharing experiences and helping participants find the best opportunities for growth.

The camp's content is delivered by a group of trainers, specialists, and experts from leading local, regional, and global academic institutions, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) from the US, IE Business School from Spain, Noor Coaching, and the Applied Innovation Institute, a non-profit thinktank from Silicon Valley focused on accelerating innovation and empowering entrepreneurs. Architech Solutions, the Kuwait-based technology consultancy firm, is also joining ZGI as a partner this year, helping participating startups with various needs like technology consulting, online business strategy, product development, digital marketing, user experience con-

sulting, and more throughout the program's phases. Architech Solutions' will help provide solutions for designing, developing, and delivering cutting-edge software and mobile applications.

International accelerator in Silicon Valley

Following the bootcamp, participants will apply the knowledge and skills they have gained to finalize their projects and pitch to a judging panel at the Super Saturday event. The panel includes executives and experts from Rasameel Investment Company and other local investment funds.

The panel will evaluate participants' pitches, selecting finalists who will advance to the next stage — the international accelerator program in Palo Alto, California, specifically in Silicon Valley, the global center of innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship. This stage in ZGI is offered in collaboration with Vibranium VC, a Silicon Valley-based venture capital firm specializing in startup investments, offers an invaluable opportunity for finalists to learn about business dynamics first-hand in the heart of Silicon Valley. Participants will attend workshops, connect with startup founders, visit major accelerators and tech companies, pitch their ideas to investment funds, build relationships, and gain a deep understanding of the global entrepreneurship ecosystem. The program will include field visits and insightful talks in collaboration with major tech companies and prestigious universities and accelerators in Silicon Valley, including Amazon, Nvidia, Stanford University, UC Berkeley, and 500 Startups, and more.

The international accelerator program covers key topics including understanding the Silicon Valley ecosystem, leveraging disruptive technologies like AI, marketing and sales strategies, financial planning, attracting investors, market expansion, team building, human resources management, and how to pitch startups to investors for funding opportunities.

Connecting with investors

After returning from Silicon Valley, Zain will organize the ZGI Demo Day, the final and most crucial stage of the program, where finalists will present their development and expansion plans and share their strategic visions for growth with a group of investment fund executives and potential business partners from local and regional companies that Zain will invite to connect with and learn about the startups. During the event, Zain will provide each participant the opportunity to connect with representatives from investment funds and business partners, introducing them to the story of each startup, their regional expansion plans, strategic visions, and how each entrepreneur plans to make their company profitable and sustainable to meet the market's needs locally and regionally.

Zain ventures

A key pillar of Zain Group's '4Sight' strategy, Zain Ventures was established to complement the existing investment portfolio of Zain Group and open the door to future investment opportunities in the venture capital, fintech and tech world, focusing on digital innovations in the fast-growing e-services and entrepreneurial startup ecosystem. Investing in the world of venture capital provides Zain with a vast range of opportunities to diversify and expand its reach across the ecosystem. Over the years, Zain has expanded its relationship with regional and international venture capital funds supporting their portfolio companies whenever appropriate. Zain has also continued its active engagement in direct strategic investments in a variety of promising startups from the region and further afield, offering them support on multiple fronts including a wide geographical reach and a progressive customer base for growth opportunities.

Business



JAISALMER, India: Camels graze near windmills on the outskirts of Jaisalmer, in India's desert state of Rajasthan. — AFP photos



JAISALMER, India: Local environmental activist Sumer Singh Bhati walks past a bird tower in Sanwata village near Jaisalmer.

India's critical green energy wind drive hits desert herders hard

Country scrambles to boost its non-fossil fuel capacity to stem impacts of climate change

JAISALMER, India: Whirring wind turbines in India's Thar desert supply critical green energy for the world's most populous nation, but those living in their shadows say it comes at their expense. It illustrates the hard balance faced as India, the third-largest greenhouse gas emitter, scrambles to boost its non-fossil fuel capacity to stem the rising impacts of climate change.

"The big companies have come here and built the windmills, but they're useless to us," said 65-year-old livestock herder Nena Ram, describing an age-old farming system upended by the giant turbines.

The country is suffering increasing devastation from heatwaves, floods and droughts, events that climate scientists say are exacerbated by rising global temperatures. But those from areas used for renewable energy production say their needs have been sacrificed for the greater good.

In western Rajasthan state, where most of the Thar desert lies, that includes the loss of grazing lands and damage to sacred groves called "orans". The desert oases, protected by the community for centuries, collect water critical for their livestock-based economy of camels, cattle and goats.

But herders say heavy construction trucks damage the water sources, reducing grasslands and further drying the land. What farmers like

Ram contribute to greenhouse gases is very far from the fume-belching giants of India's coal-hungry heavy industry.

He is struggling from a brutal one-two punch. First he was hit by the consequences of climate change. Then he was knocked by mitigation efforts to combat them.

'Paying the price'

The deserts around Jaisalmer district in Rajasthan are dotted with hundreds of turbines, one of India's largest onshore wind farms. Rajasthan is capable of providing five gigawatts (GW) of wind power to the grid, according to government figures. Many turbines are owned by Indian conglomerates, including the Adani Group and Suzlon.

The companies say they are supporting India's national drive to transition to renewable power while supporting communities impacted by the construction. Suzlon says it provides "sustainable development to the villages around its wind farms", including health, education and livestock support projects. Adani says it is "deeply committed" to the community, supporting schools and clean water programs. But farmers complain bitterly that the turbines were built on community grazing land.

Milk production has also slumped.

"The farmers are paying the price," said Jitendra Kumar, who works in a local health clinic. "Their land was taken away. Windmills occupy the land meant for cattle grazing".

'Lives in darkness'

Power lines criss-cross the desert around Jaisalmer, a district home to about 670,000 people, according to the last census. But it suffers from frequent power cuts, sometimes for days at a stretch. Residents say power is channeled to feed surging demand in industrial centers and big cities.

"We are leading our lives in darkness," local environmental activist Sumer Singh Bhati said. "We have power for barely two hours a day... We are desperate for light." Power cuts are unbearable during summer. Temperatures sometimes sizzle at 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit).

India this year baked in its longest heatwave on record, according to government weather experts. They warn steadily more oppressive temperatures will be seen increasingly in the future. India aims to boost non-fossil fuel power capacity to 500 GW by 2030 and is committed to achieving a net-zero-emissions economy by 2070 - two decades after most of the industrialized West. Renewable energy plants are being built at breakneck speed, rising from

76 GW to 203 GW in the past decade, according to government figures. Around a quarter of that is from the wind. But reaching the 500 GW renewable target requires expansion on a vast scale.

Such statistics mean little to villagers living near the towering turbines, slamming them as an "incursion of the white structures". Environmental activists say that while outsiders see the desert as a dead zone, they are areas rich in biodiversity.

Locally revered species, such as the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard, are facing extinction. The once common giant brown-and-white birds fly into the mesh of overhead power lines. Parth Jagani, an environmental activist in Jaisalmer, said numbers had plummeted in the past 25 years — with just 150 left nationally. "Once the windmills and the high-tension wires were installed, their mortality increased," Jagani said. In 2021, the Supreme Court ordered power lines to be put underground in key bird breeding zones. But the government petitioned and overturned the decision, arguing it would hinder renewable energy targets.

Villagers have set up a memorial for the bird, a statue of a lone bustard. "If our birds and animals are taken away, what will we do?" said Ram, smoothing his sweeping grey moustache. "How will we survive?" — AFP

Dutch hit Uber with huge fine over driver data

THE HAGUE: The Dutch data protection watchdog said Monday it hit ride-hailing app Uber with a 290-million-euro (\$324 million) fine over the transfer of personal data of European drivers to US servers. The regulator said the transfers were a "serious violation" of the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), as they failed to appropriately protect driver information.

"Uber did not meet the requirements of the GDPR to ensure the level of protection to the data with regard to transfers to the US. That is very serious," Dutch Data Protection Authority (DPA) chairman Aleid Wolfsen said in a statement. The DPA said Uber collected sensitive information of European drivers, including taxi licenses, location data, photos, payment details, identity documents, "and in some cases even criminal and medical data of drivers". Over a two-year period, the DPA said, the information was transferred to Uber's US headquarters without using transfer tools. "Because of this, the protection of personal data was not sufficient," the DPA said, noting that Uber has "ended the violation". Uber said it would appeal the fine, a process that suspends the penalty but can take up to four years. "This flawed decision and extraordinary fine are completely unjustified," an Uber spokesperson said in a statement. "Uber's cross-border data transfer process was compliant with GDPR during a 3-year period of immense uncertainty between the EU and US. We will appeal and remain confident that common sense will prevail," the statement said.

The EU has rolled out a series of rules for what big tech firms can and cannot do, and imposed huge fines for breaches in recent years. The DPA said it started the investigation after more than 170 French drivers complained to a French human rights interest group, which then filed a complaint to France's data protection watchdog. Under the GDPR, a business that processes data in several EU countries must deal with the data protection authority where its main office is located. Uber's European headquarters are in the Netherlands.

"In Europe, the GDPR protects the fundamental rights of people, by requiring businesses and governments to handle personal data with due care," Wolfsen said. "But sadly, this is not self-evident outside Europe," he said. "Think of governments that can tap data on a large scale. That is why businesses are usually obliged to take additional measures if they store personal data of Europeans outside the European Union."

It is the DPA's third fine against Uber following fines of 600,000 euros in 2018 and 10 million euros last year. Uber said Monday the most recent case relates to a complaint that dates back to 2021, during a three-year period "when there was significant uncertainty regarding data transfers between the US and the EU". It said the uncertainty began after the Court of Justice of the European Union invalidated a data transfer framework known as the EU-US Privacy Shield in 2020. — AFP



DELTA, Canada: Railcars with containers sit idle near the Roberts bank Super Port after a strike by railway workers in Delta, British Columbia, Canada. — AFP

Canada railway decision will hurt workers: Union

MONTREAL: A decision obliging more than 9,000 Canadian rail workers to stay on the job is a win for the railways and could impact bargaining in other federally regulated sectors like aviation, the head of a Canadian rail workers' union told Reuters. Paul Boucher, president of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference, also said the union would work with other labor groups as it mounts a legal challenge to a Saturday decision that halted work stoppages at the country's two largest railways and imposed arbitration.

While the Teamsters will obey the order to return to work, the union has warned it could lead to the imposition of future contracts, eroding workers' bargaining power. The decision comes as Air Canada pilots press for a new contract and can commence job action as early as mid-September if there is no agreement with the country's largest carrier.

Air Canada said on Sunday its intent is to reach a negotiated settlement with the pilots over the coming weeks. "Any federally regulated company, it's a win for them at this point," Boucher told Reuters in his first interview since the Thursday lockout. "This is disastrous for labor, for workers."

The Canada Industrial Relations Board made the decision after Labor Minister Steven MacKinnon asked it on Thursday to end an impasse in separate talks between the Teamsters, Canadian National Railway and Canadian Pacific Kansas City CP. The dispute, which triggered a first-ever lockout of Teamsters workers on Thursday at both freight rail carriers, led to unprecedented disruptions that threatened to hammer Canada's

export-driven economy, leading agricultural businesses to plead for relief.

Tim Perry, president of the Air Line Pilots Association Canada, which represents Air Canada pilots, said the union is concerned. "The new Minister of Labor does not trust the Canadian laws governing collective bargaining, nor does the government he represents respect the constitutional rights of workers," Perry said in a statement. A spokesperson for Canada's labor minister declined to comment on whether the decision to impose binding arbitration on railways would serve as a precedent in other sectors, including aviation.

CN has said the company would have preferred a negotiated agreement but was satisfied that the labor stoppage is over. Spokesperson Jonathan Abecassis said on Sunday that CN tried to get an agreement for nine months and made five offers that would have improved wages and working conditions but the union did not engage. A CP spokesperson said it regretted that the government had to intervene and fundamentally believes in and respects collective bargaining.

Both railways have said they are focused on restoring service, with the Teamsters calling off a CN strike on Monday but planning to appeal the decision in federal court. Other unions could participate in court and support the Teamsters, Boucher said. "This historical moment is so extremely important that labor needs to get involved and they will," he said.

The 58-year-old Boucher, who once worked as a CN locomotive engineer, has been bargaining with CN out of a second-floor conference room at a downtown Montreal hotel. The Teamsters union disagreed with CN and CP over scheduling, shift duration and availability. CN, for example, wants employees to work up to 12-hour shifts, compared with 10 hours in the current agreement, a move opposed by the union. Boucher said he has been in contact with the union representing more than 5,400 Air Canada pilots who approved a strike mandate last week. — Reuters

New Zealand seeks to reverse ban on oil and gas exploration

WELLINGTON: New Zealand said on Monday it would pass laws by the end of this year to reverse a ban on offshore oil and gas exploration, and take urgent steps to remove regulatory hurdles to import liquefied natural gas (LNG) amid energy shortages.

The law would end the ban, in place since 2018, on exploration outside onshore Taranaki, an energy-rich region on the country's North Island as the right-of-centre government plans to lure investment to the country's oil and gas sector. Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said severe shortages over the last few weeks had led energy prices to spike to some of the highest levels among developed economies.

"We are responding to a situation as I said New Zealand should never have seen in the first place," Luxon said during a media briefing, and urged opposition parties to support the bill. "It would be the sensible, common sense thing to do if they genuinely cared about New Zealand's energy security." The previous centre-left Labor-led government banned offshore petroleum exploration. Natural gas production fell by 12.5 percent in 2023 and a further 27.8 percent in the first three months of 2024, triggering a nationwide energy shortage as generators switched to more coal and diesel to power the grid. Energy Minister Simeon Brown said. — Reuters

German business morale falls again in August

BERLIN: German business confidence fell further in August, a closely-watched survey showed Monday, as Europe's biggest economy struggles to emerge from a weak period. The Ifo institute's confidence barometer, based on a survey of around 9,000 companies, declined to 86.6 points from 87 points in July. "The sentiment among companies in Germany is on a downward trend," Ifo president Clemens Fuest said following the fourth consecutive fall in the indicator.

"The German economy is increasingly falling into crisis," Fuest said. Businesses were both less bullish about the current economic environment and more pessimistic about their future prospects, according to the survey. Confidence among companies in the manufacturing sector in particular "fell considerably". Businesses in the crucial sector "once again reported declining order backlogs", according to Ifo, with the lull dragging expectations to their lowest point since February. A hoped-for recovery has failed to materialize, after the German economy shrank in 2023. — AFP

Business

Darkening global outlook, central bank pivots signal more turbulence

Slowing US, Chinese growth to bode ill for manufacturers across the globe

JACKSON HOLE, Wyoming: Growing signs of lackluster growth and risks emerging to the job market overshadowed a gathering of global policymakers at the US Federal Reserve's annual Jackson Hole conference, highlighting the changing trajectory of monetary policy as US and European central banks eye cutting interest rates. Even as the focus of US and European central bankers shifts from high inflation to softening job markets, the Bank of Japan reaffirmed its resolve to wear its economy off decades of monetary support amid growing signs of sustained price growth.

The divergence in policy direction, coupled with lingering weakness in China, the world's second-largest economy, point to turbulent times for the global economy and financial markets.

The policymakers who met at the annual economic symposium already had a taste of what may come when weak US jobs data earlier this month stoked recession fears and triggered a market rout aggravated by the BOJ's surprise rate hike in July. So far, many analysts agree with the International Monetary Fund's projection that the global economy will achieve modest growth in coming years as the US achieves a soft landing, Europe's growth picks up and China emerges from the doldrums.

But such rosy projections rest on shaky ground with doubts emerging over prospects for a US soft landing, eurozone growth failing to revive and China suffering from sluggish consumption. While major central banks are veering towards rate cuts, it remains too soon to say whether the moves could be categorized as a "normalization" of restrictive policy or first steps to prevent growth from faltering further. The uncertainty could leave global stocks and currencies susceptible to volatile swings.

"We could see other episodes of market volatility as markets are in a little bit of an uncharted territory," as major central banks enter a monetary easing cycle after tightening policy to deal with a burst of inflation, said IMF chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas. "Japan is on a slightly different cycle. The markets have to figure out what it all means, and markets overreact. So, we will have further volatility," he said.

Growth risks

In his much-anticipated speech Fed Chair Jerome Powell on Friday endorsed an imminent start to interest rate cuts, declaring further job market cooling would be unwelcome. It was a significant shift from Powell's comments as inflation surged in 2021 and 2022, and cemented the view the Fed was making a pivot from a policy that pushed its benchmark rate to a quarter-century high and held it there for more than a year. New research presented in Jackson Hole showed the US economy may be near a tipping point where a continued drop in job openings will translate into faster increases in unemployment.

European Central Bank policymakers are converging on a September rate cut, partly on moderating price pressures but also because of a notable weakening of the growth outlook. The eurozone economy barely grew last quarter as Germany, its biggest economy, contracted, manufacturing remains in a deep recession and exports have faltered, due largely to weak demand from China.

"The recent increase in negative growth risks in the euro area has reinforced the case for a rate cut at the next ECB monetary policy meeting in September," ECB rate-setter Olli Rehn said. Even in Japan, recent inflation data showed a slowdown in demand-driven price growth that could complicate the BOJ's decisions on more rate hikes. While consumption rebounded in the second quarter, there is uncertainty on whether wages would rise enough to compensate households for the rising cost of living, analysts say. "Domestic demand is very weak," said Sayuri Shirai, a former BOJ board member now an academic at Keio University in Tokyo. "From an economic perspective, there's little reason for the BOJ to raise rates."

China worries

Adding to the gloom is China. The world's most populous country is verging on deflation and faces a prolonged property crisis, surging debt and weak consumer and business sentiment. Weaker-than-expected second-quarter



ASUNCION, Paraguay: IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva (left) speaks next to the president of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Ilan Goldfajn during the Global Economic Situation conference at the Central Bank of Paraguay's theatre, in Asuncion in this July 23, 2024 file photo. — AFP

growth forced China's central bank to make surprise interest rate cuts last month, and heightens the chance of a downgrade in the IMF's growth projections for the country.

"China is a large player in global economy. Weaker growth in China has spillovers to the rest of the world," said IMF's Gourinchas. Further signs of slowing of US and Chinese growth would bode ill for manufacturers across the globe already feeling the strain from tepid demand.

Private surveys showed factories struggled in July across the US, Europe and Asia, raising the risk of an underpowered global economic recovery. For resource-rich emerging economies like Brazil, China's slowdown could hit metal and food exports, but help alleviate inflationary pressure through cheaper imports. Brazilian central bank Governor Roberto Campos Neto, speaking at Jackson Hole's closing session, said: "The net effect...depends on how much the deceleration is." — Reuters

India's gold duty cut could spark buying spree

BENGALURU: Gold demand in India during the upcoming festive season is likely to remain robust, as the substantial reduction in import duty has made prices appealing, providing comfort to retail consumers and encouraging purchases, industry officials said. Higher demand in the world's second-largest gold consumer could support a rally in global prices which hit a record high last week. But higher demand for gold imports could increase India's trade deficit and weigh on the rupee MAUCI.

"The primary beneficiaries of the reduced duty cut will be retail consumers," said Sachin Jain, CEO of the World Gold Council's Indian operations. India slashed import duties on gold in July to 6 percent from 15 percent, a step aimed at tackling smuggling.

Demand during the upcoming festival season will be very strong, Jain told Reuters on the sidelines of the India Gold Conference. Gold demand in India usually strengthens towards the end of the year, which coincides with the traditional wedding season and major festivals including Diwali and Dusshera, when bullion buying is considered auspicious.

Retail demand has improved since the duty cut brought down prices and this momentum seems likely to continue in the coming months, said Ajay Chawla, CEO of Jewelry division at Titan. Global prices hit a record high last week, but in India, domestic prices were around 71,800 rupees per 10 grams on Monday, below a record high of 74,731 rupees hit in July. The duty cut changed sentiment among retail consumers, which were postponing purchases because of the price rise, Asher O, managing director of India Operations at Malabar Gold and Diamonds. — Reuters

Harris puts housing at center of economic pitch to US voters

WASHINGTON: Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris is promising to build more housing as the centerpiece of an effort to tackle rising costs that have stressed US households and left home ownership beyond the reach of many Americans. While Harris has deliberately steered clear of some policy specifics in her month-old presidential bid, she has laid out detailed plans to spur new construction and reduce costs for renters and homebuyers, largely through tax incentives.

"We will end America's housing shortage," she said as she accepted the Democratic presidential nomination last week. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's campaign has also promised to reduce costs through tax breaks and reduced regulations. But on the campaign trail, he has defended local housing restrictions that prevent many types of affordable housing from being built.

Voters rate housing costs as their second-most important economic worry, after fears of rising prices and stagnating income, a Reuters/Ipsos opinion poll found in May. Housing construction collapsed

Fed shift to job risks is done; now policy has to catch up

JACKSON HOLE, Wyoming: In 2022, when the Federal Reserve's focus shifted to combating inflation, it had to ratchet up interest rates fast to get monetary policy caught up with fast-rising prices. Two years later, the focus has changed again - this time to protecting the job market, as outlined in Chair Jerome Powell's speech Friday at the Fed's annual Jackson Hole conference. A policy catch-up again appears to be needed - in the other direction, albeit at a likely less frantic speed. Powell's signal of coming rate cuts completed a Fed shift that began in January when it acknowledged emerging job market risks, and now it has made countering those its top job.

The open question: Are a weakening job market and rising unemployment rate evidence of an economy settling into a healthy place of steady growth with little upside risk to the jobless rate or part of a slide that will gather speed? The answer will appear in upcoming employment reports and shape how far and fast the Fed will have to cut rates to prevent what Powell called an "unwelcome further weakening in labor market conditions."

"We do not seek or welcome further cooling in labor market conditions," Powell said, remarks that seemed to set the current 4.3 percent unemployment rate as a level he would like to defend as he made the sour admission that "conditions are now less tight than those that prevailed before the pandemic."

The jobless rate was 4.1 percent and falling when Powell became chair in 2018, falling as low as 3.5 percent in 2019 without raising inflation concerns - conditions Powell said he hoped he could recreate after COVID-19 threw the economy into a tailspin. Today's Fed rate of 5.25 percent-5.50 percent is seen as restricting the economy and putting jobs at risk and is well above officials' median estimate of 2.8 percent for the longer-term

during the 2007-2009 financial crisis and has been slow to recover in the years since, leaving the United States short 2.9 million units, according to Moody's Analytics. Pandemic-driven shortages of construction materials pushed up the price of new housing, while rising interest rates made mortgages more expensive. US home prices have risen 50 percent in the last five years and rents have risen 35 percent, according to real estate firm Zillow. Harris' housing plan could help her win over voters in an election where economic concerns are paramount, said Alyssa Cass, a Democratic strategist who says the issue is a top concern in focus groups. "Anything that would reduce the cost of housing is music to voters' ears," she said.

At an Aug. 16 campaign stop in North Carolina, Harris called for building 3 million more housing units in four years, on top of the 1 million or so built annually by the private sector, through a new tax credit for developers who build homes aimed at first-time homebuyers and a \$25,000 tax credit for those buyers. She also proposed a \$40 billion fund to encourage local governments to build more affordable housing, streamlining regulations and expanding rental aid, among other steps.

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a nonpartisan watchdog group, estimates those policies would cost at least \$200 billion over 10 years. If elected president, Harris might have trouble enacting those policies into law as similar proposals from President Joe

"neutral" rate. Assuming inflation continues ebbing towards the Fed's 2 percent target, job market changes will determine how fast officials head toward that neutral level and whether they need to go even lower to restore full employment.

"We're definitely cooling, but are we cooling to a point where we're going to level out...or is this just a pit stop to a stronger cool down?" Nela Richardson, ADP Research Institute's chief economist, said on the conference sidelines. Richardson, along with many Fed officials and others in attendance, argues the economy remains strong and is likely just settling to its underlying trends - "normalizing" from the pandemic's extremes. But the sense of urgency around employment has intensified.

The Fed's two-year battle against inflation saw rates rise to a quarter-century high without any appreciable job-market fallout. Officials next meet on Sept. 17-18 on a very different footing than just a few weeks ago as they ready to cut rates and debate whether the job market is just slowing or at a precipice.

The Fed's language around risk began steadily changing this year. Until January Fed policy statements said officials were "highly attentive" to inflation risks. Then that month it said "the risks to achieving its employment and inflation goals are moving into better balance." They said in June that risk had "moved toward better balance" and in July that risks "continue to move into better balance," adding they were now "attentive" to both the job market and inflation.

Powell's remarks completed the journey, saying "the balance of the risks to our two mandates has changed" and policymakers would "do everything we can to support a strong labor market."

Now comes the catch-up. In September officials will update interest rate projections showing their sense of the pace of cuts to come. As recently as June they were still worried about sticky inflation, saw the unemployment rate steady at 4 percent, and anticipated just a single quarter-percentage-point rate cut this year. Pantheon Macroeconomics chief economist Ian Shepherdson, who has been predicting a job market slide, called Powell's tone "startling" relative to June's outlook, taking it as evidence the Fed had "waited too long" to shift.

Biden has failed to clear Congress. Trump's position is less clear. The Republican Party's platform calls for boosting home ownership through tax breaks and eliminating regulations, though it does not outline specifics.

However, Trump also has spoken against proposals to loosen local zoning restrictions that prevent apartments, duplexes and other forms of affordable housing from being built in neighborhoods reserved for single family houses. "I keep hearing about the suburban woman doesn't like Trump," he said at a campaign event in Howell, Michigan last week. "I keep the suburbs safe. I stopped low-income towers from rising right alongside of their house, and I'm keeping the illegal aliens away from the suburbs."

Trump's running mate, US Senator JD Vance, has blamed immigrants for the housing shortage. Jenny Schuetz, a housing expert at the nonpartisan Brookings Institution, said that comment amounted to a "not very subtle dog whistle" that recalled the racially charged housing fights of the 1970s, when white residents resisted efforts to integrate suburban areas. "Trying to frame housing affordability as a social issue, rather than an economic one, isn't helpful to actually addressing the problem," she said.

During Trump's 2017-2021 presidency, his housing secretary Ben Carson proposed easing zoning rules but did not take action. More recently, he called for opposing any efforts to weaken single-family zoning in Project 2025,



NEW YORK: Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange during morning trading in New York City. — AFP

Apollo Global Management chief economist Torsten Slok, meanwhile, frets that with layoff rates remaining low, the Fed may still court inflation risk if it cuts rates too fast.

The Fed is having its own data battles. July's job gains of just 114,000 were noticeably weaker than the pandemic-era average, but in line with what before the pandemic was considered a reasonable pace to match population growth. Another closely watched metric, the ratio of open jobs to unemployed persons, has fallen from an historic high of 2-to-1 during the pandemic to 1.2-to-1, akin to pre-pandemic levels in another sign of the economy normalizing.

Powell on Friday even somewhat downplayed the 4.3 percent unemployment rate, regarding it as a result of rising labor supply and slowed hiring, not outright job losses. There is "good reason to think that the economy will get back to 2 percent inflation while maintaining a strong labor market," he said.

Boston Fed President Susan Collins said in an interview she sensed there was an "overall resilience" in the labor market, with the unemployment rate possibly about to level off.

"What I have seen is some evidence of plateauing," she said, "not a 'blowing through.'" Still, there are concerns the labor market may be weaker than it seems, risks that could play out in coming months and push the Fed towards faster or deeper rate cuts to defend its "maximum employment" objective. — Reuters



LOS ANGELES: Price reduction flyers are displayed outside of a home for sale on August 16, 2024 in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

a conservative policy plan that has been disavowed by the Trump campaign.

Harris has not said whether she would push local governments to loosen zoning regulations, but she has been involved in a broader Biden administration effort to encourage development. In June, she announced \$85 million in grants to 21 local governments to remove "barriers to affordable housing," including reforming land-use policies in some areas. The Biden administration plans to distribute another \$100 million later this year. — Reuters

Business

Canada to slap 100% tariff on Chinese EVs

US industry seeks easing of steep Biden-Harris China tariff hikes

OTTAWA: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Monday that Canada will impose a 100 percent tariff on the import of Chinese electric vehicles. Ottawa will also impose a 25 percent tariff on imported steel and aluminum from China, Trudeau told reporters in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The tariffs come a little over a month after Ottawa opened a 30-day public consultation on Chinese EVs and related products, bringing it in line with the United States and the European Union.

"I think we all know that China is not playing by the same rules," Trudeau said. "What is important about this is we're doing it in alignment and in parallel with other economies around the world," he said. Ottawa is trying to position Canada as a critical part of the global EV supply chain, and has come under pressure domestically to act against China. Canada has inked deals worth billions of dollars to bring in top European automakers in all parts of the EV supply chain to bolster its manufacturing heartland. The United States is expected to announce final implementation plans this week for steep tariff increases US President Joe Biden announced earlier this year. However, the planned duties might be softened.

Meanwhile, the Biden-Harris administration this week is expected to announce final implementation plans for steep tariff increases on certain Chinese imports, and if US industry gets its way, many of the planned duties would be softened. Manufacturers from electric vehicles to electric utility equipment have asked for the higher tariff rates to be reduced, delayed or abandoned, and for potential exclusions to be greatly expanded.

President Joe Biden in May announced a quadrupling of tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles to 100 percent, a doubling of duties on semiconductors and solar cells to 50 percent, as well as new 25 percent tariffs on lithium-ion batteries and other strategic goods including steel to shield US firms from Chi-

nese excess production. The White House had said initially the new tariffs would take effect on Aug. 1 but that was delayed until sometime in September as the US Trade Representative's office studied more than 1,100 public comments. A final determination is due by the end of August.

Whether to ease the tariffs is the administration's first major trade decision since Vice President Kamala Harris emerged as the Democratic Party's presidential nominee after Biden stepped aside in late July. The decision is politically tricky. Dialing back the duties could draw criticism from Republicans that Harris will take a softer stand on China trade in a campaign where Trump has vowed to hit Chinese imports with hefty tariffs. Proceeding with the original hikes would draw complaints about higher costs, even from some Democrats in Congress.

China has vowed retaliation against the "bullying" tariff hikes and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said they showed that some in the US may be "losing their minds."

The US decision will come in the same week that US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan will meet with Wang in a visit aimed at keeping US-China tensions in check with the November US election fast approaching.

The Biden-Harris tariffs include a new 25 percent levy on Chinese-made ship-to-shore cranes, a China-dominated sector with no US producers. The Port of New York and New Jersey said it has eight cranes on order from China's state-owned ZPMC at \$18 million apiece, and a 25 percent tariff would boost the cost of each by \$4.5 million, "causing a significant strain on the Port's critical and limited resources."

Democratic senators Tim Kaine and Mark Warner from Virginia and Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff from Georgia also raised concerns about the impact on ports in their states, calling for existing orders for



HUAIAN, China: Employees work on a new energy vehicle (NEV) assembly line at a BYD factory in Huai'an, in China's eastern Jiangsu province on August 26, 2024. - AFP

Chinese cranes to be exempted. Warnock and Ossoff also urged USTR to reconsider the planned 50 percent tariff on syringes, saying they could disrupt supplies for those used to feed newborn infants.

Ford Motor asked USTR to reduce proposed tariffs on artificial graphite, a key material used in the production of anodes for electric vehicle batteries. Ford said it still "almost exclusively" uses Chinese secondary-particle graphite. Autos Drive America, a group representing foreign-brand automakers, called for tariff rates on batteries, modules, cells, and critical minerals to be kept stable through at least 2027 to allow automakers to "fulfill investments in US production

assessment, there is scope for further normalization of monetary policy going forward, and policy rates to increase gradually for some time," he said.

The BOJ has said it was clear on what would trigger rate hikes and that its policy decisions were more data-driven. But the fact it took an actual rate hike to get its hawkish message across highlights the communication challenge facing BOJ officials, including Governor Kazuo Ueda.

The key complaint among analysts was that despite stressing it would be "data-dependent" in deciding when to raise rates, the BOJ pulled the trigger before there were clearer signs that consumption would emerge from the doldrums. That led them to believe the BOJ's July hike was driven by a desire to support a nose-diving yen rather than by strong economic data. "The fundamental problem with the BOJ's communication is that it needed to offer hawkish guidance to stem yen falls, even though many measurements of the economy were weak," said Shigeto Nagai, head of Japan economics at Oxford Economics. In an about-face from the hawkish July communication, BOJ Deputy Governor Shinichi Uchida reassured jittery markets this month that it won't hike rates while markets remained unstable.

With a measure of calm now restored, though, Ueda returned again to hawkish jawboning, telling parliament on Friday the BOJ will keep hiking rates to levels seen as neutral - neither stimulating nor restricting the economy. To avoid confusing markets, the BOJ needs a medium-term framework with clearer guidance on its long-term rate hike path, some analysts say.

While the BOJ issues quarterly long-term growth and inflation forecasts, it does not have a Fed-style dot plot of policymaker rate projections nor an estimate of the neutral rate. Ueda said on Friday there was not enough data to come up with a credible estimate on Japan's neutral rate, though he added the BOJ would keep trying. "The primary task for the BOJ is to pull the market's focus away from the next meeting or the next hike, and guide it more toward where rates will go over the medium term," said Jeffrey Young, chief executive officer of US research firm DeepMacro. "That's something that we don't really have a lot of guidance on." - Reuters

and to bolster consumer adoption" of EVs.

There were some companies that urged more extensive Section 301 tariffs, including for Chinese made steel, which Biden proposed to increase to 25 percent from 7.5 percent. Finnish stainless steelmaker Outokumpu, which operates a mill in Alabama, said it supported the increase and wants it extended to all steel products melted and poured in China and processed in other countries, such as Vietnam, to curb tariff circumvention. The steelmaker also said the higher tariffs should extend to other stainless steel categories, such as cutlery and refrigeration and brewery equipment. - Reuters

BOJ shows how action matters more than hawkish signs

JACKSON HOLE, Wyoming: For academics and policymakers gathered at the US Federal Reserve's annual Jackson Hole economic conference to debate how central banks can affect market perceptions on the course of monetary policy, the Bank of Japan might appear to have gotten it right in July when it raised rates for a second time. In March the BOJ managed at last to end eight years of negative interest rates. The next month it began dropping hints it would kick off steady interest rate hikes if inflation remained on track to meet its forecasts.

The message went ignored by markets, until last month. That's when the BOJ backed hawkish signaling with action: It lifted short-term rates to 0.25 percent from 0-0.1 percent in a surprise move that triggered a global unwinding of carry trades that for the better part of a decade had been funded with ultra-cheap Japanese yen. The subsequent market rout forced the BOJ to backtrack and offer reassurance it won't hike again until markets stabilize. And yet, it showed how central bank communication has maximum impact when words are matched with action.

The BOJ's experience dovetails with findings in a new research presented at this year's Jackson Hole conference, where global central bank policymakers discussed ways to enhance their communication with markets. The paper - "Changing Perceptions and Post-Pandemic Monetary Policy" - showed how it took substantial rate hikes by the Fed for the public and markets to fully grasp how committed policymakers were to ensuring inflation returned to the US central bank's 2 percent target.

"Policy rate actions contribute to, and may even be necessary for, the effectiveness of communication, particularly when uncertainty about the monetary policy framework is high," the authors wrote. "As our evidence shows, a timely policy rate response to inflation



TOKYO: A pedestrian walks in front of the Bank of Japan headquarters in Tokyo. - AFP

matters not only for influencing immediate financial conditions, but also for signaling that policy makers are serious about responding to future inflation news." To be sure, the highest Japan's inflation rose was to 4.2 percent in January 2023, well below the 7.1 percent peak US rate that pushed the Fed into rate-hike overdrive in June 2022. Japanese inflation in July was 2.7 percent and has held above the BOJ's 2 percent target for more than two years, with broadening wage hikes starting to push up services prices.

In current projections made in July, the BOJ expects core consumer inflation to stay around its target through the year ending in March 2027. It has also warned that yen depreciation could fan inflationary risks that warrant steady rate hikes. "We're expecting that as inflation expectations remain stable at their new level close to 2 percent, the BOJ will start normalizing policy rates," IMF chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas told Reuters on Friday. "Certainly in our

Temu owner says net profits surge 144% in Q2 2024

BEIJING: Chinese e-commerce giant PDD Holdings — owner of shopping platform Temu — announced Monday a jump in net profit for the second quarter as the company continues to boost its competitiveness at home and abroad. The Shanghai-based firm reported \$4.4 billion of net profit for the quarter ending June 30, a 144 percent rise from the same period last year, according to a company statement.

Its sales rose 86 percent year-on-year to \$13.4 billion. PDD Holdings is the parent company of Pinduoduo — a Chinese online marketplace for low-cost products launched in 2015. Pinduoduo is experiencing growing success in China at a time when Chinese consumers are cutting back on spending and turning to low-cost products even despite an economic slowdown and high youth unemployment. Its international version, Temu, has sucked in consumers with its low prices and all-powerful algorithms. It has become one of the most popular online shopping sites in the United States, propelled by a marketing strategy that featured multiple prime-time Super Bowl advertisements.

It is also one of the fastest-growing apps in Europe despite only entering the EU market in April 2023, and has already faced fierce scrutiny from consumer groups over its practices. PDD Holdings founder Colin Huang, worth \$48.6 billion, recently became China's richest man, the Bloomberg Billionaires Index showed in August. In April, regulators in South Korea opened an investigation into Temu on suspicion of unfair practices including false advertising and poor product quality. - AFP



BEIJING: People walk along the Huguosi street, Xicheng district, a dedicated food street in Beijing. - AFP

China central bank rolls over maturing loans, injects cash

SHANGHAI: China's central bank rolled over maturing medium-term loans and injected cash through its liquidity instruments on Monday, underlining market expectations for further easing as the economy struggles to gain traction. The People's Bank of China (PBOC) said it was keeping the rate on 300 billion yuan (\$42.11 billion) worth of one-year medium-term lending facility (MLF) loans to some financial institutions at 2.30 percent, unchanged from the previous operation.

And it injected another 471 billion yuan through seven-day reverse repos while keeping borrowing costs unchanged at 1.70 percent. "Today's outcome adds to expectation for a near-term reserve requirement ratio (RRR) cut," said Frances Cheung, head of FX and rates strategy at OCBC Bank.

"Meanwhile, as US rates fell further, there may also be renewed expectations for an interest rate cut (in

China)." China is struggling with a prolonged property crisis that has curbed investment and dented consumer demand. Monday's reverse repo operation was meant to "keep month-end banking system liquidity conditions reasonably ample," the central bank said in an online statement.

A batch of 401 billion yuan worth of MLF loans was due earlier this month, when the PBOC said it would postpone the loan rollover. The postponement and the sequence of a string of key interest rate cuts last month suggested that the central bank has changed its monetary policy framework, market watchers said, shifting the short-term rate to being the main signal guiding markets. OCBC's Cheung expected the difference in yields between 5-year and 30-year, and 2-year and 30-year China government bond yields, to steepen. PBOC Governor Pan Gongsheng, in remarks published in state media on Saturday, said the central bank would adhere to supportive monetary policy to guide reasonable growth in credit lending and help the world's second-largest economy.

On Friday, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell made it clear the US central bank would not shy away from pivoting to interest rate cuts in the final weeks of a presidential election campaign and that protecting the job market was now its top priority. - Reuters

US business spending on equipment shows signs of cooling in July

WASHINGTON: New orders for key US-manufactured capital goods unexpectedly fell in July and data for the prior month was revised lower, suggesting a loss of momentum in business spending on equipment that extended into the early part of the third quarter. Non-defense capital goods orders excluding aircraft, a closely watched proxy for business spending plans, dipped 0.1 percent last month after a downwardly revised 0.5 percent increase in June, the Commerce Department's Census Bureau said on Monday.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast these so-called core capital goods orders would be unchanged after a previously reported 0.9 percent jump in June. Business spending on equipment notched double-digit growth in the second quarter, with spending on goods largely holding up despite 525 basis points worth of interest rate hikes from the Federal Reserve in 2022 and 2023. The US central bank has maintained its benchmark overnight interest rate in the current 5.25 percent-5.50 percent range for more than a year. Fed Chair Jerome Powell last Friday signaled rate cuts were imminent amid concerns over labor market weakness. Financial markets expect the Fed to kick off its easing cycle next month with a 25-basis-point rate reduction, though a half-percentage point cut cannot be ruled out. Core capital goods shipments fell 0.4 percent after being unchanged in June. Non-defense capital goods orders rebounded 41.9 percent. They dropped 22.9 percent in June. Shipments of these goods rose 4.7 percent after increasing 6.1 percent in June.

Shipments go into the calculation of the business spending on equipment component in the gross domestic product report. Business investment in equipment contributed to the economy's 2.8 percent annualized growth pace in the second quarter. "The upshot is that equipment investment is currently on track to post a modest gain in the third quarter," said Paul Ashworth, chief North America economist at Capital Economics. Orders for durable goods, items ranging from toasters to aircraft meant to last three years or more, surged 9.9 percent in July after a revised 6.9 percent drop in the prior month. Durable goods orders were previously reported to have declined 6.7 percent in June. They were boosted last month by a 34.8 percent rebound in transportation orders after tumbling 20.6 percent in June. That reflected a 12.9 percent jump in defense aircraft orders. Motor vehicle orders fell 2.6 percent. - Reuters

'100% pure N Zealand' dairy firm busted for using Indian butter

WELLINGTON: A Kiwi dairy company has been busted for falsely claiming its products were "100 percent pure New Zealand", despite using butter imported from India. Dairy firm Milkio Foods Limited was fined US\$261,452 on Monday after New Zealand's Commerce Commission took it to court for making false claims about the origin of its butter products.

The Hamilton-based firm misled customers about where its ghee products came from, with "claims like '100% Pure New Zealand' despite importing the core ingredient from India", the Commerce Commission said in a statement. New Zealand's agriculture-driven industry prides itself on high-quality dairy exports, with overseas customers hungry for milk and butter from its rich pastures. "Milkio took advantage of this reputation to promote their own products" Commerce Commission spokesperson Vanessa Horne said. The company also presented false and incomplete information to get approval to use the FernMark logo — a trusted symbol to identify New Zealand-made products. Milkio pleaded guilty to 15 breaches of New Zealand's Fair Trading Act for making false representations and admitted using the FernMark logo and licence number without proper authorization. - AFP

Lifestyle



This combination of pictures shows (from left) US actor Brad Pitt, US singer-songwriter Lady Gaga, US-Australian actress Nicole Kidman, US actress Angelina Jolie and US actor George Clooney. — AFP photos

Venice gets surge of star power, from Lady Gaga to Pitt, Clooney

Stars from Angelina Jolie to George Clooney will gather this week at the Venice Film Festival, bringing a high dose of Hollywood pizzazz back to the watery city's sandy Lido. With 21 films vying for the top Golden Lion prize, the 81st edition of the prestigious festival kicks off Wednesday, with Lady Gaga, Daniel Craig and Brad Pitt expected on the red carpet during the 10-day affair.

The dazzle is welcome after Hollywood strikes last year kept most studio films and their A-listers away from the world's longest-running festival, known as "La Mostra". In the spotlight, but out of competition, is "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice", the long anticipated sequel to Tim Burton's 1988 cult classic that opens the festival Wednesday, with Michael Keaton, Catherine O'Hara and Winona Ryder reprising their original roles. High-profile contenders in the main competition include Todd Phillips' "Joker: Folie à Deux", the sequel to the US director's 2019 Venice-winning film that sees Joaquin Phoenix paired with Lady Gaga, and "Queen" from Italy's Luca Guadagnino starring Craig, based on the William Burroughs novel set in 1940s Mexico City.

Jolie headlines "Maria", a Maria Callas biopic from Chile's Pablo Larraín who returns to Venice following his Diana drama "Spencer" in 2021, while Nicole Kidman and Antonio Banderas

star in erotic thriller "Babygirl" from Dutch director Halina Reijn. To keep the drama on the screen — and avoid it behind-the-scenes — "Maria" will premiere on the festival's first full day Thursday, while "Wolfs" starring Jolie's ex, Brad Pitt, will screen out of competition on Sunday.

Joining Pitt in the Apple TV+ film from "Spider-Man" director Jon Watts is Clooney, with the actors playing rival professional fixers in the action comedy. The main competition also includes the first full-length film in English for Venice regular, Spain's Pedro Almodóvar — "The Room Next Door" with Tilda Swinton and Julianne Moore — while "The Order" from Australian director Justin Kurzel sees Jude Law playing



British actress Tilda Swinton speaks to the press after a rehearsal of her latest drama 'Pier Paolo Pasolini' at the Taipei Performing Arts Center in Taipei.

an FBI agent investigating a terror ring in the Pacific Northwest.

Weaver, Costner and Kline

Wednesday's opening night will feature the introduction of the international jury led by its president, French actress Isabelle Huppert, and the awarding of an honorary Golden Lion for lifetime achievement to "Alien" star, US actress Sigourney Weaver. Also having its out-of-competition debut is the second chapter of Kevin Costner's "Horizon: An American Saga". The first part of the actor-director's Western epic premiered at Cannes in May.

Running until September 7, the international festival has increasingly become known for showcasing films that go on to Oscar glory for its directors and cast members, including former Golden Lion winners "Poor Things", "Nomadland" and "Joker". Unlike at the rival Cannes Film Festival, Venice accepts films produced by streaming services in competition, especially Netflix, which has found great success launching titles such as "Maestro" and "Roma" at the Italian festival. Besides "Wolfs", Apple TV+ also produced "Disclaimer", a thriller series starring Cate Blanchett, Kevin Kline and Sacha Baron Cohen which is also having its premiere in Venice. — AFP

Tim Burton, Hollywood's Goth soul, heads to Venice

With Tim Burton's "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice" to premiere at the Venice Film Festival this week, the US director's dark, oddball yet always tender cinematic approach looks poised for its latest success. From "Edward Scissorhands" (1990) to "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" (2005), Burton's films are instant classics, ageless works seen and re-seen from generation to generation without losing any of their eerie magic.

Slated to kick off the prestigious festival Wednesday in an out-of-competition screening, Burton's "Beetlejuice" sequel is "the happy confirmation of the extraordinary visionary talent" of its director, in the words of festival head Alberto Barbera. It's a taste for monsters and the dark that non-conformist Burton has cultivated since his childhood spent in the Los Angeles suburb of Burbank, over the hill from Hollywood and home to the major film studios including Disney.

A loner as a child, but saved by a love of drawing, Burton - who turned 66 Sunday - says he always felt apart from others, one of those "weirdos" others consider strange. "I liked everything that was a little different, strange. I didn't fit into the classic categories," he has said. But the fantasy films and horror flicks that Burton turned to became a refuge, fueling his nascent interest in the creepy,

kooky and fantastical.

Decades later, Burton remains rather taciturn, preferring to create rather than explain his world populated by skeletons, ghosts and headless horsemen. He has cited "the element of mystery", saying he prefers his work to speak for itself.

Pee-wee, Batman and Scissorhands

A fan of "stop motion", a rudimentary frame-by-frame animation technique, Burton joined Disney on a scholarship, working on the studio's 1981 cartoon, "The Fox and the Hound". But the eccentric Burton left, finding himself a poor fit with Disney's sunny, family-friendly fare - gravitating instead to a cinematic vision that plays up the imperfect, the handmade, the cobbled-together.

That quirky charm was on display in his 1985 directorial debut, "Pee-wee's Big Adventure", but perhaps felt most acutely in "Beetlejuice" three years later, a gothic tale where dying seems like a big joke, and where the peaceful co-existence between ghosts and humans seems almost possible. In 1989, Burton again tapped "Beetlejuice" star Michael Keaton for "Batman", ushering in a new era for flawed superheroes in the film the director has described as "a complete duel of the freaks". — AFP



(From left to right) Jenna Ortega, Catherine O'Hara, Michael Keaton, Winona Ryder, Justin Theroux, Monica Bellucci and Tim Burton attend the "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice" New York photo call at JW Marriott Essex House. — AFP

Britain embraces 'set-jetting' trend

Standing opposite a mansion in the elegant English city of Bath, Tegan Shirdon marveled at the window from where Penelope, one of the heroines of "Bridgerton", would eye her love interest Colin in the hit show. A "huge fan" of the Netflix series which has racked up 300 million views, the 20-year-old Australian student was

"Bridgerton" shoots. She pointed to a Marks & Spencer's supermarket sign that made it on-screen after production editors missed it, while noting the handsome fees paid to locals to stay indoors during filming. "A lot of people when thinking about where to go for holidays, they'll put their favorite show on and go 'Oh, actually, why don't we check out

travel group Expedia. It found that 39 percent of tourists surveyed reported they had chosen a destination after seeing it featured on screen.

'Motivator'

Set-jetting is "becoming a significant driver and motivator for travel," said Robin Johnson of the VisitBritain

Seven out of 10 international tourists have visited at least one film and TV location during their stay in the UK in the last 10 years, according to VisitBritain. Over 90 percent of potential visitors would be eager to do so in the future, it noted. "There is not really much film back home where I am, so if I want to see any set of a TV show I need to come on a 17-hour flight on the other side of the world," said Shirdon, a journalism student.

Enduring franchises such as "James Bond" and "Harry Potter" continue to attract millions of visitors. But more recent productions, such as "Game of Thrones" in Northern Ireland, "Outlander" in Scotland, and more recently "The Crown" as well as "Bridgerton" in England, are sustaining the momentum. To further boost this "powerful pull", VisitBritain and the British Film Commission, the industry's support agency, plan to launch a joint promotional campaign next year. Called "Starring GREAT Britain", it is aimed at attracting more travelers as well as new productions.

'Transformed'

The campaign will place filming locations and associated visitor experiences "center-stage, telling the story of Britain's regional diversity to drive visits and spend across the regions", according to the agencies. "When you look at what has happened in the UK over the last 10 years, the UK is now perceived as one of the biggest places in the world to make film and television," Adrian Wootton, head of the British Film Commission, told AFP. He noted the country had netted £3.1 billion (\$4.1 billion) of foreign investment as a result.

The key to this success? A com-



Visitors leave tips after they were shown around the city by tour guide Ruby Maidment, during a visit to discover the sets of the Netflix series "Bridgerton".

combination of breathtaking scenery, English-speaking talent, big investment in studios and other filmmaking hubs, as well as generous tax reliefs, he argued. "Places like Northern Ireland have been transformed by a series... nobody would have considered it a tourist destination," before "Game of Thrones" and its recent prequel "House of the Dragon", Wootton added. By the end of 2023, "Bridgerton" had already generated £5 million for the local economy thanks to domestic and international visitors - and that was before a popular third season aired this year.

"There's definitely so much history in the UK that you don't get as much in Canada, so we love to visit and learn all about the history," Canadian transplant to the UK Emily Maniquet told AFP during a visit to Bath. "I love British television," she added, noting she had already visited "Harry Potter" filming locations during a trip to Edinburgh. — AFP



Visitors follow the tour guide Ruby Maidment during a visit to discover the sets of the Netflix series "Bridgerton".

one of around 30 tourists to descend on the southwestern city recently. They had come from countries including the Netherlands, Canada, Spain and Japan to admire the setting for the early 19th century romance drama.

Film student Ruby Maidment, their guide for the day, dished out historical anecdotes alongside snippets about

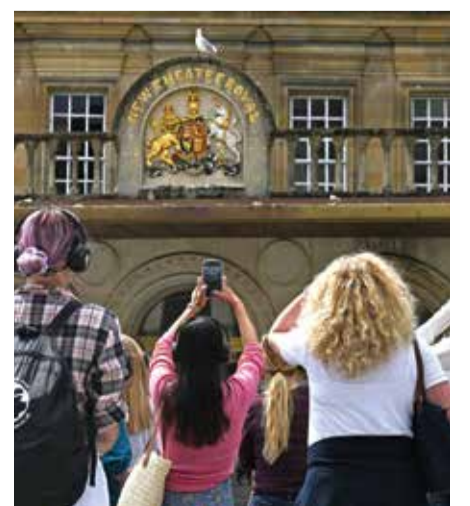
there?," she told AFP.

This trend has a name: so-called set-jetting. It has emerged in recent years with the rise of streaming platforms, and has boomed further since the Coronavirus pandemic. Movies and television series have become the leading source of travel inspiration, ahead of social networks, according to online

tourism authority. "I think particularly for younger audiences - Gen Z, millennials - who are growing up on streaming," he added. "It really makes sense for us Britain to capitalize on (it), because there is no bigger or better platform to promote a destination than high-end film or TV series. Money can't buy that sort of exposure."



Visitors follow the tour guide Ruby Maidment as they walk by The Circus during a visit to discover the sets of the Netflix series "Bridgerton", in Bath, western England. — AFP photos



Visitors take photographs with their mobile phones as they attend a visit to discover the sets of the Netflix series "Bridgerton".

Lifestyle



A steam-powered train.



The London Underground steam-powered train in 1866. - KUNA photos



A steam-powered train from 1866.



The new London Underground.

London Underground: World's oldest metro transit system

The London Underground, launched over 160 years ago, is the world's oldest metro transit system, created to reduce congestion in one of the busiest cities on the planet. It opened on January 10, 1863, at a cost of one million pounds sterling, and initially operated with steam-powered locomotives. On its first day, around

38,000 passengers used the service, a figure that grew to 9.5 million in its first year and 12 million by the second.

Electric-powered trains were introduced in 1890, and during World War II, the Underground served as a refuge and a covert manufacturing site for weapons and aircraft parts during the German bombings of 1940-41.

Today, the London Underground accommodates 1.3 billion passengers annually, with 272 stations and 15 lines. It continues to evolve, ranking as the world's second-largest metro system, just behind Shanghai's. — KUNA

Friend of French rapper SCH shot dead after concert

A friend of French rapper SCH was shot dead early Monday after leaving a club in the south of the country where the musician had just performed, a source close to the case told AFP. Another person was wounded in the shooting outside La Dune club in La Grande Motte, a popular seaside resort whose synagogue was attacked in a suspected terror attack Saturday. Unknown assailants opened fire with an automatic weapon on a car regularly used by the 31-year-old Marseille singer whose real name is Julien Schwarzer. Both men inside were hit.

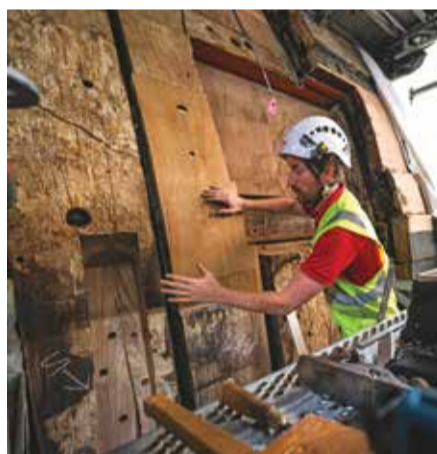
Police said the shots were fired from another car carrying four passengers on a road running along the seafront that is busy in the daytime but deserted at night. The dead man was hit twice in the chest with the other victim suffering life-threatening injuries, they said. A source close to the investigation said the shooting bore the hallmarks of the bloody score-settling between drug gangs in Marseille, France's second-big-

gest city, that left 49 people dead last year. SCH's label, Rec. 118, declined to comment when contacted by AFP. Police cordoned off the area, with heavily-armed gendarmes patrolling at a nearby roundabout.

SCH is currently on tour with several concerts scheduled over the next few months, including in Paris's 20,000-capacity Accor Arena. The nightclub where SCH performed Sunday is where another rapper, PLK, punched a policeman in 2022. He was later jailed for a year. La Grande Motte, near Montpellier, has about 8,500 permanent residents, but the population swells during the summer tourist season. On Saturday, a man draped in a Palestinian flag started fires and caused an explosion near a synagogue in the town in what authorities say was an anti-Semitic attack. A police officer was injured. The suspect, a 33-year-old Algerian, was arrested after a shootout with police in nearby Nîmes in which he was wounded. —AFP



This photograph shows a view of La Dune nightclub, near an investigation site following gunshots, at La Grande Motte, southern France.--AFP



James Haycraft, a shipwright, repairs the wooden futtocks, part of the hull of HMS Victory, Britain's most celebrated naval warship as it undergoes a restoration project, "Victory Live: The Big Repair" at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard on the south coast of England. - AFP photos



People enter the temporary structure covering HMS Victory.



Project Manager Simon Williams (left) and Richard Atherton, lead shipwright, talk beside the top deck of HMS Victory.



A temporary structure shrouds HMS Victory.

Deathwatch beetle threat to celebrated British warship

HMS Victory has survived the cannonballs of Napoleon's navy, being rammed by another warship, a World War II bomb, even UK navy plans to scrap her. But nearly 260 years after it was launched, Victory - emblem of British maritime heritage and scene of naval hero Horatio Nelson's death during the Battle of Trafalgar - is facing another equally deadly threat: the deathwatch beetle. The 104-gun warship is undergoing a £45 million (\$60 million) refit, which is one of the biggest of its kind carried out.

Visited each year by over 350,000 people in Portsmouth Dockyard on England's southern coast, Victory's huge renovation follows the unwelcome discovery that much of the wooden structure was affected by rot. Shipwright surveys found that rain water had caused decay and created food for the dreaded beetles. Without urgent action Victory would have continued to degrade, ending in "catastrophic structural failure", conservation project manager Simon Williams told AFP. Visitors to the ship currently find it's middle section encased in scaffolding to allow a team of shipwrights to painstakingly replace parts of the "frames" - described as the vessel's ribs.

'Rotten wood'

After that "replanking" will see it given a new water-tight outer layer. Project managers are also consulting with experts at the University of Southampton to ensure modern materials are employed where possible to provide maximum longevity. For shipwright James Haycraft, however, much of the work involves the exact same techniques his predecessors would have used two-and-a-half centuries ago. "It's very much unchanged," he said, as he planed a section from which rot-



Visitors walk around the stern of HMS Victory, Britain's most celebrated naval warship as it undergoes a restoration project, "Victory Live: The Big Repair" at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard on the south coast of England.

ten wood had been removed ready for a replacement.

"The tools I'm using - they solve the problem," he said, pointing to his plane, a mallet and a chisel. Once work on the middle section of the ship is finished, shipwrights will repeat the process on the bow and stern. Other work will see the masts conserved and the entire ship re-rigged to return Victory to its previous glory.

Nelson

It is not the first time Victory has been "saved" from neglect. Until now, its survival has been more a case of "luck" than "judgement", said Williams.

At one point, a plan by navy top brass to remove most of the multiple decks and cut it down to a two-decker was only halted by a public outcry. "The Battle of Trafalgar connection is what saved her but I don't think the navy were that sentimental about warships," he said.

"I don't think that would have saved her if the navy felt that scrapping her was the best option," he added. The public, however, have long taken Victory to their hearts. Its story is inextricably intertwined with that of Admiral Lord Nelson, who masterminded a string of naval victories over the French culminating in the 1805 Battle of Trafalgar.

The battle in which he died defeat-

ing the combined French and Spanish fleet ended the threat of invasion by France under Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. It earned Nelson national hero status. At his funeral at London's St Paul's cathedral his coffin was carried by six fellow admirals and thousands lined the streets. The 51-metre (169 feet) Nelson's Column monument erected in his memory still towers over Trafalgar Square in the heart of the city.

'Visceral experience'

The last time Victory underwent a revamp on the current scale was in 1814. A "Save the Victory" campaign, spearheaded by the Society for Nautical Research, in 1922 also led to major work and it was opened as a museum six years later. For nearly a century, visitors have been able to immerse themselves in what Williams calls the "really visceral experience" of what it would have been like to be an eighteenth century sailor.

Victory's 820 crew lived and worked in cramped, low-ceilinged decks, sleeping in hammocks and surviving on rations of salted meat, cheese, dried peas and biscuits and a daily half pint (280 milliliters) of rum. "The stories of bravery and of Nelson's leadership continue to inspire," added Williams. Today there is relief that the 12-year project is successfully underway with completion pencilled in for 2032/3. The vessel is the only surviving ship to have taken part in the American War of Independence, the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars. If the project goes to plan, it is hoped it will allow Victory to survive out in the open for at least another 50, maybe even 100, years. — AFP



Visitors take a selfie as they walk around the stern of HMS Victory.



A general view of the structure housing HMS Victory.

Sports

Two key Paris landmarks for Paralympics opening ceremony

Parade to involve more than 180 delegations and 4,400 para-olympians

PARIS: Paris has chosen the iconic Champs-Élysées avenue and the historic Place de la Concorde to host the opening ceremony for the Summer Paralympics on Wednesday.

The prestigious avenue sweeping through the 8th arrondissement to the west of central Paris is dotted with cafes, palaces and luxury shops and connects the Arc de Triomphe in the west with Place de la Concorde in the east in a single straight line.

The Champs-Élysées

Tens of thousands of people daily throng the two-kilometre-(one mile)-long tree-lined artery with its wide sidewalks. It has long been for French a place of celebrations and popular gatherings. It was there in 1960 that American actress Jean Seberg appeared in Jean-Luc Godard's legendary new wave film "Breathless" selling copies of the New York Herald Tribune.

On Wednesday it will be the scene of a popular parade, open to everyone and involving up to more than 180 delegations and 4,400 para-olympians from around the world. France has celebrated two football World Cup victories there, the traditional military parade on July 14, the Bastille Day national holiday, and the Tour de France cycle race ends there.

Hundreds of thousands of Parisians and tourists gather there to celebrate New Year's Eve. Once fields and fallow land, the avenue started to take shape when Louis XIV's city planner first linked the Louvre to the Tuileries Garden in the mid-17th century.

At one end of the avenue is the Arc de Triomphe, commissioned by French Emperor Napoleon which now honors France's war dead, and was inaugurated in 1836. France's WWII leader General Charles de Gaulle, chose it, of course, for his triumphant return from exile on August 26, 1944, after the Liberation of Paris from the Nazis.

However the prestigious thoroughfare has known scenes of unrest. Police used tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannon when "yellow vest" anti-government protesters in 2018 attacked the Arc de Triomphe, and ransacked shops.

However, with stores and historic cinemas closing along the avenue due to rising rents and falling sales, locals have gradually abandoned the Champs-Élysées over concerns that it is too noisy, dirty and expensive. With Paris' other famous symbol the Eiffel Tower looming just across the River Seine, the name is the French for Elysian Fields, the paradise for dead heroes in Greek mythology.

Place de la Concorde

At the other end, the Place de la Concorde, the largest square in Paris, will be the scene of the official parade for ticket holders, in addition to the protocol and artistic sequences. The square has a bloody past: Then known as "Place de la Revolution" it was a place of execution and heads rolled (literally) there during the French Revolution.

King Louis XVI and his wife Marie-Antoinette were famously guillotined there in 1793 during the Reign of Terror that followed the 1789 Revolution. It was renamed Concorde af-



COQUELLES: Former French wheelchair fencer Emmanuelle Assmann (C-L) with the torch of the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games on her wheelchair and other torchbearers raise their hands after arrival of the Paralympics flame at the entrance of the Channel Tunnel in Coquelles. — AFP

ter the July Revolution of 1830.

Today the elegant paved square by the Seine is defined by its huge obelisk, one of a pair originally

erected by Ramses II outside the temple in Luxor in Egypt in the 13th century BC. It was gifted to Paris in 1830. — AFP

Ko ends eight-year major drought with British Open win

ST ANDREWS: Lydia Ko said she had enjoyed a "Cinderella" story after ending an eight-year wait for a major title by winning the Women's British Open at St. Andrews on Sunday, just a fortnight after her Olympic gold medal triumph in Paris. The New Zealander finished in champion style with a superb birdie on the 18th hole of a windswept Old Course to complete a round of three-under-par 69 and claim her third major title with a tournament total of seven under.

"It is surreal," Ko told Sky Sports. "Winning the gold medal in Paris a few weeks ago was almost too good to be true. Heading into the weekend I thought 'how is it possible for me to win the Open?' "This is almost too good to be true. Out of all the major championships, this was the one I had the least amount of confidence in."

Victory gave Ko, 27, her first major since she won the 2016 Chevron Championship. Ko, who as a 17-year-old became the youngest player to be ranked number one in professional golf, added: "It is the most Cinderella-like story these past

two weeks. To be holding this trophy now, it is some achievement.

"I thought to myself because of the last few weeks it is not going to happen. So don't overreact and play the shot in front of you. My two goals were to par the 11th and birdie the 18th, I achieved both. This is such a special place.

"I always said I wanted to win another major championship. Here I am now as a three-time major champion." Defending champion Lilia Vu failed to sink a 15-foot birdie putt on the last at the 'Home of Golf', to force a play-off and then missed from barely 12 inches as Ko, already in the clubhouse, completed a two-shot win.

Korda collapse

World number one Nelly Korda led by two strokes on the 14th tee of the renowned links course on Scotland's east coast following a run of three birdies in four holes around the turn. But the American then took seven shots on the par-five 14th.

Her bid for victory finally ended when she found the infamous Road Hole bunker on the 17th, which she subsequently bogeyed. Korda finished in joint-second place alongside Vu, Yin Ruoning and Shin Ji-yai on five under.

"I had 58-degree (for my third shot), and it just shot on me," Korda said of her double bogey on the 14th. "The wedge shot I had over the green was sitting a little bit in a hole with some of 'hay' or whatever



ST ANDREWS: England's Lottie Woad (L) and New Zealand's Lydia Ko pose with their trophies on day four of the 2024 Women's British Open Golf Championship. — AFP

er you call it behind it. I just couldn't catch it cleanly and then obviously didn't make the putt for bogey."

England's Charley Hull, who led after the first round to raise hopes of a first major title after finishing runner-up in both last year's Women's British Open and Women's US Open, endured a frustrating final day before she finished tied for 20th on one over par.

But compatriot Lottie Woad won the Smyth Salver, awarded to the tournament's leading amateur, after a closing birdie gave her a total of one-under par. — AFP



Sun Yang

Chinese swimmer Sun Yang wins on return from doping ban

SHANGHAI: Disgraced three-time Olympic swimming champion Sun Yang has won his first title in the pool after coming back from a four-year doping ban. The Chinese freestyler was originally suspended for eight years by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in 2020 for smashing vials of blood during a 2018 test, the circumstances of which he still disputes.

The ban was reduced on appeal to four years and three months by the Court of Arbitration for Sport in 2021. It expired in May, too late for him to join the Chinese team at the Paris Olympics. The swimmer instead earned his first post-ban gold medal on Sunday at the second level Chinese National Summer Swimming Championships.

Sun won the men's 400m freestyle, pulling ahead of his rivals after the first 200 metres to win in 3min 49.58sec, considerably slower than his personal best, an Olympic record 3:40.14 set at London 2012. Sun told state media outlet Xinhua he could have done better. "I do feel rusty in controlling the tempo, and I need more competitions," Sun said.

He wrote in a post on the X-like Weibo social platform Sunday that his past victories and failures had all "taught (him) how to face life's many difficulties and challenges." Sun's comeback comes after Chinese swimmers faced intense scrutiny over doping allegations at the 2024 Olympics in Paris.

The two-metre tall (6ft 7in) Sun was the first Chinese swimmer to win Olympic gold, in 400m and 1500m at the 2012 London Games, but has long been a controversial figure in the pool. Some rivals called him a cheat at the 2016 Rio Olympics and two competitors refused to stand with him on medal podiums at the 2019 world championships. Sun was also given a three-month ban in 2014 after testing positive for a banned substance. — AFP

Bradley triumphs in BMW Championship

LOS ANGELES: USA Ryder Cup captain Keegan Bradley pulled off a surprise win at the BMW Championship with his final round even-par 72 enough to secure a one stroke victory Sunday at Castle Pines. Bradley had only qualified in the final spot in the top 50 of the FedEx Cup standings with his last round at the St Jude Championship last week.

But the 38-year-old overnight leader drew on all his experience to produce a solid round on the Colorado course and finish on 12-under for the tournament. From coming into the week ranked 50 out of

NBK supports Rafa Nadal Academy Youth Team Summer Camp

TOULOUSE: As part of its sponsorship agreement with Rafa Nadal Academy Kuwait (RNAK), National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is keen to promote public health and the practice of sports activities. In this context, NBK supported Rafa Nadal Academy youth team summer camp in Toulouse.

This comes as part of the bank's firm commitment to performing its social responsibilities, and its relentless pursuit of sustainable development by encouraging members of society to do sports and adopt healthy lifestyles. Ten players from the youth program at the academy participated in the three-week summer camp, which included tournaments and daily training sessions. On this occasion, Mohammad Al Sarraf, Sports Team Manager and PR Officer at National Bank of Kuwait said: "Through its support for sports, including this camp, NBK aims to improve our community's wellbeing and lifestyle."

"At NBK, we believe in the transformative power of sports, especially for our youth. Partnering with the Rafa Nadal Tennis Academy in Kuwait is not just about tennis; it's about shaping character, fostering teamwork, and instilling lifelong values. Through this sponsorship, we aspire to build a legacy of excellence, where the energy of our youth translates into a brighter, more vibrant future for Kuwait," he added.



Mohammad Al Sarraf



"Sports and health represent completely a foundational priority at NBK, and is one of our six main sustainability CSR focus areas," he explained. Al Sarraf also highlighted the importance of sports in contributing effectively to the well-being of our community. "By providing the opportunity for our community members to participate and excel in a team setting, this helps boost their morals, wellbeing and motivates them even higher."

"NBK seeks to establish partnerships with leading institutions in all fields, in a way that contributes to support its community needs and expectations. Our commitment to supporting youth reflects our dedication to empowering the next generation. By investing in sports and education, we aim to cultivate not just tennis skills but also resilience, discipline, and a healthier future for our youth" he pointed.

50. Bradley has now flown up the FedEx Cup rankings and heads to next week's final event, the Tour Championship in Atlanta, fourth in the standings.

Sweden's Ludwig Aberg, Australian Adam Scott and American Sam Burns had all threatened to steal the lead on the back nine but Bradley, who made two birdies and two bogeys — including on the final hole when the win was in the bag — held firm.

It was the seventh win on the PGA Tour for Bradley and it was greeted with chants of 'USA, USA' around the 18th green for a player strongly associated with the country's Ryder Cup team. Bradley and Scott had been jousting for the lead for most of the weekend and the outcome was still in play on the final green.

With Bradley enjoying a two-stroke advantage, Scott had a chance for birdie while the American had

a long and tricky putt from off the green. A birdie for the Australian and a bogey for Bradley would have taken their duel to a playoff but after Scott missed his 18-foot attempt, Bradley could afford his bogey.

"I was shaking over that last putt. I was ready for those cheers. We did it. It was a battle all day," he said. Bradley had described his performance last Sunday, to sneak into the top 50, as one of the most nerve-wracking experiences he had endured on tour and he smiled when considering how his week had turned out.

"It just shows why you've got to grind it out every week because you never know how fast it can switch. Now I go to Atlanta with a chance to win the FedEx Cup," he said. "I can't believe it. I'm so excited. My dad, first time he's seen me win, so we're pumped."

Bradley was watched by his father Mark, who had

taught him the game while working as a club professional. Scott, who had made his PGA Tour debut as a 20-year-old at this course, had pushed himself into the lead with an eagle on the par-5 first hole.

But he ultimately paid the price for a run of four bogeys on the back nine, including three in a row from the 10th to the 12th. "(They) kind of blew it for me there. I was in position with wedges on every hole and made three bogeys. That's almost unthinkable, really," said Scott.

"I definitely struggled on the greens on the weekend. Just didn't quite have the confidence in some of those putts," he added. "It's amazing it came down to one shot, but I felt like my bogeys on 10, 11, 12 gave Keegan a bit of breathing space, and the pressure wasn't really on him, and he didn't make any mistakes." — AFP

Sports

Kvaratskhelia guides Conte's Napoli to convincing Bologna win

Roma slumped to a shock 2-1 home defeat to Empoli

MILAN: Khvicha Kvaratskhelia starred as Napoli got their first win under Antonio Conte on Sunday by beating Bologna 3-0, while Roma slumped to a shock 2-1 home defeat to Empoli. Georgia star Kvaratskhelia celebrated becoming a dad on Wednesday by netting Napoli's second with 15 minutes remaining in an absorbing contest at the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona.

But while his deflected strike ensured Napoli of the three points and redemption after last weekend's humbling at Verona, Kvaratskhelia's real touch of class came in stoppage time at the end of the first half. The 23-year-old, who also hit the crossbar, clipped a delightful pass over the Bologna defence for the onrushing Giovanni Di Lorenzo, who lashed home the opening goal and unleashed joy both in the stands and on the touchline.

"I think you saw it on the pitch, the energy, and I did everything for the team," said Kvaratskhelia to DAZN. "This week was for me so important, I'm so happy that I also came here and won with the team. I'm so happy."

Napoli captain Di Lorenzo was heavily criticised after his dire performances at Euro 2024, where Italy were dumped out as reigning champions in the quarter-finals by Switzerland. But his goal helped Napoli beat an enterprising Bologna team who should have more than the one point that they have collected from their first two matches.

"These fans show me a lot of love and I try to pay that back every time I step out onto the pitch," said Di Lorenzo. Substitute Giovanni Simeone made it a brilliant home debut for Conte when he forced home new signing David Neres' low cross deep in added time.

Madrid win but Mbappe fires Bernabeu blanks

MADRID: Spanish champions Real Madrid earned a 3-0 win over Real Valladolid in La Liga on Sunday as Kylian Mbappe made his Santiago Bernabeu bow without finding the net. Atletico Madrid comfortably beat last season's surprise package Girona by the same scoreline later on in the capital. Madrid's French striker Mbappe played at home for the first time in a Los Blancos shirt but was largely frustrated by Valladolid's defence.

Madrid midfielder Fede Valverde opened the scoring after 50 minutes and substitutes Brahim Diaz and debutant Endrick struck late on. Without the injured Jude Bellingham Madrid created little in the first half but did enough after the break to earn their first win of the season, following an opening draw at Real Mallorca.

Still lacking fluency in attack, Carlo Ancelotti's side stayed two points behind rivals Barcelona, who beat Athletic Bilbao on Saturday. "We were too slow in the first half, the second half we were much more active, there was more movement, much faster with the ball," said Ancelotti. Real Valladolid set out to frustrate the champions in the summer heat and succeeded for 45 minutes.

Madrid came out with more bite in the second half and Valverde smashed home a vicious low free-kick with the help of a deflection to break the deadlock.

Indonesia's Paralympic powerlifter pushes for more medal glory

SURAKARTA: Indonesia's most decorated para powerlifter Ni Nengah Widiasih shouts as she benches a heavy weight at her training gym, pushing through a shoulder injury to prepare for her next challenge: winning a third Paralympic medal.

The three-time Paralympian, diagnosed with polio as a child and unable to use her legs, began powerlifting in elementary school — training with her brother in exchange for ice cream. The Balinese para athlete went on to win bronze at Rio 2016, silver at Tokyo 2020, and even a Toyota sponsorship, and she will bid for gold in the women's 41kg category at the

Roma crumble

Also on one point are Roma who lost to Empoli at home for the first time in their history after a hugely disappointing display in which Paulo Dybala staying in the Italian capital wasn't enough to inspire Daniele De Rossi's side.

Emmanuel Gyasi's tap-in on the stroke of half-time and a Lorenzo Colombo penalty in the 61st minute sank Roma, who pulled one back through Eldor Shomurodov with 10 minutes remaining but couldn't complete a comeback.

Dybala, whose move to Saudi Arabian outfit Al Qadsiah collapsed on Thursday, was one of three Roma players to hit the woodwork alongside Lorenzo Pellegrini and Gianluca Mancini. But Roma were booed off the pitch for the way they fell two goals behind against a team which is expected to struggle against relegation. "We were lacking energy and intensity... We played well in the second half but it wasn't enough, and if you don't play well in the first half things aren't going to well for you," said De Rossi to Sky Sport. De Rossi doesn't have long to get his team's spirits up as Roma travel to Juventus, who face Verona on Monday, next weekend.

Adams emulates Law

Earlier, Che Adams emulated Denis Law with the decisive goal in Torino's 2-1 win over Atalanta on Sunday, delighting fans who had called for the owner to sell in mass pre-match protests. Scotland striker Adams netted his first goal for Torino since signing as a free agent last month, tapping home the hosts' second four minutes after half-time.

The 28-year-old became the first of his countrymen to score for Torino since Scotland and Manchester United legend Law in the 1961/62 season.

Endrick arrives

Mbappe blew a golden opportunity to get off the mark when Vinicius cut the ball across to him, but Estonian goalkeeper Karl Hein saved well. The France captain had another chance on the counter-attack but fired wide before being replaced by 18-year-old Brazilian forward Endrick.

Mbappe scored on his debut in a UEFA Super Cup triumph but in La Liga, has failed to score in his opening two matches. "He's a spectacular forward, very fast, moves well without the ball, attacks in behind, he had three or four chances (which were) created with his movement," said Ancelotti.

"In this position, he will score like he always scores. I don't think he needs to play from the left, in the centre in the end he will score goals." Diaz secured Madrid's win with a neat lobbed finish and then teed up Endrick, who drilled home at the near post to celebrate his first appearance for the club in style.

"(Endrick) has got a lot of potential and for his goal he showed his quality," added Ancelotti. "He's a centre-forward who plays in the box, in small spaces he's very dangerous." Madrid signed Endrick from Palmeiras in 2022 but he arrived this summer, once old enough to move.

Atletico on song

Antoine Griezmann, Marcos Llorente and Koke's strikes helped Diego Simeone's Atletico claim their first win of the campaign against Girona. Julian Alvarez started for the Rojiblancos at their Metropolitan stadium while new arrival Conor Gallagher made his debut as a substitute after joining from Chelsea.

"The fans were really excited for this one, playing at home for the first time in some time, with new signings — a perfect night," said Griezmann. The

Paris Games that begin this week. "Powerlifting has changed my life a lot," the 31-year-old told AFP at the national training centre in Indonesia's Surakarta city. "Maybe if I didn't do powerlifting, I don't know, I have no idea what I would do."

Widiasih says wanting to make her family and country proud was a driving force for another shot at a Paralympic medal. "It's a personal target. Paris is not easy for me (because of the injury), but I will try as hard as I can," she said. "I will do my best for Indonesia, for my family."

Women in power

While men dominate Indonesia's overall Paralympic medal haul, women have always led the way in its para powerlifting representation. No Indonesian man has ever qualified for the Paralympics in the sport. Widiasih trains with two other women para powerlifters with their own med-



NAPLES: Napoli's Georgian forward #77 Khvicha Kvaratskhelia (R) fights for the ball with Bologna's Italian forward #07 Riccardo Orsolini during the Italian Serie A football match SSC Napoli against Bologna FC 1909. — AFP

Adams rolling in the winner after Duvan Zapata's low shot was saved made it a perfect home debut in which he also set up Ivan Ilic's delightful dinked equaliser in the 31st minute. His strike, and Vanja Milinkovic-Savic saving Mario Pasalic's penalty deep in stoppage time, put Torino on four points

from their first two matches. The win came after thousands of fans marched to the game together to demand that owner and media magnate Urbano Cairo sell the club after 19 largely drab years at the helm. Fiorentina were held to a goalless draw by Venezia in the day's other early kick-off. — AFP



MADRID: Real Madrid's French forward #09 Kylian Mbappe (2R) is challenged by Real Valladolid's French defender #06 Flavien Boyomo (2L) during the Spanish league. — AFP

hosts had control of the game as Michel Sanchez's Girona, who finished third ahead of fourth-place Atletico last term, struggled to make an impact.

Griezmann put Atletico ahead shortly before the interval with a hard and low free-kick which caught goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga out. Llorente increased the lead early in the second half with a thunderbolt from outside the area which flashed into the roof of the net.

Girona, who lost several key players in the summer, have only one point from their first two matches. Koke wrapped up Atletico's win on the counter-attack in stoppage time when Llorente put the ball on a plate for him to finish. "It's a process, the season is long but we want to get to our best version as soon as we can," said Girona midfielder Oriol Romeu. — AFP

al hopes, who will be a part of Indonesia's largest-ever contingent of Paralympic athletes in Paris. She will be joined by Siti Mahmudah, in the 79kg category, and Sriyanti, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, in the +86kg class.

Siti, who lost her left leg to amputation, will compete at her second Paralympics. Sriyanti, who also had polio as a child, has gone from a chicken noodle seller to a Paralympian and silver medalist at the Asian Games in 2022.

Widiasih said the Indonesian women's feat was all the more impressive because of challenges that men would never encounter, recalling a recent competition day when her menstrual cycle began. She experienced extreme pains in her stomach but still had to lift tens of kilograms of weight to compete. "Thank God I could handle it. It was quite disturbing. This won't be experienced by male athletes," she said. — AFP

Hernandez double ires Columbus to Leagues Cup title

MIAMI: Colombian striker Cucho Hernandez scored twice for the Columbus Crew, helping his team beat Los Angeles FC 3-1 with two goals in stoppage time to win the Leagues Cup final on Sunday. It is the second trophy won by the Crew under French coach Wilfried Nancy following the team's MLS Cup triumph — also over LAFC — last December at their Lower.com stadium.

The Crew, who also reached the final of CONCACAF Champions Cup, losing to Mexico's Pachuca in June, have won admirers in North America for their attractive and progressive football. The finishing ability of Hernandez, a 25-year-old forward who had spells in England and Spain, was once again crucial for Columbus.

Hernandez put the Crew ahead on the stroke of half-time with a powerful header after a clever chip into the box from Mohamed Farsi. Former France and Arsenal striker Olivier Giroud, making his first start for LAFC following his recent move from AC Milan, leveled in the 57th minute with a trademark header from a Mateusz Bogusz corner.

The goal brought LAFC to life and they enjoyed a spell of strong pressure with the Crew back-line struggling to cope. With the game heading to penalties, Hernandez floated in a hopeful ball from the inside-left position that passed across the area and the unsighted LAFC goalkeeper Hugo Lloris was unable to keep it out.

Hernandez celebrated by removing his shirt and jumping into the crowd but he preserved enough energy to make another decisive contribution. The Colombian created the third, leading a counter-attack deep in stoppage time, breaking away before slipping the ball to substitute Jacen Russell-Rowe, who coolly slotted home.

"I have no words, I continue to make history in this club," said Hernandez. "This is my work. Good work brings reward and this is the reward. The mentality that this team has is rarely seen in other teams," he said.

Nancy said his team had shown their qualities once again. "It's amazing. This is again the possibility to show that we are consistent, to show that we are good, to show that we are able to face adversity," Nancy told Apple TV after the game. — AFP

Classifieds

Change of Name

I, **Kuntal Bhattacharjee**, holder of Indian Passport No. N2358730 having permanent address Halisahar, Khasbati S S Lane P.O - Hazinagar, North 24 Parganas Pin: 743135, West Bengal, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given name) Kuntal and (surname) Bhattacharjee. (#6158 27/08/2024)

I, **Husain**, holder of Indian Passport No. X2745991, having permanent address Ward No. 5 Bohra Mohalla Ratangarh, Neemuch Pin: 458226, Madhya Pradesh, India, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth

my name will be read as: (given name) Husain and (surname) Najmi. (25/08/2024)

I, **Tasneem Bohra**, holder of Indian Passport No. X5355352, having permanent address Ward No. 5 Bohra Mohalla Ratangarh, Neemuch Pin: 458226, Madhya Pradesh, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given name) Tasneem and (surname) Najmi. (25/08/2024)

I, **Shabbir**, holder of Indian Passport No.

X5355907, having permanent address Ward No. 5 Bohra Mohalla Ratangarh, Neemuch Pin: 458226, Madhya Pradesh, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given name) Shabbir and (surname) Najmi. (25/08/2024)

I, **Insiya**, holder of Indian Passport No. V9369805, having permanent address Ward No. 5 Bohra Mohalla Ratangarh, Neemuch Pin: 458226, Madhya Pradesh, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as: (given name) Insiya and (surname) Najmi. (25/08/2024)

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Judge belts 2 more HRs in Yankees' rout Padres rally, edge Mets on Jackson Merrill's walk-off HR



NEW YORK: Aaron Judge #99 of the New York Yankees runs the bases after his first inning two run home run against Austin Gomber #26 of the Colorado Rockies at Yankee Stadium. — AFP

NEW YORK: Aaron Judge hit his 50th and 51st homers of the season to lead the New York Yankees to a 10-3 victory over the visiting Colorado Rockies on Sunday afternoon. Judge joined Hall of Famer Babe Ruth along with Mark McGwire, Sammy Sosa and Alex Rodriguez as the fifth player to reach 50 homers at least three times. Judge's 50th homer came two batters after Gleyber Torres opened the bottom of the first inning with a walk. Judge lifted an 0-2 changeup from Colorado starter Austin Gomber (4-9) and sent it into the visiting bullpen beyond the left-center field fence to give the Yankees a 2-1 lead. He then hit his 51st long ball in the seventh, sending a first-pitch fastball from reliever Jeff Criswell into the right field seats. Gomber allowed four runs on six hits in six innings. Drew Romo had an RBI single in the fourth and Ryan McMahon produced a run-scoring double in the fifth for the Rockies.

Padres 3, Mets 2

Jackson Merrill cracked a solo homer in the bottom of the ninth inning, lifting San Diego to a comeback win over visiting New York and a split of the teams' four-game series. Merrill got a 2-0 count against reliever Edwin Diaz (5-2) and lined a hanging slider an estimated 379 feet into the right field seats for his 19th homer. Robert Suarez (8-1) pitched a clean ninth for the win as the Padres ended their seven-game homestand at 4-3 and stayed 1 1/2 games behind Arizona for the National League's first wild-card spot. The Mets were in position to win the series, leading 2-0 in the bottom of the eighth. But Jose Butto walked rookie Mason McCoy with one out and then fed Jurickson Profar ripped a homer to right field, tying the score with his career-high 21st homer. That swing no-decided Jose Quintana, who allowed just four hits and two walks, striking out none in 6 1/3 innings.

Nationals 5, Braves 1

Jacob Young had two hits, including an RBI double to highlight a three-run seventh inning, helping visiting Washington beat Atlanta to salvage the finale of a three-game series. Nationals starter DJ Herz allowed only one hit — a second-inning single by Orlando Arcia — in five scoreless innings. Jacob Barnes (8-2) earned the win. Atlanta, which was limited to three hits, tied the game at 1-1 in the sixth when Matt Olson hit a 429-foot homer to center field, his 22nd long ball of 2024.

Pirates 4, Reds 3

Yasmani Grandal hit a walk-off two-run home run to lift Pittsburgh to a win against visiting Cincinnati in the finale of a four-game series. Grandal knocked a fastball into the seats in right-center field against Reds closer Alexis Diaz (1-4) to give Pittsburgh its third victory of the series. Aroldis Chapman (5-4) threw a scoreless top

of the ninth to earn the win. Cincinnati struggled to capitalize on having a handful of baserunners through the first six innings against Pirates starter Luis L. Ortiz, who held the Reds scoreless on four hits. The visitors scored all three of their runs in the seventh.

Phillies 11, Royals 3

Garrett Stubbs went 4-for-4 with three runs and an RBI to help visiting Philadelphia pound Kansas City in the rubber match of their three-game series. Kyle Schwarber and Alec Bohm each had two hits and three RBIs. Brandon Marsh had two hits and scored twice and Nick Castellanos hit a two-run homer for the Phillies, who went 3-3 on a six-game road trip. Bobby Witt Jr., Maikel Garcia and MJ Melendez homered for the Royals, who went 0-for-11 with runners in scoring position. Kansas City starter Seth Lugo (14-8) allowed six runs (five earned) and a season-high 11 hits in 5 1/3 innings. — Reuters

Zubaid achieves new record in aquatics championships

By Abdellatif Sharaa and KUNA

CAIRO: Kuwaiti swimmers secured two more medals, one silver and another bronze in the evening period of the competition, at the Cairo-hosted 3rd Arab Aquatics Championships which last till Wednesday.

The Kuwaiti team now have four medals, one gold, one silver, and two bronze in the first day of competition. Faisal Abu Al-Hassan, the head of the Kuwaiti delegation to the tournament and a member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Aquatics Federation, told KUNA that the team won a silver medal in the Relay-200M free style for the 13-14 years category, adding the swimmers were Hasan Zaid, Hmoud Al-Hmoud, Mohammad Ashkanani, and Abdullah Sultan. Abu Al-Hassan



Gold medalist Mohammad Zubaid

said swimmer Khaled Al-Otaibi won the Bronze medal in the 800m free style competition, and highly praised all Kuwaiti swimmers. The Kuwaiti delegation participating in the Arab Championship comprises 27 swimmers (both boys and girls) competing in three age categories: 13-14 years, 15-16 years, and 17-18 years. The events are being held in morning and evening sessions at the Cairo International Stadium's swimming pool complex. The diving competitions are set to begin on Wednesday, featuring Kuwaiti participants Jassim Al-Qallaf, Fadhel Abbas, Abbas Qali, Ali Fahad, and Abdulkarim Al-Sebaa across three men's categories.

Meanwhile, Chairman of Aquatics Federation Sheikh Khalid Al-Bader Al-Sabah was pleased with Kuwait swimmer's new record besides winning gold and bronze medals.

Al-Bader congratulated swimmer Mohammad Hamid Zubaid for winning the gold medal for the 50 meters butterfly of 15-16 years category achieving a new Arab record of 24.68 seconds breaking the old record of 26.04. Sheikh Khalid Al-Bader said each player who scores an Arab record will receive KD 1,000 in addition to KD 500 for a gold medal and KD 200 for the silver and bronze medals.

Al-Bader said results of the championship shows that Kuwait swimming is on the right path, and that Kuwait swimmers are able to make achievements in the name of Kuwait abroad, provided that they are well prepared, and this is what the Aquatics Federation seeks to do. He thanked players and their guardians for their sincere efforts, adding that the coming period will see more efforts to make more achievements to raise Kuwait flag at the sports arenas.

Ex-England manager Sven-Goran Eriksson dies at 76

STOCKHOLM: Swedish football manager Sven-Goran Eriksson, who coached England from 2001 to 2006, died Monday at the age of 76 after a battle with pancreatic cancer, his agent said. "He passed away peacefully this morning with his family around him at his home," Eriksson's agent Bo Gustavsson told AFP.

The Swede, who managed a number of high-profile teams and took England to World Cup quarter-finals in 2002 and 2006, announced in February 2023 that he was stepping back from public life due to "health issues". In January, he told public broadcaster Sveriges Radio that he was suffering from pancreatic cancer and that his doctor's assessment was that he had "at best maybe a year (to live), at worst a little less". "We have known about this but it happened very quickly. We were not prepared for it to happen today," Gustavsson told AFP.

Born February 5, 1948 in Sunne in western Sweden, Eriksson, who goes by "Svennis" to Swedes,



Sven-Goran Eriksson

found success as a football manager after retiring from a modest career as a defender. In 1977, he became manager of Swedish club Degerfors IF. After leading the small club to success in lower divisions, he attracted the attention of bigger clubs.

He went on to manage Sweden's IFK Goteborg before finding success internationally, managing Benfica in Portugal, as well as several Italian teams including Roma and Lazio. His most high-profile position was as the first foreigner to manage England's national squad. During his spell, he took England to the World Cup quarter-finals in 2002, where they were knocked out by Brazil.

the Olympic Games. The ceremony is expected to be a star-studded affair, with prominent politicians and famous athletes set to be in attendance before some 65,000 spectators in a gesture meant to fire up the athletes ahead of the Paralympic Games.

While the event offers Paralympic athletes the chance to perform on an international stage, it subsequently creates a better understanding of the notion of disability inclusion, which gives the event a humanitarian and social dimension on top of the sporting allure that such spectacles usually garner.

In the wake of the Paris Olympics, which French authorities have called a "tremendous success," the Paralympic Games have been given unprecedented global exposure, as organizers seek to ensure that facilities across Paris are fully prepared to host the action, while providing the ultimate experience for the athletes themselves.

In the run up to the event, chief organizers have

'Special memories'

They also made the last eight four years later where Portugal came out on top in a penalty shoot-out in a game where Wayne Rooney was sent off after a clash with his then Manchester United teammate Cristiano Ronaldo. Eriksson led England to the last eight of the 2004 Euros where Portugal also knocked them out in another penalty shoot-out.

He left the England job in 2006 after five years in charge. His time in the hotseat had seen a memorable 5-1 win over Germany in a World Cup qualifier but also controversy over his personal life. "This is a very sad day. He gave all England fans such special memories," Mark Bullingham, CEO of England's Football Association, said in a statement.

"Sven will be rightly recognized and forever remembered for his significant work with the England team, and for his wider contribution to the game," Bullingham continued. Eriksson went on to manage Mexico, Ivory Coast and the Philippines, but never his native Sweden's national squad.

In March, Eriksson fulfilled what he said had been a life-long dream of managing English football club Liverpool. Alongside former Liverpool favourites Ian Rush, John Barnes and John Aldridge in the home dug-out, he managed Liverpool Legends in a charity match against Ajax Legends, overseing a 4-2 win for his team. — AFP

revealed the special mascot for this year's edition, the "Paralympic Phryge," who is on a mission to "encourage everyone to incorporate sport into their daily lives, highlighting the transformative power of physical activity on health, relationships, and society," according to the Paralympic Games' official website. In keeping with the distinction of this year's edition of the Paralympic Games, the medals for the competition have been uniquely designed by renowned French jeweler Chaumet, accentuated by original iron taken from Paris' mammoth Eiffel Tower to leave recipients with something to remember long after the games are done and dusted.

The Paralympic Village, the special accommodation designed to host the athletes, has been built in a way that fully caters to their needs given the spacious and "steps-free" facilities inside, which ensures that the athletes would be able to move seamlessly from one place to another. — KUNA

Paralympics fervor pervades Paris ahead of 17th edition

PARIS: Parisians are brimming with excitement as the 17th edition of the Paralympic Games fast approaches, with preparations across the French capital in full swing ahead of the sporting spectacle that kicks off on Wednesday. As Paris readies to host the event for the first time in history, some 4,400 Paralympic athletes will be vying for supremacy in some 22 different sports, while organizers are putting the finishing touches on an opening ceremony in the French capital's iconic Place de la Concorde square, which promises to be equally as riveting as