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More Zionist carnage in West Bank

Zionists, Hamas agree to zoned 3-day pauses for Gaza polio vaccinations



(Left) People inspect damage to a mosque following a Zionist military operation in the Farra camp for Palestinian refugees near Tubas in the north of the occupied West Bank on Aug 29, 2024. (Right) A Palestinian woman reacts at the sight of the devastation as she returns with others to eastern Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip to check on property, after Zionist troops pulled out from some blocks in the area on Aug 29, 2024. — AFP photos

TULKAREM/GAZA: The death toll climbed Thursday as the Zionist entity pressed a large-scale military operation in the occupied West Bank for a second day, despite UN concerns it is "fueling an already explosive situation". The operation was launched as violence raged on in the Gaza Strip, which has been devastated by war.

Meanwhile, the Zionist military and Hamas have agreed to three separate, zoned three-day pauses in fighting in the Gaza Strip to allow for the vaccination of some 640,000 children against polio, a senior WHO official said on Thursday. The vaccination campaign is due to start on Sunday, said Rik Peepkorn, the World Health Organization's senior official for the region.

He said the campaign would start in central Gaza with a three-day pause in fighting, then move to southern Gaza, where there would be another three-day pause, followed by northern Gaza. Peepkorn added that there was an agreement to extend the humanitarian pause in each zone to a fourth day if needed.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

48,000 UK ETAs issued to Kuwaitis

KUWAIT: British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis revealed 48,239 Kuwaitis were granted electronic travel authorizations (ETAs) between February and June 2024. This comes as part of the UK's ETA scheme, which was extended to nationals of Kuwait, other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Jordan. Kuwaitis accounted for the second-highest number of ETA applications in the GCC, surpassed only by Saudi nationals. The ETA allows multiple short-term visits to the UK for purposes such as tourism, business, study, or medical treatment, over a two-year period.

Kuwait strips 78 citizenships

KUWAIT: Kuwait has revoked the citizenship of 78 more people before referring the measure to the Cabinet, pending its approval, an ad hoc committee formed to investigate the matter said on Thursday. In May, an Amiri decree was issued to form the supreme committee to investigate Kuwaiti citizenship, appointing the first deputy prime minister, defense and interior minister as the committee's head, with the deputy prime minister and minister of state for Cabinet affairs, foreign minister and secretary general of the Cabinet as members. — KUNA

Harris campaign hires Arab lawyer

WASHINGTON: Kamala Harris' campaign for US president has hired an Egyptian American lawyer and former Department of Homeland Security official to help lead outreach to Arab American voters who hold sway in some states that could help decide the Nov 5 election, the campaign said on Wednesday. Brenda Abdellal would be tasked with shoring up support from a community frustrated with US support for the Zionist war in Gaza. Vice President Harris has already hired Afghan American lawyer Nasrina Bargzie for outreach to Muslim Americans. Harris is in a tight race with Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, and votes from Muslim and Arab Americans could help decide the outcome in battleground states like Michigan. While pro-Palestinian voices are not expected to vote for Trump and have indicated no support for the Republican, some activists have launched a campaign called "Abandon Harris" and have urged their supporters to back third-party candidates. — Reuters

Kuwait army chief affirms forces as ultimate deterrent

KUWAIT: Chief of the Kuwaiti Army Staff Lt Gen Bandar Al-Muzain affirmed on Thursday that Kuwait's army is the ultimate shield and deterrent against internal and external challenges, underscoring the main goal of maintaining peace and stability in the country. This came in a statement following Muzain's inspection tour of the 15th Armored Brigade (Mubarak) and the 94th Mechanized Brigade (Saleh Mohammed).

During his visit to the 15th Armored Brigade, Muzain reviewed the types of training and exercises conducted, as well as the brigade's future plans, modernization programs and development initiatives aimed at enhancing the capabilities of its officers and soldiers. At the 94th Mechanized Brigade, Muzain was briefed on the latest tasks and duties carried out under the brigade's approved training and qualification programs.

The lieutenant general commended the members of both brigades for their high levels of competence, as he expressed his wishes for their continued success, urging them to spare no effort in honoring their oaths and pledging loyalty to HH the Amir, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and HH the Crown Prince. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Chief of the Kuwaiti Army Staff Lt Gen Bandar Al-Muzain inspects the 15th Armored Brigade and the 94th Mechanized Brigade — KUNA

Telegram boss Durov charged, but out on bail

PARIS: Telegram chief Pavel Durov was spending Thursday out on bail after four days of detention in France, banned from leaving the country as he faces a possible trial related to illegal content carried on his messaging app. Russian-born Durov, dressed in black and wearing dark glasses, walked briskly out of the Paris courthouse late Wednesday into a waiting car after being charged but allowed to go free under judicial supervision.

He thanked his lawyer and was rap-

idly ushered into the vehicle by a burly man appearing to be a bodyguard, video posted on social media channels showed. Durov, 39, was charged on several counts of failing to curb extremist and illegal content on the popular messaging app which now has over 900 million followers but has become increasingly controversial.

His lawyer David-Olivier Kaminski said it was "absurd" to suggest Durov could be implicated in any crime committed on the app, adding: "Telegram complies in all respects with European rules concerning digital technology." In Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov warned France against turning the case into "political persecution", emphasizing he is a "Russian citizen" and "we will be watching what happens next."

Among those also voicing support for Durov is fellow tech tycoon and chief executive of X, Elon Musk, who has posted comments under the hashtag #FreePavel. After the charges, Musk posted a meme on X of a surveillance camera attached to buildings inscribed with France's motto, "liberty, equality, fraternity."

Durov was arrested at Le Bourget airport outside Paris late Saturday and questioned in subsequent days by investigators. He was granted conditional release on a bail of five million euros and on the condition he must report to a police station twice a week as well as remaining in France, Paris prosecutor Laure Beccau said in a statement. The charges concern alleged crimes involving an organized group, including "complicity in the administration of

an online platform to enable an illicit transaction".

This charge alone could see him jailed for up to 10 years and fined 500,000 euros if convicted. Durov has also been charged with refusing to share documents demanded by authorities as well as "dissemination in an organized group of images of minors in child pornography" as well as drug trafficking, fraud and money laundering. The next step will be for the case to be sent to trial.

Separately, Durov is also being investigated on suspicion of "serious acts of violence" towards one of his children while he and the boy's mother were in Paris, a source said. She filed a criminal complaint against Durov in Switzerland last year.

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Harris, Walz on bus tour in Georgia

SAVANNAH, Georgia: US Vice President Kamala Harris campaigned across southern Georgia by bus Wednesday as Democrats try to harness a surge of enthusiasm and put the swing state back in play in November's election against Donald Trump. President Joe Biden had been on course to lose the southern state he slipped from Republican Trump in 2020, but since Harris replaced Biden as the candidate five weeks ago, the party has begun to hope it could win it again.

Both Harris and Trump are now ramping up their campaigns in seven key battleground states as an extraordinary — and now super-short

White House race enters its final 10-week sprint. "We're seizing on the energy and putting in the work to win again in 2024," Harris' campaign said. Riding a wave of enthusiasm from the Democratic National Convention last week, Harris and running mate Tim Walz are traveling through southern parts of Georgia on a two-day bus tour.

The blitz is focused on black and working-class voters who the campaign believes are crucial to a Harris victory in the state in November. She and Walz began their tour in Savannah, where they met students from a historically black university, before heading by bus through rural communities where some onlookers waved Trump flags, and then stopping at Liberty County High School in Hinesville.

"We wanted to come by just to let you know that our country is counting on you," Harris told student marching band members there. Back in Savannah the candidates ducked into Sand-



SAVANNAH: Democratic presidential candidate, US Vice President Kamala Harris, and her running mate, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, disembark from their campaign bus on Aug 28, 2024. — AFP

fly Bar-B-Q, a small restaurant where they chatted with diners and staff and posed for photographs. "You have to stay in it," Harris encouraged a patron about the upcoming election.

The bus tour culminates with a ral-

ly Thursday in Savannah, where the 59-year-old also faces a critical test on the same day: her first sit-down interview since starting her campaign, in a joint appearance on CNN with Walz.

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Kuwait underscores youths' role in peace, development

Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security kicks off

AMMAN: Kuwait's participation in the Global Forum on Youth, Peace, and Security stems from its advocacy of joint Arab action and necessity of upgrading the youth potentials, an official of the Gulf state said. Al-Sheikh stressed on Thursday the importance of activating the energies of Arab youth and building their capacities within the framework of joint Arab action, coordination, and cooperation.

This came in a statement made by Al-Sheikh to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) following his participation in the International Forum on Youth, Peace, and Security, hosted in Amman under the patronage and attendance of Jordanian Crown Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah and organized by the Jordanian Ministry of Youth in partnership with the Arab League.

Al-Sheikh said that Kuwait's participation in the youth forum reflects the state's belief in the importance of the role of youth in society, as they are a "great wealth" that should be invested in social affairs and prepared effectively in developing society and achieving peace and security. This is what the Arab Strategy for Youth, Peace, and Security is based on.

Regarding the most important objectives of this strategy, he said that it works to enhance joint Arab action, coordination, and cooperation at the regional level to support the efforts of Arab coun-

tries in this regard and focuses on effective youth leadership, cooperation and partnership in decision-making, the rule of law, and effective evaluation and follow-up. In this regard, he pointed out the importance of building youth skills related to knowledge, the creative economy, and the green economy, which aim to improve human well-being while taking care of environmental risks.

Regarding the extraordinary session of the Council of Arab Youth and Sports Ministers, which was held during the forum, he said that it discussed ways to enhance youth community participation, build their skills, and diversify them in line with the requirements of technological progress witnessed by the world so that they can compete in the labor market and achieve the state's goals in economic diversification.

The International Forum on Youth, Peace, and Security kicked off on Wednesday with the participation of youth and sports ministers from several Arab countries, including the acting Director General of the Kuwait Public Authority for Youth Nasser Al-Sheikh, Arab youth delegations, and representatives of civil society organizations and international organizations.

The forum witnessed the launch of the Arab Strategy for Youth, Peace, and Security (2023-2028), which aims to implement the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda and Security Council res-



Acting Director of the Kuwait Public Authority for Youth Nasser Al-Sheikh participates in the extraordinary session of the Council of Arab Youth and Sports Ministers in the Jordanian capital, Amman. — KUNA

olutions in enhancing the role of Arab youth in decision-making, increasing their political and economic participation, and achieving economic security. The forum includes dialogue sessions

on mechanisms for implementing the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda and the priorities of member states in developing the strategy's executive plan. — KUNA

E-commerce vs physical stores: Which is better for your business?

By Saud Alzanki

KUWAIT: Starting a business on a small budget can be tough, but with e-commerce, it's easier than ever to get started without spending a lot. Imagine creating an online store that sells just one type of product, like eco-friendly clothing, to a specific group of people who care about the environment. By focusing on a specific market, you can offer exactly what those customers want, making it easier to succeed. With a simple, well-designed website and smart online marketing, even a small business can stand out and grow in today's digital world.

Khalid Alzanki, a Strategic Marketing & Launch Consultant, emphasizes that understanding financial commitment is crucial. The costs associated with opening a physical store can vary widely depending on factors like location, interior design, staffing, and inventory. In contrast, starting an e-commerce business removes many of these costs, offering a more affordable and flexible path for entrepreneurs who are careful with their spending.

Costs of running a store

When planning to open a traditional store, one of the first things to consider is location. Prime locations, such as Kuwait City, which is one of the busiest areas in Kuwait, come with high rental costs. In addition, there are expenses related to decorating the store, which is crucial for attracting customers and creating a welcoming environment. Khalid also notes that the costs of hiring employees can add up quickly, from wages to benefits, and these ongoing expenses need to be included in the business plan. Additionally, stocking the store with products requires a significant upfront investment, along with ongoing costs to keep inventory replenished.

Online store benefits

On the other hand, starting an online clothing store eliminates many financial burdens. You avoid costs like rent, utilities, and furniture, though you may need storage space for inventory and materials for your products. Instead, entrepreneurs can focus their budget on building a user-friendly website, optimizing it for search engines, and ensuring a seamless customer experience.

Alzanki points out that one of the biggest benefits of online stores is their flexibility. You can start small, offering just a few products, and expand as your business grows. This allows entrepreneurs to test different products and marketing strategies without the pressure of maintaining a physical storefront. Plus, online stores can reach customers all around the world, unlike physical stores that can only serve people in the local area. This broader reach opens up opportunities for products that might not sell well locally but have a global audience.

Quick and easy adaptation

Another key advantage of e-commerce is the ability to quickly adapt to market changes. In a traditional store, making changes to inventory, layout, or marketing can be time-consuming and expensive. On the other hand, an online business can easily update its website, launch new products, or change its marketing approach with little disruption. This adaptability is especially important in today's fast-changing market, where customer preferences can change rapidly.

Alzanki also highlights that e-commerce allows for more personalized marketing. With tools like email marketing, social media ads, and customer data analysis, online businesses can create targeted campaigns that speak directly to what their customers want.



This level of personalization is harder to achieve in a physical store, where customer interactions are more limited and less data-driven.

Online business challenges

While e-commerce offers many advantages, it's important to remember that it also comes with its own set of challenges. Building an online presence requires a strong understanding of "running online business", digital marketing, web development, and e-commerce platforms. Entrepreneurs need to invest time and resources into learning how to attract visitors to their website and turn those visitors into paying customers. Additionally, competition in the online marketplace is fierce, with many businesses competing for the same customers.

Alzanki advises that to succeed in e-commerce, entrepreneurs must focus on creating a unique selling point that sets their business apart from the competition, as well as a unique customer experience. This could mean offering exclusive products, providing exceptional customer service, or creating a brand story that connects

with customers. It's also essential to build trust with customers by ensuring that the website is secure, easy to use, and clear about shipping and return policies.

Choosing the right path

In the end, both physical stores and online stores have their own advantages. Opening a physical store can be expensive, but it allows you to interact with customers face-to-face, create a real-life shopping experience, and attract people who pass by your store. A physical store can help build strong connections in your community and lets customers take their purchases home immediately.

On the other hand, starting an online store is usually less expensive and more flexible. You can reach customers all over the world and quickly make changes to your business. However, to succeed online, you need a good strategy to stand out among many other businesses. As Alzanki pointed out, understanding these pros and cons will help you make the best choice for your business, whether you decide to open a physical store, an online store, or even both.

Fossil fuel benefits to outweigh potential side effects: OPEC

KUWAIT: OPEC Secretary-General Jamal Al-Loughani stressed that the benefits of fossil fuels will continue to greatly outweigh their potential side effects, calling for pumping new investments into fossil fuel projects, especially oil and natural gas, to ensure reliable and affordable energy in the future. This came in a statement to KUNA Thursday on issuing the second quarterly report of the organization's general secretariat for the year 2024.

He stated that the oil and natural gas sector is expected to account for about 53.7 percent of the global energy mix by 2045, according to OPEC estimates. Al-Loughani also noted that the past few years' events, especially the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, have proven that the trend toward energy transformation away from fossil fuels cannot continue steadily and on a large scale, even in advanced economies.

Carbon emissions from fossil fuels can be significantly reduced by enhancing and supporting investment, innovation, and continuous development in clean technologies such as carbon capture and storage technology while focusing on increasing energy efficiency, he added. The OPEC chief hoped that this report would provide continued support to future energy policymakers in the Organization's member states, noting that the performance of the global economy witnessed stable growth during the second quarter of this year.

Al-Loughani noted that emerging Asian market economies continued to be the main driver of the global economy, proving their resilience despite global monetary tightening, expecting the global economy to grow by 3.3 percent next year, slightly higher than the prevailing rate in 2024 of 3.2 percent. He said continued strong demand from refiners in the Asia-Pacific region helped absorb available supplies in the Atlantic Basin amid refinery maintenance in Europe.

Oil prices fell during May and June, affected by the noticeable fluctuations in speculative activity in the futures market, which witnessed an increase in selling operations, changes in expectations regarding the market prospects in the near term, and a decrease in the variance in gasoline and diesel prices between major trading centers, he added. Moreover, Al-Loughani said that the availability of crude oil supplies in northwest Europe, supplies from the US Gulf Coast, and the rise in US oil inventories contributed to the decline in prices during the first half of June.

He pointed out that the average spot prices of the OPEC basket of crudes every quarter witnessed an increase of 4.3 percent compared to the previous quarter to reach \$85.3 per barrel, while Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate futures recorded quarterly gains of 3.9 percent and 8.6 percent, respectively. He stressed that global oil supplies of crude oil and natural gas liquids witnessed an increase of only 0.1 percent compared to the previous quarter to reach 102.2 million barrels per day.

The developments in the global oil market cast a shadow over the levels of economic performance in OPEC member states during the second quarter of this year, as the growth witnessed in the levels of output in the oil sectors of those countries continued to slow down, he added. Al-Loughani expected the slowdown to continue in the short term, coinciding with the decision of OPEC Plus countries to extend voluntary production cuts, which may harm oil revenues in OPEC member countries, which are among the most important sources of national income and contribute to achieving sustainable development. — KUNA



Jamal Al-Loughani

Meteorologist forecasts hot, dusty weather

KUWAIT: The Meteorological Department expected the weather over the weekend to be hot to warm with a chance of dust due to the extension of the Indian seasonal low with the influence of the European high, causing northwesterly winds that are sometimes active and dusty, especially in desert areas. Director of the Department Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi told KUNA that the weather will be very hot with northwesterly winds of moderate-to-active speed ranging between 20 and 50 kilometers per hour, causing dust. The expected maximum temperature will be between 44 and 47 degrees Celsius.

On Saturday, the weather will be hot with northwesterly winds of light-to-moderate speed, sometimes active between 15 and 45 kilometers per hour, causing dust. The expected maximum temperatures will be between 45 and 48 degrees Celsius, and the sea will be light to moderate, with waves sometimes rising between 2 and 6 feet. — KUNA



Kuwait Oil Company's delegation at the annual International Meeting for Applied Geoscience & Energy in Houston, Texas. — KUNA

KOC showcases its latest achievement and project

KUWAIT: Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) showcased its latest achievement and project at the annual International Meeting for Applied Geoscience & Energy (IMAGE 2024) held in Houston, Texas. The four-day exhibition, which concluded on Thursday, was to uncover the latest geoscience developments and technologies. KOC said in a statement.

Deputy Chief Executive Officer West Kuwait, at KOC Fuad Al-Shaikh, said in a statement that many leading geoscience companies and institu-

tions participated in the expo, where the latest innovations and technical developments aimed at improving oil and gas production operations and extractions as well as reducing the environmental effect of those stages. Al-Shaikh, who also headed the delegation, said that participating in exhibitions as such boosts the company's developments in the energy sector and achieves its strategic objectives in refining operation efficiency as well as safeguarding the environment.

He further added that the expo also included panel discussions and workshops about various topics, including modern technologies, energy sustainability in the industry, and the role of renewable energy, stressing the significance of cooperation and networking with international companies to adopt the latest technologies and innovative solutions. — KUNA

Local

European Council strengthens GCC ties, seeks to prevent Middle East escalation

Belgium hands European Council presidency to Hungary

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: On the occasion of the end of the term of the Belgian Presidency of the European Council, the Embassy of Belgium to Kuwait held a reception on Wednesday, marking the handover to Hungary. During her speech, Anne Koistinen, EU Ambassador to Kuwait, noted that the Presidency of the EU Council rotates every six months, as it plays a crucial role in advancing the EU's legislative agenda and facilitating agreements among member states.

"Our cooperation with the Belgian Presidency has been excellent. While we may not witness the daily legislative work managed by the Presidency in Brussels, the team of European Presidency's spirit can certainly be felt in Ku-

wait. Among the many notable events, I fondly recall the joint public diplomacy activity at the Lycée Français de Koweït during Europe Month, with support from the French Embassy. We look forward to continuing our cooperation with our Hungarian colleagues over the coming months," she added.

She emphasized that the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, which has unfolded over the past ten months, cannot be forgotten, adding "The EU will continue to join forces with Arab partners and others committed to peace to end the war in Gaza and promote regional de-escalation." She congratulated Ukraine on its recent Independence Day, reaffirming the EU's unwavering commitment to supporting Ukraine in its existential struggle for

independence and sovereignty, which is equally existential for the EU.

In his turn, Christian Domes, the Belgian Ambassador, noted that the Belgian Presidency of the European Union (BPEU) focused on three main goals: finalizing legislative files before the European Parliament's dissolution, addressing ongoing crises, and preparing the EU for the future. He concluded that the Belgian Presidency promised to deliver, and they did, adding "We protected, strengthened, and prepared the EU for today and tomorrow. Belgium extends its best wishes to the upcoming Hungarian Presidency for a successful term."

The Hungarian Ambassador, Andras Szabo explained that in July, Hungary began its six-month rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union, which

will run until December 2024, pointing out that Hungary will work as an honest broker, in the spirit of sincere cooperation between member states and institutions, for the peace, security and prosperity of a truly strong Europe.

The ambassador noted that the Hungarian presidency comes at a pivotal time within the institutional cycle, following the European Parliament elections and during an ongoing institutional transition, saying that the primary focus of the presidency is to ensure a smooth transition, assisting both the European Parliament and the European Commission, while maintaining stability and continuity.

"The presidency also aims to initiate strategic policy discussions in key areas such as EU competitiveness, security, defense, enlargement, cohesion, agriculture,

and demographic challenges. The Hungarian presidency prioritizes the adoption of a New European Competitiveness Deal to enhance productivity and growth across the Union and underscores the need for improved European defense capabilities in response to global conflicts," he stated.

On the international front, he indicated that the Hungarian presidency aims to prevent regional escalation in the Middle East, ensure humanitarian aid reaches those in need in Gaza, and support the EU's role in the long-term political settlement of the conflict while strengthening cooperation with Gulf countries and enhancing EU-GCC relations in security, counter-terrorism, energy, trade, and investments are also key objectives. Additionally, they seek to restore stability and secure supply chains in the Red Sea region.

Ministers address traffic congestion

By Khaled Al-Abdulhadi

KUWAIT: Government agencies held a coordination meeting to address the problem of traffic congestion in its various stages (short, medium, and long term) based on the decision of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers. The General Directorate of Relations and Security Media at the Ministry of Interior said in a statement that the Director General of the General Directorate of Traffic, Brigadier General Jamal Al-Fouderi, chaired a preliminary meeting at the department's headquarters in the presence of representatives of the Ministries of Public Works and Education, Kuwait Municipality, the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport, the Civil Service Bureau, and the Fatwa and Legislation Department.

The meeting is aimed at unifying efforts and moving forward with the implementation of the necessary measures to address the problem of traffic congestion. The officials discussed ways to overcome obstacles with the concerned government agencies and find appropriate solutions (legal, financial, and technical) to achieve the flow of traffic in the country. They agreed to submit a final report to the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers within six months from the date of issuance.

During a meeting held on July 23, the Ministry of Interior submitted a visual presentation on ways to address the problem of traffic congestion, in which the proposed solutions were addressed. It highlighted the 3 stages: the first immediate and urgent, the second medium-term, and the third long-term. The immediate and urgent solutions were the application of flexible working hours and the dissemination



KUWAIT: File photo shows heavy traffic. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

of the idea of joint transport for school students (buses), while the medium-term solutions were to develop entrances and exits of some roads.

There were 39 proposals for development, in addition to providing the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport with the report of the Central Control Department regarding crowded intersections during peak periods. The officials from the General Authority for Roads and Land Transport were urged to take a traffic tour on the Fourth Ring Road to choose the locations of the experimental

temporary closure of signalized intersections while retaining the reverse detours.

The intermediate solutions also include emphasizing on the Kuwait Municipality not to license projects and facilities with high density, except after conducting a traffic study and the approval of the General Directorate of Traffic, while linking the requirements of the study to construction and licensing. It comes in line with Kuwait Vision 2035, which includes expanding the roads, increasing them from 6,000 km to over 9,000 km, which will highly improve Kuwait's status as a financial and trade hub.

Kuwait's electricity crisis persists amid power cuts

KUWAIT: Last week, Kuwait entered a phase of the programmed power cut; other phases preceded this phase during the same summer. This has been the case in the past consecutive decades. Such repeated crisis is neither the product of a financial deficit nor fuel shortage, which Kuwait has a surplus of both. Neither is there a shortage of solutions. It is rather the product of public administration incompetence.

One of the easiest planning aspects is to determine the growth rate of electricity consumption according to its historical path, and then to hedge by providing enough and slightly more than the maximum reserve in a country that is the hottest inhabited country on earth, especially during this summer. That kind of planning has not been achieved for decades. Even that solution is unsustainable because it addresses the suffocation problem only in the short term.

Sustainable treatment logically needs a system of pathways or alternatives that can reduce

the volume and growth rates of consumption on the one hand, and raise the produced energy from non-conventional sources on the other. The solutions are known and practiced and have become history in most countries of the world, except in Kuwait. The first of these solutions is to divide the consumption levels into brackets and to start the tariff for the first segment, those with low incomes, from scratch, that is, for free.

That segment consumes only a very small percentage of the volume of total consumption, then grade up to the next four or five segments. The second solution is the programmed increase in electricity generation from alternative energy sources, whose cost has fallen significantly and is on the way to a higher decline. This will not only increase production capacity, but will also provide exportable oil or gas derivatives in support of public finance.

The third solution is a review of public policies such as horizontal housing expansion which is impossible to sustain, not only as a result of its impact on the rise in power consumption growth rates, but also as a result of the impossibility of providing infrastructure, money and land. Finally, it is imperative to have a decisive intervention in describing and organizing building methods and the used building materials, which will make power

consumption reasonable and within its reasonable low levels. The above-proposed solutions do not contain anything new.

There are others, of course, and their access is no longer an option. Electricity generated in Kuwait has increased in ten years (2014 – 2023) from 65.1 TW to 88.3 TW. It may reach 120 TW in 2034 if the current policies continue without changing. Public administration's failure is due to several reasons. One of these reasons is to plan to avoid the crisis is the average rotation of ministers.

Future planning requires a stable, professional and non-politicized public administration that cares for the necessities of the people, while the power of planning and implementation is in the hands of a minister in a ministry headed by 14 ministers in the past ten years only two whom served twice, i.e. a minister every 260 days or about 8.5 months.

Based on the 2 above, we believe there is a need to abolish MEW and turn it into an independent body that rationalizes its expenditures and adopts strategies and policies to enable it to adopt the above solutions and ensure the stability and sustainability of energy supplies. It will gradually be able to finance itself, and perhaps achieve some profitability that alleviates the public financial crisis. - Al-Shall Report

New airport project to support Kuwait's economic growth

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works Dr Noura Al-Mashaan said that the new airport project (T2) confirms the commitment to developing the civil aviation sector and its vital role in supporting the country's economic growth, keenness to complete work - and projects, and belief that hard work serves the interests of the country and citizens.

Al-Mashaan told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Thursday during a periodic meeting with government agencies involved in the project that the T2 is one of the ambitious national projects to develop and modernize the country's infrastructure in a way that serves the vision 'New Kuwait 2035' and transform the country into a regional, global financial and commercial center that attracts investments.

It was unanimously agreed on the need to expedite the project within the specified dates and within the contract's timetable. She stressed the government's keenness to harness all capabilities and facilities to complete the airport project according to the scheduled timetable, noting that interest in developing the infrastructure of the air transport sector in the country is a top priority.



Minister of Public Works Dr Noura Al-Mashaan is pictured during a meeting in the presence of a number of representatives of the concerned authorities. — KUNA

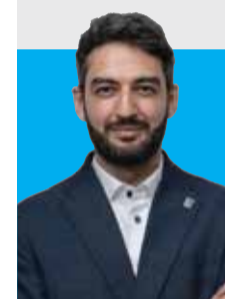
She explained that the Ministry of Public Works "is working and cooperating intensively to ensure the completion of the new passenger building T2, which contributes significantly to improving the passenger experience and expanding our capabilities to accommodate the expected increase in air traffic". Minister Al-Mashaan stressed the need for coordination to resolve pending issues and the need for cooperation and overcoming all

obstacles to complete the project on time.

The meeting also discussed the Civil Aviation letter No 10261/7 and the latest developments from the Civil Aviation regarding telecommunications companies and the latest developments from this department. The meeting also discussed the roads leading to Kuwait International Airport, stressing the need to pay attention to potential obstacles that passengers may face upon arriving at the airport. — KUNA

In my view

What's after the West Bank?



Hussain Sana

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The Zionist occupation army declared the start of a military operation in the West Bank yesterday. This is the largest operation in the West Bank since 2002 and includes the air force and hundreds of "Mustaribeen", elite Zionist undercover soldiers who disguise themselves as Palestinians when needed.

It is a matter of consensus among many media platforms and news agencies that the occupation army might be exhausted and aimless after the Gaza campaign. The occupation army is far from liberating Zionist prisoners and does not have a clear achievable objective after reaching every point above Gaza's territory.

The Netzarim line might (and hopefully will) serve Palestinian heroic resistance to attrite the occupation forces. While the occupation army is neither capable of achieving any military nor political objective of its war, it is already doing its maximum in the genocide attempt and in increasing civilian casualties, hoping to pressure the resistance.

Sympathizers with the Palestinian cause might think (or wish) that the occupation is incapable of opening another war front, due to the high costs of Gaza war already and their reluctance in escalating the Lebanon front, compared to the '80s and times when Zionists used to come in and out of Lebanon with no calculations needed.

However, it is worth mentioning that the occupation received 50 tons of weapons and ammunition with foreign support (take a wild guess which countries lead the list). The United States alone declared recently that it will send an additional \$3.5 billion to the Zionist entity, in addition to the \$14.5 billion supplemental funding bill for the Zionist entity passed by the Congress in April, etc.

The occupation army is capable "par excellence" in invading the West Bank, and maybe for good, to demonstrate for the hundredth time how dead are the Oslo peace accords. Yitzhak Rabin, "the peacemaker", opposed a Palestinian state until his assassination by another Zionist. Current Zionist ministers like Gallant, Katz, Smotrich and Ben Gvir (the latter two are settlers themselves) have called repeatedly for treating the West Bank like Gaza, and to fully settle in it and displace its Palestinian residents.

This occupation is unlimitedly supported by some of the world's richest elites and biggest powers. Palestinians are surrounded and infiltrated by collaborators and indifferent regimes and elites who see the Palestinian cause as a liability that needs to be ditched and terminated anyhow. Security studies and scholars classify the current resistance movement against Zionism as strategic threats, but not as existential threats, not yet. All aside, this occupation is opening another front without being able to achieve its goals in the first front, and most likely will not be able to achieve any of its goals in the West Bank either.

Mass resistance is rather an alarm and a signal about injustice than it being an act of terrorism. As long as the occupation continues, there will be acts of radical resistance against it. There is no solution nor treatment for the Palestinian "insurgency"; the solution lies in addressing the occupation and stop arrogantly denying the elephant in the room. History of other settler colonialism cases points to the pattern, this is no exception and this entity is not a shining city above the hill.

The occupation's "Lebanese" dilemma repeats in the West Bank. "While resistance is growing, if we don't invade now, then when?! The invasion is bad but it will be worse and harder in the future". Just like resistance today is costly, it would have been less costly if the previous generations of '48, '67 or the early '90s had made better decisions and avoided their mistakes.

Meanwhile, as long as the resistance lives and survives for another day, it shall triumph. This is because occupation is not sustainable, and its supporters of falling global powers are changing their priorities, with their interests shifting away towards the South China Sea and Ukraine.

This operation in the West Bank might be the attempt to fully annex the West Bank and arm the settlers, something that Zionists fascist ministers always promised to do. It might be another step towards the end of the barely legitimate and representative Palestinian Authority, for good, since the two-state solution turned out to be a delusion, with an unserious rival and unfair moderator.

Despite Hezbollah's latest declaration of de-escalation, this operation might escalate the Lebanon front again. It will be influenced by the outcome of the American elections, the alliances and breakaways within the Zionist government, and the internal Zionist protests. This operation is another offensive, but might be the wake-up call in the West Bank, that the occupation's nightmarish reality is still ongoing, and the costs of liberation are never easy, especially for the last remaining case of settler colonialism in the world.

Kuwait's volunteers continue humanitarian work in Kenya



Kuwaiti volunteer team of doctors and humanitarian team. — KUNA photos



Kuwaiti volunteer team assists Kenyan children.

GCC, Europe Council chiefs discuss global and regional events



Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Jasem Al-Budaiwi and President of the European Council Charles Michel. — KUNA

RIYADH: The Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Jasem Al-Budaiwi, and the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, discussed the latest developments in the preparations for the Gulf-European summit scheduled to be held in October in Brussels. In a statement, the General Secretariat stated that this came during Al-Budaiwi's meeting with the President of the European Council at the headquarters of the General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council in Riyadh.

The statement said that the meeting discussed several global and regional events, most notably Palestine. Al-Budaiwi stressed that the GCC countries attach great importance to their relations with the EU, describing these relations as important and historic, covering many aspects. He also urged the international community to assume its responsibilities and work to pressure the Zionist occupation forces to immediately cease fire and military operations in the Gaza Strip. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti charitable volunteers continue to process the humanitarian works and extend aid and assistance to the world's needy to help in overcoming major circumstances and challenges. The Kuwaiti volunteer team started implementing a number of projects

in the Republic of Kenya to help more than 300 families. The projects included a medical camp to provide guidance and ways to prevent diseases, in addition to the distribution of food and school supplies. It assisted in serving the labor market by opening stores and

providing machines and tools to achieve self-sufficiency for families and other various charitable works. The Kuwaiti team, including doctors and medical and humanitarian staff, visited orphanages and elderly people centers within the visit program. — KUNA



Volunteers distribute basic food supplies to needy families.



Officials discuss financial and administrative issues

CAIRO: The Arab League permanent committee for administrative and financial affairs, chaired by Arab Affairs Supervisor at Kuwait's Ministry of Finance, Arwa Al-Musallam, held the 106th regular session of the Arab League on Thursday. In a statement to KUNA following the meeting, Al-Musallam said that two days were devoted to discussing topics related to the General Secretariat of the Arab League and its employees. The committee was keen to come up with recommendations that enrich the work of the General Secretariat and preserve the interests of its employees, she added.

The committee also submitted a report on the results of its work that includes recommendations re-



Arab League's permanent committee for administrative and financial affairs chaired by Arab Affairs Supervisor at Kuwait's Ministry of Finance, Arwa Al-Musallam. — KUNA photos



garding the financial and administrative items on its agenda and submitted them to the next session (162) of the Council held next month at the ministerial level. The Permanent Committee for Administrative and Financial Affairs is one of the four main committees of

the Council of the League of Arab States, along with the Economic and Social Committee and the Legal and Political Committees, concerned with studying topics presented on the agenda of the Council at the level of Arab foreign ministers. — KUNA



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KUWAIT: Assistant Undersecretary for Engineering Affairs and Projects Ibrahim Al-Naham and specialized engineering teams inspect the Abdulrahman and Waleed Manahi Al-Asimi Cardiac Intensive Care Center. — KUNA photos

Ministry seeks to modernize health facilities

KUWAIT: Assistant Undersecretary for Engineering Affairs and Projects Ibrahim Al-Naham said on Wednesday that developing health facilities embodies the Ministry's vision to provide the best integrated health services that ensure the comfort and safety of the citizens and enhance the efficiency of the health system in the country. This came in a press statement made by Al-Naham following a field visit accompanied by specialized engineering teams in the Ministry to the Abdulrahman and Waleed Manahi Al-Asimi Cardiac Intensive Care Center.

He stressed that the Ministry pays great attention to the quality of health services provided and seeks to modernize and develop its facilities to keep pace with the latest international standards in health care. He added that these projects enhance the health services provided to citizens, noting that these facilities represent a qualitative addition to the health care system in the country and contribute significantly to meeting citizens' health needs in specialized areas such as heart diseases and pediatric dental treatment.

Al-Naham stressed the need to adhere to the specified timetables to complete the remaining

works to ensure that these projects enter into operation on time. Al-Naham expressed his thanks to the engineering teams and workers for their efforts, appreciating the support of the Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi and the Undersecretary of the Ministry Dr Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, and their follow-up of the implementation of projects.

This visit comes within a series of inspection visits to ensure the progress of work in the construction projects supervised by the Ministry and to ensure their commitment to the specified timetable. During the tour, the current completion rates in each of the two centers were reviewed, and the challenges facing the engineering teams and ways to overcome them were discussed to ensure the completion of work according to the approved engineering and health standards. — KUNA





Filipino sailors hold the line at South China Sea reef

Thousands evacuated as cyclone builds off India, Pakistan's coast

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CHICAGO: US Vice President and 2024 Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris waves as she arrives to speak at the Democratic National Convention (DNC). — AFP

Swifties harness power for Harris

Taylor Swift fans using platform to 'protect' US democracy, get people involved in election

NEW YORK: Taylor Swift has yet to weigh in on the US presidential race, but some of her superfans are already stumping for Kamala Harris. As of Wednesday midday "Swifties for Kamala" had raised more than \$140,000 in favor of the Democratic White House hopeful. They held an inaugural fundraising call the evening prior that was joined by some 27,000 viewers, launching the effort aimed at "turning our swiftie power into political power," as the group's political director put it during the meeting.

Stars like Carole King along with Senators Elizabeth Warren and Kirsten Gillibrand appeared in the virtual meeting. "I am a swiftie, and Taylor and I are actually friends," King, the legendary singer-songwriter behind hits including "I Feel The Earth Move" and "You've Got A Friend" said on the call. "I've been a political activist for years. I've been a volunteer, I've been a door knocker, even as a famous person," King continued. "I'm telling you all this because if any of you are thinking of volunteering to be door knockers or phone callers, but you're a little nervous about what you might say,

please believe me: there is nothing to lose and everything to gain."

Swifties For Kamala began as a social media initiative founded by social media user and swiftie Emerald Medrano in the hours after President Joe Biden dropped out of the race. The effort blossomed across platforms, and with accounts that currently have more than 72,000 subscribers on X, and nearly 50,000 on Instagram.

Swift herself is not personally affiliated with the group. "We're a coalition of Taylor Swift fans committed to protecting the United States of America's historical democracy by working together to help progressive candidates in local and national elections, including Vice President Kamala Harris for our country's next president," reads the group's mission statement on their website.

The group has a policy platform section on their website urging the protection of LGBTQIA+ rights and reproductive freedom, as well as support for new immigrants and taking climate change seriously. They also list "a permanent ceasefire between the Zionist entity and Hamas" as a priority. Along with collecting donations they're

encouraging swifties to register to vote, and selling merchandise including shirts that say "In My Voting Era."

'Swifties are the leaders'

A global megastar with hundreds of millions of social media followers and a wildly loyal — and chronically online — fan base, Swift can move any needle with the tiniest of efforts. The right and the left have long wanted to count the "Blank Space" singer as their own — but for years Swift stayed conspicuously out of politics, including in 2016 when Donald Trump won the presidency.

Speculation abounded that the superstar was a closet Republican, until 2018, when she broke both her silence and the internet by endorsing the Democratic opponent of far-right politician Marsha Blackburn in Tennessee. Blackburn won anyway, but it ushered in a new chapter for Swift: she later explained handlers had urged her against wading into politics, telling her it could damage her career — particularly in the country music industry, which despite its complexities is often associated with conservatism.

Swift endorsed Joe Biden in 2020 and condemned the Supreme Court's reversal of the federal right to abortion and has encouraged droves of her fans to register to vote. But Swift's massive popularity has also meant she's a regular target for political misinformation and right-wing conspiracy theories, often fueled by AI and amplified by the likes of Donald Trump.

Nabbing a Swift endorsement for Harris isn't the goal of her organizing fans, they say. "We are not waiting on Taylor to show her support for Kamala Harris. We are doing this outside of her, using the platform of swifties as a way to get people involved in the election," Rohan Reagan, among the group's social media managers, told Cosmopolitan recently.

Democratic Senator Ed Markey, who also joined the kickoff call, told swifties that "I am in awe of the community you have created online to share not just your love for Taylor Swift, but your commitment to building a better world." "This is the time, this is the place," he continued. "The swifties are the leaders for us to win this election." — AFP

Harris election bid galvanizes black students at alma mater

WASHINGTON: At Howard University, the historically black college that educated Kamala Harris four decades ago, students are dreaming about how her victory in the US presidential election could elevate the institution — and their own ambitions. "I like seeing people that look like me and are doing such great things, like Kamala," said Serena Evans, who said she experienced racism at majority-white schools in her native North Carolina before she enrolled at Howard two years ago.

Evans followed in the footsteps of Democratic presidential nominee Harris, who began her studies in 1982 at the university, located in the nation's capital — one of around 100 such institutions nationwide that cater primarily, though not exclusively, to African Americans. For many, these so-called "historically black colleges and universities" or HBCUs serve as safe havens in a country still marred by racism — even if those same racist attitudes lead to some doubting Howard's credibility. "People think that we're underdeveloped compared to Ivy League schools like Harvard," said Evans, who is studying classics.

But with Harris aiming for the White House in November's vote, Howard students are feeling "on top of the world," 20-year-old Jomalee Smith told AFP. "I feel like once Kamala wins, (Howard) will not only be an American thing, it will be a global thing," said Smith, an international relations student. "More people will know about Howard. It will showcase more job opportunities internationally, not just domestically," Smith added.

'She loves Howard'

Among the red-brick buildings and their tall columns, white students are rare, and it's difficult to find anyone who isn't proud to be studying at the vice president's alma mater. For her part, Harris, 59, regularly returns to the Washington campus — and was there earlier this month to prepare for her September debate against Donald Trump, according to the New York Times. "She loves Howard," said Yusuf Kareem, who came from Texas on the advice of a cousin who was disappointed by her experience at a majority-white university. "For people to see that a black woman could be the president of the United States, and she went to Howard University — they can't take us as a joke," Kareem said.

Other major figures have passed through Howard, including Nobel Prize in Literature winner Toni Morrison, and the first black Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall. "All we want is a fair shot, you know, a foot in the door," said Kareem, a second-year finance student. — AFP

Biden 'looking forward' to talks with Xi: Sullivan

BEIJING: US President Joe Biden is looking forward to talks with Xi Jinping in the "coming weeks", top White House aide Jake Sullivan told the Chinese leader Thursday as they met for rare talks in Beijing. Sullivan, the first US national security advisor to visit China since 2016, met Xi as he wrapped up three days of talks in Beijing which also saw him sit down with Foreign Minister Wang Yi and other high-ranking officials. His visit came as China was embroiled in security rows with US allies Japan and the Philippines.

Sullivan told Xi during a meeting on Thursday in Beijing's ornate Great Hall of the People that Biden "looks forward to engaging with you again in the coming weeks". "President Biden is committed to responsibly managing this consequential relationship to ensure that competition does not veer into conflict or confrontation, and to work together where our interests align," he said.

Chinese state media said Xi told Sullivan that in spite of "great changes", China and the US could still enjoy good ties. "China's commitment to the goal of stable, healthy, and sustainable development of China-US relations hasn't changed," Xi said. "We hope that the US will work with China to meet each other halfway," he added, according to CCTV.

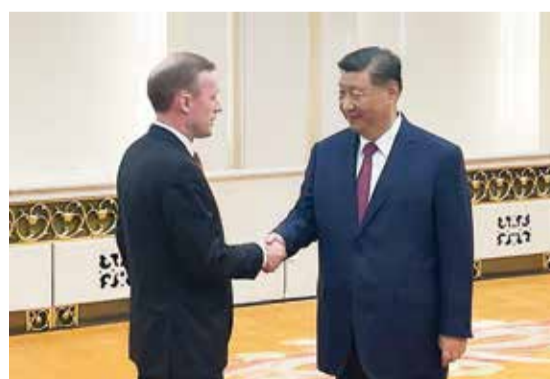
Sullivan told reporters at the US embassy on Thursday that the talks with Chinese officials had lasted for 14 hours, describing the discussions as "constructive, candid, substantive". The Ukraine war came up during the talks, but Sullivan said that both sides had not reached "any particular plan". "I can't say that we did make progress on that issue," he said.

The talks did not touch on the upcoming US election, but Sullivan said that Vice President Kamala Harris wanted to maintain "open lines of communication" with China. Harris, also the Democratic presidential nominee, "shares President Biden's view that responsibly managing this competition so it doesn't veer into conflict or confrontation is essential", Sullivan said. On Wednesday, Sullivan and top diplomat Wang had discussed plans for their leaders to talk in the coming weeks. They also clashed over China's increasingly assertive approach in disputed maritime regions.

Taiwan 'red line'

On Thursday morning, Sullivan met with senior Chinese army official Zhang Youxia at the Beijing headquarters of the Central Military Commission, where the two discussed Taiwan and other flash-point issues. "It's rare that we have the opportunity to have this kind of exchange," Sullivan told Zhang in opening remarks. The officials agreed to hold a call between the two sides' theatre commanders "in the near future", a readout from the White House said.

Sullivan also raised the importance of "freedom of navigation" in the South China Sea, where China and the Philippines have clashed in recent months, and "stability" in the Taiwan Strait, Wash-



BEIJING: US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan (left) shakes hands with China's President Xi Jinping during their meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on August 29, 2024. — AFP

ington said. Zhang, in turn, warned that the status of the self-ruled island was "the first red line that cannot be crossed in China-US relations". "China has always been committed to maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," he said, according to a readout by Beijing's defense ministry. "But 'Taiwan independence' and peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait are incompatible," he said. "China demands that the US halts military collusion with Taiwan, ceases arming Taiwan, and stops spreading false narratives related to Taiwan," Zhang added. He also asked Washington to "work with China to promote communication and exchanges between the two militaries and jointly shoulder the responsibilities of major powers". — AFP

International

Thousands evacuated as cyclone builds off India, Pakistan's coast

Rain-related incidents kill at least 28 in Gujarat; Flash floods cause power outages in Karachi



MULTAN, Pakistan: A motorcyclist rides his vehicle through floodwaters on a street after heavy monsoon rains in Multan on August 28, 2024. — AFP photos

AHMEDABAD/ISLAMABAD: Heavy rains battered India and Pakistan's coastal areas along the Arabian Sea, flooding cities in western India's Gujarat state and forcing thousands of people from their homes, with authorities predicting a cyclonic storm to develop by Friday. People waded through waist-high waters that partly submerged vehicles and roads in parts of the state, visuals from Reuters television showed.

At least 28 people have died this week from rain-related incidents in the state, officials said, as meteorologists in India and neighboring Pakistan warned that more heavy downpours and strong winds were expected to lash the coast. "There is no electricity for the last two days," said Prabhu Ram Soni, who lives in

Gujarat's coastal city of Jamnagar. "I have an eight-month-old daughter and an asthma patient, my mother, who is on oxygen support."

More than 18,000 have been evacuated since Sunday from cities near the coast, disaster management authorities said. The army was also involved in relief efforts in the state which was hit in last year by cyclone Biparjoy, damaging infrastructure and leading to the evacuation of more than 180,000 people.

Heavy rains also lashed Jamnagar, home to the world's largest oil refinery complex, owned by Reliance, the district collector, B K Pandya, told Reuters. At nearby Vadinar, Nayara Energy, backed by Russian groups including its largest oil producer, Ros-



AHMEDABAD, India: A man carries his belongings through a flooded street after heavy rains on the outskirts of Ahmedabad on August 28, 2024.

neft, runs another refinery. "They are operational," Pandya said, when asked if rain had affected work in the refineries, adding that authorities were focusing on rescue efforts in the district. A deep depression off Gujarat is expected to intensify into a cyclonic storm by Friday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said, but it was forecast to move away from the Indian coast over the next two days.

Rain causes widespread destruction every year, but experts say climate change is shifting weather patterns and increasing the number of extreme weather events. The northeastern Indian state of Tripura was hit by floods and landslides last week, with more than 20 people killed. In neighboring Bangla-

desh, downriver from India, floods killed at least 40 people over the same period, with nearly 300,000 residents taking refuge in emergency shelters.

In Pakistan, the weather department warned fishermen to not venture into the sea until Saturday. The IMD has forecast extremely heavy rainfall in Gujarat's Bharuch, Kutch and Saurashtra districts on Friday. Rain also triggered flash floods in the neighboring Pakistani port city of Karachi, causing power outages, media reported. Pakistani authorities have also warned of flash floods in two districts of the southern province of Sindh, which is still recovering from the massive floods of 2022 which inundated large swaths of the country and damaged the economy. — Agencies

In latest crackdown on free speech, Hong Kong editors 'guilty of sedition'

HONG KONG: Hong Kong pro-democracy news outlet Stand News and its two former chief editors were found guilty of sedition on Thursday, the first conviction of its kind since the city came under Chinese rule in 1997. The verdict is part of a crackdown on free speech in the former British colony that has seen critics of China jailed or forced into exile, following huge pro-democracy protests in 2019.

Editors Chung Pui-kuen, 54, and Patrick Lam, 36, are the first journalists to be convicted of sedition since Britain handed Hong Kong over to China in 1997, and the ruling drew resounding international condemnation. Chung and Lam were in charge of Stand News, a Chinese-language website that gained a massive following during the protests in 2019, before it was raided and shut down in December 2021.

On Thursday, district court judge Kwok Wai-kin said the pair were guilty of "conspiracy to publish and reproduce seditious publications". The parent company of Stand News, Best Pencil Limited, was also found guilty. "The line (Stand News) took was to support and promote Hong Kong local autonomy," according to a written judgement by Kwok. "It even became a tool to smear and vilify the Central Authorities (Beijing) and the (Hong Kong) SAR Government."

Kwok also pointed to 11 articles published by



HONG KONG: Chung Pui-kuen (right), the former chief editor of Hong Kong's now shuttered pro-democracy news outlet Stand News, leaves the district court in Hong Kong on August 29, 2024. — AFP

Stand News that "caused potential detrimental consequences to national security" and had the intention of "seriously undermining" authorities in Beijing and Hong Kong. Lam was absent from court on Thursday due to illness. The judge granted both men bail before their sentencing on September 26. Chung and Lam were charged under a colonial-era law, which punishes sedition with a maximum jail term of two years. A recent security law enacted in March raised the jail term for sedition to seven years.

The verdict drew swift global outcry, with the United States denouncing it as a new blow to the Chinese city's reputation. "The conviction of Stand News editors for sedition is a direct attack on media freedom and undermines Hong Kong's once-proud international reputation for openness," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller wrote on social media platform X. — AFP

Powerful Typhoon Shanshan slams into southern Japan

OITA, Japan: One of Japan's strongest typhoons in decades dumped torrential rain across southern regions on Thursday, with one person missing and at least 80 injured as authorities warned of life-threatening flooding and landslides. Typhoon Shanshan packed gusts of up to 252 kilometers (157 miles) per hour as it smashed into Japan's main southern island of Kyushu early Thursday, making it the most powerful storm this year and one of the strongest at landfall since 1960.

The storm then weakened, with maximum gusts of 162 kph at 5:00 pm (0800 GMT), the weather office said, but it was still dumping heavy rain across Kyushu and beyond as it moved slowly towards the main island of Honshu. The Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) warned that "the risk of a disaster due to heavy rain can rapidly escalate in western Japan as Friday approaches".

Even before Shanshan hit, precipitation pummeled large parts with three members of the same family killed in a landslide late Tuesday in Aichi prefecture around 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) from Kyushu.

Authorities issued their highest alert in places, with more than five million people advised to evacuate, although it was unclear how many did. Kunisaki city in the Oita region of Kyushu warned inhabitants to "evacuate to a safe place or higher place such as the second floor of your houses" because of the risk of flooding.

One person was missing on Thursday — reportedly a man on a small boat — and two people were seriously injured, chief government spokesman Yoshi-

masa Hayashi said. At least 80 people were injured across Kyushu, the JMA said. Rains turned rivers into raging torrents while winds smashed windows and blew tiles off roofs. TV images showed flooded roads and power lines being repaired.

The coastal city of Miyazaki, littered with debris from nearly 200 damaged buildings, reported 25 injuries — including some from a tornado. Some parts of Miyazaki prefecture saw record rains for August, with the town of Misato recording a staggering 791.5 millimeters (31 inches) in 48 hours, the JMA said.

Worried student Aoi Nishimoto, 18, said he had called his family in Miyazaki to see if they were safe. "Our home is fine, but there was a tornado in Miyazaki and power went out in some places," he told AFP in Kyushu's main city of Fukuoka. "This year, I am away from my parents' home for the first time. So it's a bit scary being all alone," fellow student Rio Ohtsuru, 19, told AFP. "Maybe I will look for a flashlight in case of a power outage," she said. Kyushu's utility operator said 187,010 houses were without power elsewhere on the island.

Climate change

Shanshan comes in the wake of Typhoon Ampil, which dumped heavy rain that disrupted hundreds of flights and trains this month but caused only minor injuries and damage. Typhoons in the region have been forming closer to coastlines, intensifying more rapidly and lasting longer over land due to climate change, according to a study released last month.

Another released by World Weather Attribution (WWA) on Thursday said that climate change turbocharged Typhoon Gaemi, which killed dozens of people across the Philippines, Taiwan and China this year. In the city of USA, retiree Fukashi Oishi looked forlornly at an old tree opposite his house that was already mature when he was a child but had snapped and fallen on the road. "Oh, it's so sad," he told AFP. — AFP

More Zionist carnage in West...

Continued from Page 1

The WHO confirmed on Aug 23 that at least one baby has been paralyzed by the type 2 polio virus, the first such case in the territory in 25 years.

The Zionist entity began coordinated raids in the northern West Bank cities of Jenin, Tubas and Tulkarem early on Wednesday. Columns of Zionist armored vehicles backed by troops and warplanes were sent in before soldiers encircled refugee camps in Tubas and Tulkarem, as well as Jenin, and exchanged fire with Palestinian fighters. The army said it killed seven fighters on Thursday, bringing to 16 the death toll reported by the Zionist military since the launch of the West Bank operation.

The Palestinian health ministry also reported that 16 Palestinians had been killed since the beginning of the operation. A military statement said five fighters were killed Thursday at a mosque in the Tulkarem refugee camp, including Muhammad Jaber, also known as Abu Shujaa. Palestinian group Islamic Jihad said he was its commander in the nearby Nur Shams refugee camp. It added that two other fighters were killed in Jenin on Thursday.

The violence has caused significant destruction, especially in Tulkarem, whose governor described the raids as "unprecedented" and a "dangerous signal". AFP TV footage showed bulldozers ripping up the asphalt from streets in the city. Widespread damage was reported to infrastructure. Witnesses said Zionist forces had withdrawn from Al-Farra refugee camp in Tubas where several Palestinians were killed on Wednesday.

An AFP journalist said clashes were taking place in Jenin, where a drone was seen flying overhead and the streets were empty. Another said Zionist soldiers were

operating in Tulkarem. The Palestinian Prisoners' Club said at least 45 people had been arrested in the West Bank since the start of the Zionist operation.

United Nations chief Antonio Guterres, in a statement, called for an "immediate cessation of these operations". He condemned the use of air strikes on civilian targets and "the loss of lives, including of children". "These dangerous developments are fueling an already explosive situation in the occupied West Bank and further undermining the Palestinian Authority," the statement said.

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas on Wednesday cut short a visit to Saudi Arabia to address the crisis, while Jordan's King Abdullah II appealed for a ceasefire in Gaza to stop the spread of violence. Iran's foreign ministry condemned the operation in the West Bank, describing it as a "continuation of the genocide in the Gaza Strip".

The United Nations on Wednesday said at least 637 Palestinians had been killed in the West Bank by Zionist troops or settlers since Oct 7. Violence also raged in Gaza, where the Zionist military on Thursday said it "eliminated dozens" of fighters during the past day in close-quarters combat and air strikes. The Zionist military campaign has killed at least 40,602 people in Gaza, mostly women and children. The war has devastated Gaza and triggered a humanitarian crisis.

"It's just catastrophic," Louise Wateridge, a spokesperson for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees said of the effects of the war and repeated evacuation orders from the Zionist military. "What we're seeing now is families, mothers, children dragging their belongings," she said on social media platform X. "There's very limited access to any kind of vehicles for this kind of displacement now, and people just don't know where to go."

As emergency services crumble under the strain of the war, Gaza's civil defense agency said ambulance and fire services had been severely degraded, with most "hit by (Zionist) strikes". — Agencies

Harris, Walz on bus tour...

Continued from Page 1

Republicans have criticized her for not facing media scrutiny sooner, and Trump spokesman Jason Miller accused her on Wednesday of using Walz as a "human shield." But Harris has been content to let her campaign do the talking in the frenetic weeks since the 81-year-old Biden stunned the country by bowing out. She has reinvigorated the Democratic Party, raised more than half a billion dollars and wiped out Trump's lead in the polls. Harris insists, however, she remains the underdog, and that the election will be won or lost in the battleground states.

In the last days of Biden's campaign, increasingly poor polls showed his only real remaining hope of victory was through winning the three "Rust Belt" states of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin. Harris is now also targeting the four "Sun Belt" states of Georgia, Arizona, Nevada and

North Carolina as a way to give her multiple ways to win the overall Electoral College vote.

The Peach State is a particularly tough target. Biden won it by a razor-thin margin of less than 12,000 votes in 2020, in a result that Trump bitterly contested. The Republican now faces criminal charges in Georgia related to his alleged plot to overturn that vote. On Wednesday in an uplift for her campaign, the latest Fox News poll shows Harris edging Trump in Georgia, 50 percent to 48 percent.

But Trump is also stepping up his swing state campaign as he seeks to recover his poise after being wrong-footed by new flag bearer Harris. The vice president is not only two decades younger than Trump and of Black and South Asian heritage, but vying to be the first female US president. Trump will be attacking Harris' "dangerously liberal policies" Thursday in Michigan and Wisconsin, before traveling to Pennsylvania on Friday, the campaign said.

But his team was embroiled in controversy Wednesday after a report that Trump's entourage shoved and verbally abused staff during a politicized visit to the United States' most hallowed resting place for its war dead. — AFP

Telegram boss Durov charged...

Continued from Page 1

The tech mogul founded Telegram as he was in the process of quitting his native Russia a decade ago following a dispute with authorities related to ownership of his first project, the Russian-language social network VKontakte.

An enigmatic figure who rarely speaks in public, Durov is a citizen of Russia, France and the United Arab Emirates, where Telegram is based. Forbes magazine estimates his current fortune at \$15.5 billion, though he proudly promotes the virtues of an

ascetic life that includes ice baths and not drinking alcohol or coffee.

Numerous questions have been raised about the timing and circumstances of Durov's detention, with supporters seeing him as a freedom of speech champion while his detractors paint him as a menace who willfully allowed Telegram to get out of control. Le Monde newspaper reported Wednesday that Durov had met President Emmanuel Macron on several occasions prior to receiving French nationality in 2021, via a special procedure reserved for those deemed to have made a special contribution to France.

A source close to the case, who asked not to be named, told AFP on Thursday that after his arrest Durov asked that French telecoms tycoon Xavier Niel, chairman and founder of the Iliad mobile operator, be informed of his arrest. Niel is seen as being close to Macron. — AFP

International

Filipino sailors hold the line at South China Sea reef

Sabina Shoal latest reef to become a flashpoint in decades of maritime disputes with China

SOUTH CHINA SEA: Sailors aboard two Philippine Coast Guard boats crashed through South China Sea waves, shadowed by Chinese vessels as they attempted to bring desperately needed supplies to colleagues holed up on a ship inside a remote ring of reefs. The coast guard's BRP Teresa Magbanua has been anchored inside Sabina Shoal since April to assert Manila's claims to the area off its coast and prevent China from seizing it.

But the Filipino sailors on board the ship are running critically low on food and other provisions — which Monday's tense "humanitarian" mission by two smaller coast guard boats was intended to supply. Philippine and Chinese vessels have collided twice this month near Sabina Shoal, located 140 kilometers (86 miles) from the Philippines' western island of Palawan and 1,200 kilometers from China's nearest major landmass Hainan island.

AFP journalists on board one of the 44-metre (144-foot) Philippine resupply boats watched as Chinese coast guard and navy ships shadowed both vessels for hours, eventually surrounding them. With 40 Chinese ships in their path in rough seas, the Philippine Coast Guard turned back, leaving the sailors on the 97-metre Teresa Magbanua without fresh provisions.

Flashpoint fears

Sabina Shoal is the latest reef to become a flashpoint in decades of maritime disputes between the Philippines and China. In 1995, Beijing began building structures on Mischief Reef, which Manila claims as part of its continental shelf, and China has since constructed several artificial islands that it uses as military outposts. More recently, the focus of clashes between Philippine and Chinese vessels has been Second Thomas Shoal, about 30 kilometers southeast of Mischief Reef. A handful of Filipino troops are stationed on a rusty navy ship that the Philippines deliberately grounded there in 1999 to check China's advance.

A Filipino sailor lost a thumb in a clash there in June, when Chinese coast guard members wielding knives, sticks and an axe foiled a Philippine Navy attempt to resupply its troops. Beijing and Manila reached a "provisional arrangement" in July for the delivery of necessities and rotation of Filipino troops at Second Thomas Shoal.

But now the Philippines faces a new challenge in reaching its coast guard personnel at Sabina Shoal, 60 kilometers east of Second Thomas Shoal. Sabina Shoal is also the rendezvous point for Philippine resupply missions to Second Thomas Shoal. "If we lose Escoda Shoal, that would be very easy for China ... to prevent our resupply operation that we intend to carry out in Ayungin Shoal because they can basically block it on both sides," Commodore Jay Tarriela, a spokesman for the Philippine Coast Guard, told reporters on Tuesday, using the Filipino names for Sabina and Second Thomas shoals.

'Not going to withdraw'

Beijing claims almost the entire South China Sea, despite an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis and defends its actions against Philippine vessels as lawful and proportional. Analysts say Beijing's aim is to further encroach on Sabina Shoal, moving deeper into Manila's exclusive economic zone and normalizing Chinese control of the area.

The discovery earlier this year of piles of crushed coral at Sabina Shoal ignited suspicion in Manila that Beijing was planning to build another permanent base there, which would be its closest outpost to the Philippine archipelago.

Beijing is using a "salami-slicing strategy", said Don McLain Gill of De La Salle University in Manila, deploying ships to Sabina Shoal and other areas to "stretch" the Philippines' limited maritime resources. Sabina Shoal's proximity to Palawan is a concern, said Andrea Wong, non-resident research fellow at the Institute for Indo-Pacific Affairs in New Zealand.



AT SEA: A China Coast Guard ship is seen from the Philippine Coast Guard vessel BRP Cabra during a supply mission to Sabina Shoal in disputed waters of the South China Sea on August 26, 2024. — AFP

"If China gained access to it, it's a matter of time before they can, not invade Palawan per se, but they can also get resources in that area," Wong said, referring to fish stocks and potential oil and gas deposits. To head off any attempt by China to seize Sabina Shoal, the Philippines sent the Teresa Magbanua there to monitor Chinese activities.

China responded by deploying more vessels, including a 165-metre coast guard vessel. The situation has echoes of 2012, when Beijing took control of Scarborough Shoal, another strategic feature about 240 kilometers west of the Philippines' main island of Luzon. Tarriela said lessons had been learned from that incident.

"We were not able to go back the moment we left Bajo de Masinloc," Tarriela said, using the Filipino name for the shoal. "The Commandant of the Philippine Coast Guard has made it very clear. We're not going to withdraw our forces that would allow China to permanently occupy (Sabina)." — AFP



SEOUL: Climate activist Han Je-ah poses while holding her closing argument outside the Constitutional Court in Seoul on May 21, 2024. — AFP

S Korea's climate law violates rights of future generations: Top court

SEOUL: South Korea's top court said on Thursday the climate change law did not protect basic human rights and lacks targets to shield future generations, in a landmark ruling after activists blamed the government for failing to effectively tackle climate change. About 200 plaintiffs including young climate activists and even some infants filed petitions to the constitutional court since 2020, arguing that their government was violating its citizens' human rights by not doing enough on climate change.

The court asked the legislature to revise the carbon neutrality act by the end of February 2026, acknowledging that the existing law's emission targets did not conform to the constitution by violating the duty to protect basic rights as well as failing to protect future generations against a climate crisis. Climate advocacy groups said it was the first high court ruling on a government's climate action in Asia, potentially setting a precedent in a region where similar lawsuits have been filed in Taiwan and Japan.

In April, Europe's top human rights court ruled the Swiss government had violated the rights of its citizens by failing to do enough to combat climate change. The Korean court ruling was met by cheers, tears and applause by the plaintiffs, activists and lawyers, who chanted slogans like "The verdict is not the end, but the beginning". "I hope today's decision will lead to a bigger change so that children do not have to file this kind of constitutional appeal," said Han Je-ah, 12, one of the plaintiffs. "The climate crisis is having a huge impact on our lives and there is no time to delay," she told reporters after the ruling.

Kim Young-hee, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, called the verdict "an important decision for the entire society's greenhouse gas reduction". The court said South Korea's carbon neutrality act, enacted in 2010 and revised later to lay out emissions targets by 2030 and the goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2050, failed to present "any quantitative levels" for the reductions targets between 2031 and 2049. "Since there is no mechanism that can effectively ensure gradual and continuous reductions until 2050, it stipulates reduction targets that would transfer an excessive burden to the future," the court said in a statement.

In a statement, the environment ministry said it respected the verdict and would implement follow-up measures. Koh Moon-hyun, a law professor at Soongsil University, told Reuters the ruling could potentially spark change in other countries. "The court must have looked at rulings in Europe and changed its stance," he said. "It has created a chance for South Korea to drop its nickname as a climate villain." — AFP

Turkish defense industry: A self-sufficiency success story

As we jubilantly celebrate the 102nd anniversary of our Victory Day, it is a source of immense pride to witness the evolution and achievements of the Turkish military over the last two decades. In this regard, one area particularly stands out: the defense industry. The evolution of the Turkish defence industry in the recent decades under the leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has become a matter of global attention. Turkey has shifted from importing many of its defense technologies to becoming one of the world's most prominent exporters in the defense and aerospace industry. With a large number of products in its defense industry portfolio and the significant importance given to R&D and technological advancement, Turkey has emerged as a competent and trusted global player, with over 2000 enterprises, SMEs, research institutes, and universities contributing domestically.

Second largest army of the NATO

Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Turkey is in fact surrounded by many wars, armed conflicts and instabilities, necessitating strong security forces backed by an advanced defense sector to maintain regional peace and security. As the second largest army of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and one of the biggest defense spenders in the world, Turkey has developed the capabilities to defend itself while sharing this experience and capacity accumulated over the years with its partners and friends around the world.

Danish court rules arms smuggler can't be extradited to India

COPENHAGEN: A court in Denmark said Thursday that a Danish arms smuggler who air-dropped weapons to Indian villagers in 1995 could not be extradited to India, citing the risk that his rights would be violated. Niels Holck, 62, has admitted to parachuting four tons of weapons into the state of West Bengal to help locals fight government authorities.

New Delhi has relentlessly pursued attempts to have him stand trial in India, and the affair has been a stumbling block in Danish-Indian relations. However, the Hillerod district court ruled that he should not be extradited because there was a "real risk" that he would be "subjected to treatment in India that violates Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights", which prohibits torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The court noted this was the case despite diplomatic assurances from India that Holck would be housed in a special detention center during the criminal proceedings in India. India had said the detention center would be set up to house only Holck and he could be accompanied by Danish police officers acting as observers.

Holck was the only one of seven smugglers who managed to escape after the Indian Air Force intercepted their returning plane. The others, all European nationals, were sentenced in Kolkata to life imprisonment in 2000, but all were eventually released.

Over the years, Turkey's effort towards ensuring her national security as well as the regional peace while fully abiding by the international law have resulted in unfair treatment by certain countries that are the main exporters of defense industry products to Turkey. Although achieving an independent and self-sufficient defense industry has always been a national strategy, the arms embargo imposed by these countries provided an accelerator to push for further efforts to meet the needs of the security units with domestic resources.

Independence of the defense industry

Turkey's advancements in the defence sector have garnered global recognition, particularly in drone warfare, with Turkish drones like the Bayraktar TB-2 playing pivotal roles in international conflicts. Beyond armed drones, Turkey's defense industry has made significant strides, now possessing the capability to design, produce, modernize, and export a wide array of core conventional arms and equipment. This includes corvettes, fire support systems, unmanned aircraft systems, gliding munitions for drones, joint-direct attack munitions, various land warfare platforms (excluding main battle tanks), grenade launchers, and tactical anti-material rifles, with varying degrees of domestic input.

To name a few, the state-of-the-art AKINCI Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs), ANKA, and the first unmanned fighter jet Bayraktar Kizilelma, along with the Gökürk sat-



ellite system, Altay tanks, ATAK and GÖKBAY helicopters, Hürkuş training aircraft, and Fırtına Obus, are just a handful of examples. Turkey's defense exports have diversified, reaching over 170 countries, with the industry's project portfolio expanding to include 750 projects by over 1,500 local firms. Despite international challenges, Turkey's defense spending and industry turnover have seen steady growth, underscoring its emergence as a formidable player in the global defence market.

As a result of efforts toward ensuring the independence of the defence industry over the last decades, Turkey's foreign military imports decreased from 80 percent in 2004 to around 20 percent in 2023, while arms exports increased by 75 percent from 2018 to 2023 compared to 2013-2017. In 2023, Turkish defence industry exports reached a record-breaking 5.5 billion USD.

Supporting our friends and allies' defense capabilities

We don't consider defence industry

cooperation merely a type of foreign trade. Supplying friendly countries with affordable, sophisticated, and durable products and solutions benefits our bilateral ties and fosters greater security partnerships. In recent years, Kuwait has emerged as a prime example of this approach. Kuwait's procurement of Baykar UAVs in 2023 marks the beginning of a new era in the defence sector between Kuwait and Turkey.

Most importantly, during His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to Turkey on May 7, 2024, Turkey and Kuwait signed a Government-to-Government deal, the Implementation Protocol on Government-to-Government Defence Industry Procurement Contracts that laid the foundation for further cooperation. We sincerely believe that the defence sector will be the cornerstone of our brotherly relations with Kuwait.

This article was provided by the Turkish Embassy in Kuwait.

India regards the Dane, also known as Kim Davy, as the mastermind of the operation, which saw the delivery of hundreds of assault rifles, pistols, anti-tank grenades, rocket launchers and thousands of rounds of ammunition.

'Frustrated'

Holck was arrested in Denmark in April 2010 after Danish authorities reached a deal with India over the terms of his extradition, including a promise that he would not be given the death penalty and would serve any sentence in Denmark. But a Danish district court in 2011 overturned the authorities' decision, saying he risked mistreatment in India.

An appeals court later upheld the district court's ruling. In 2016, India again requested his extradition. Holck's lawyer, Jonas Christoffersen, told AFP they were "very satisfied with the decision" on Thursday. Christoffersen said he expected the prosecution to appeal the decision, like they did in 2011.

But given that two courts in 2011, and now the district court, had ruled that India could not guarantee his safety, he was confident the ruling would be upheld. "We would be very surprised to say the least, if the High Court would reach another conclusion this time," the lawyer said.

Earlier this week, Christoffersen said that his client was tired of the protracted affair. "He's frustrated that the case has dragged on for so long," Christoffersen said. "Now he's hopeful that it will come to a close and that once it has gone through the Danish legal system, it will be clear that he will never be extradited to India." "He is going on with his life, but he cannot travel. He has his life in Denmark but it's a burden on him," he said. "He's been called a terrorist without any factual merit for 28 years." — AFP

Spanish actor's son jailed for life for grisly Thai murder

KOH SAMUI, Thailand: A Thai court on Thursday jailed a famous Spanish actor's son for life for the grisly murder of a Colombian plastic surgeon on a tropical holiday island, in a lurid case that has gripped Spain. Daniel Sancho Bronchalo, a 30-year-old chef, was found guilty of the premeditated murder of Edwin Arrieta Arteaga on the tourist island of Koh Phangan last year.

The case has generated enormous interest in Spain because the defendant's father Rodolfo Sancho is a well-known actor, and scores of Spanish reporters have flown in for the trial. The court on the island of Koh Samui said in a statement that Sancho had been given a life sentence and ordered to pay 4.4 million baht (around \$130,000) to Arrieta's family.

Bussakorn Kaewleedee, a lawyer for the victim's family, said they were happy with the outcome. "The plaintiff is satisfied with the sentence because he will be put in prison for life and they receive some financial compensation," Bussakorn told reporters outside the court on the island of Koh Samui. "The verdict has been delivered, both sides have the right to appeal according to Thai law," Bussakorn added.

When asked about Sancho's reaction, she said: "He is sad, but we can't forget the loss of the dead one". The trial heard that Sancho chopped up Arrieta's body and put the parts in plastic bags before distributing them around Koh Phangan. — AFP

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 2024

Hungry Gazans face crippling prices and shortages of food as war rages

Cost of living crisis means many basic goods out of reach

GAZA: Most Palestinians shopping for hungry families can only stare at the meager offerings in Gaza City's street markets, frustrated that soaring prices and shortages of food are pushing essential supplies beyond their reach. Prices of basic commodities have more than quadrupled since the conflict began, piling pressure on families already traumatized by Zionist entity's military campaign and a humanitarian crisis, with no ceasefire in sight, Gaza residents say.

"We do not have vegetables, meat products, eggs or anything," said Abu Issam, a Palestinian from northern Gaza. "Where are the governments? Where are the people? They are supposed to watch out for us, to have mercy on the people. Let me tell you something — yesterday I slept hungry."

The price of three potatoes is currently at 150 shekels (\$41.01). Before the war, one kg (2.2 lb) of potatoes cost two shekels (\$0.55), residents said. A jar of honey used to cost 25 shekels (\$6.84), now it is sold for 85 shekels (\$23.24), they said. Residents said they are mostly relying on canned products that come through aid delivered to the territory, given the unavailability of other food products.

"We are now wishing for a grape that we used to grow in our lands... Your son asks for money to buy some things... but now even 5 Shekels for your

son are not enough to buy even one product," said Gaza resident Abu Anwar Hassanein. A high risk of famine persists across Gaza as long as the war continues and humanitarian access is restricted, according to an assessment by a global hunger monitor published on June 25. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) added that more than 495,000 people in Gaza are facing the most severe, catastrophic level of food insecurity. Even before the conflict, two-thirds of the population lived in poverty and 45 percent of the workforce was unemployed. After the war, Gaza's economy could take decades to recover.

"We are unable to live, we are unable to buy anything. There's nothing, we are not working," said Palestinian laborer Mohammed Al-Katnany. "You have the pregnant women, how are they supposed to grow their child while pregnant? How is she supposed to give birth? Diseases are everywhere," said Hassanein. More than 40,500 Palestinians have been killed during Zionist entity's offensive on Gaza, according to local health authorities, and the enclave has been laid to waste. Most of its 2.3 million people have been displaced several times and face acute shortages of food and medicine, humanitarian agencies say. — Reuters



BUREIJ, Palestinian Territories: Palestinian children queue to receive a meal during food distribution in Bureij refugee camp central of Gaza Strip. — AFP

Sri Lanka president defends IMF bailout in campaign launch

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka had no option but to agree to an International Monetary Fund bailout that required tough austerity measures, President Ranil Wickremesinghe said Thursday as he launched his re-election campaign. An unprecedented economic crisis two years ago led to months-long food and fuel shortages, triggering street protests that forced Wickremesinghe's predecessor to briefly flee the country.

The 75-year-old president said the \$2.9 billion IMF rescue package he negotiated last year required reforms that the island must implement or risk a repeat of those struggles. "The agreements with the IMF and by our bilateral lenders cannot be changed," he said at a campaign event to launch his manifesto ahead of September 21 polls. "Some candidates think they can renegotiate, but that is only going to be a waste of time."

His main rivals, opposition leader Sajith Premadasa, 57, and Marxist leader Anura Kumara Disanayaka, 55, have vowed to open fresh talks with the IMF to rewrite the agreement. Premadasa has pledged to cut income taxes, which were doubled by Wickremesinghe.

"We will strengthen fiscal discipline as per the IMF agreement... However, we will make amendments," Premadasa's manifesto said. Disanayaka's party says it will halt touted privatizations of state enterprises. Wickremesinghe said he had agreed with the IMF to ease the tax burden on middle and low income groups from next year, but did not give details. Sri Lanka is still negotiating with international bondholders after defaulting on its \$46 billion foreign debt in 2022, a year when the economy shrunk by 7.3 percent.

Wickremesinghe is also facing a challenge from the largest party in parliament which had backed his ascension, but where his predecessor's family still wields great influence. Lawmaker and Rajapaksa clan scion Namal, 38, is among the 38 other candidates challenging Wickremesinghe in next month's poll. Wickremesinghe is also under fire for refusing to fund a local government election last year, saying the country had no money to pay for



COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's President and independent presidential candidate Ranil Wickremesinghe (center) attends the launch of his election manifesto, in Colombo on August 29, 2024. — AFP

it. The Supreme Court ruled last week that he was guilty of violating the fundamental rights of Sri Lankan voters as a result and ordered it to be held as soon as possible. — AFP

Egypt central bank boosts lending to govt as inflation slows

CAIRO: Lending to the government by Egypt's central bank continued to climb in the last fiscal year, according to the central bank's newly released annual budget, even as inflation has slid from an all-time peak in September. Economists say such lending by the central bank risks undermining the economy by expanding the money supply, fuelling inflation and causing the exchange rate to weaken against foreign currencies.

Central bank figures show "M1" money supply, which includes domestic currency in circulation and demand deposits in Egyptian pounds, jumped by 31.1 percent in the year to end-June 2024, after growing 33.4 percent in the fiscal year to end-June 2023 and 23.1 percent in fiscal 2021/22.

The sharp acceleration in money supply growth has come during four years in which Egypt's underlying economic weaknesses have been exposed by a series of shocks including the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Headline inflation, however, declined from a record 38.0 percent in September to 25.7 percent in July.

"If anything, M1 money supply in percent year-on-year terms has slowed from its peak of nearly 50 percent in February, which may be adding to the momentum of price changes (such as the decline in food inflation) in driving the headline rate of inflation in Egypt down over the course of this year," James Swanston of Capital Economics said. As of the end of June, the central bank had 1.36 trillion Egyptian pounds outstanding in securities purchased from the finance ministry, up from 1.09 trillion a year earlier, according to its budget, released on Tuesday. These included 940.3 billion pounds in local currency bonds purchased from the finance ministry as of end-June, up from 818.9 billion pounds in June 2023. Egypt pledged to the International Monetary Fund in an \$8 billion financial support agreement signed in March that it would reduce central bank lending to the government.

But it missed its targets in April and May after funds from the UAE's \$35 billion purchase of the development rights to property on the Mediterranean coast were delayed, the IMF said in a review of the package published in July. Egypt also promised that the central bank would stop sidestepping the finance ministry by lending hundreds of billions of pounds to other government agencies.

Such lending fell to 766.8 billion pounds as of end-June from 887.6 billion pounds a year earlier, according to the central bank budget. Egypt pledged to the IMF in June that it would reduce such borrowing by other government agencies by 150 billion pounds by the end of June and by 100 billion pounds in subsequent years until it had fallen to zero.

Government spending has surged in recent years as the state has pursued ambitious infrastructure projects including new cities and a vast expansion of roads while seeking to sustain some subsidies in order to prop up sliding living standards. — Reuters

UK reshapes its AI strategy under pressure to cut costs

LONDON: Britain's Labour government is drawing up a new, cost-cutting artificial intelligence strategy ahead of a crunch autumn budget — prioritizing public sector adoption of the technology over direct investment into industry. Since taking office in July, Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government has been reviewing the costs of AI. It has already scrapped a planned 1.3 billion pounds' (\$1.72 billion) worth of investment in related technologies — drawn up by the previous Conservative government — including an 800 million pound investment promised to develop a supercomputer at the University of Edinburgh.

While 1.3 billion pounds is a relatively small sum in the wider AI landscape, Starmer's government faced backlash from industry leaders who said it signals that Britain is becoming less interested in supporting innovation. By comparison France, which is building a reputation as a European hub for generative AI, recently committed 2.5 billion euros (\$2.77 billion) to invest in developing the technology domestically. The British government is also considering scrapping a planned San Francisco office for its AI Safety Institute, according to one source close to the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). The office was originally due to open over the summer, and would have seen staff hired in line with market rates, estimated at upwards of \$100,000 each.

"Labour always needs to somehow look different to the Tories, and reining in the AI safety stuff, the focus on existential risks, is an easy way to do that," the source said. Signaling a change of direction, tech minister Peter Kyle in July sacked one of the



BERLIN: Britain's PM Keir Starmer (center) poses with CEO of Siemens Energy Christian Bruch (left) and Vice President Darren Davidson as he visits the Siemens Energy plant in Berlin on Aug 28, 2024. — AFP

co-founders of the AI Safety Institute, Nitarshan Rajkumar, from his role as a senior policy adviser, according to three sources close to the DSIT.

While it is not unusual for a new administration to bring in its own advisers, some in the industry see the sacking as an unforced error. Rajkumar announced his departure from DSIT on social media platform X, but did not say his contract had been terminated. "Huge loss to the UK civil service," Jordan Sullivan, of lobby group Startup Coalition, wrote on X shortly after. "Just the sort of person we should be doing a huge amount to keep inside the tent."

Around the same time, Labour recruited Matt Clifford, a tech entrepreneur and chief organizer of last year's AI Safety Summit under Conservative leader Rishi Sunak, to devise a new strategy. Clifford is expected to deliver the plan in September, the source said, ahead of the government's

Autumn Statement the following month. A government spokesperson said it recognized the transformative power of AI and remained committed to harnessing the technology to deliver growth and create opportunities for people across the UK. Tech minister Kyle aims to drive AI adoption in the public sector as a means of improving efficiency and reducing costs, while cutting back the government's direct investments into industry, according to the three sources.

Britain hosted the world's first AI Safety Summit in Bletchley Park last November, drawing world leaders like Kamala Harris and tech moguls such as Elon Musk and Sam Altman. Fears around AI's catastrophic potential spread after Microsoft-backed OpenAI released ChatGPT to the public in November 2022, but these need to be balanced against the technology's positive aspects. — Reuters

Global equities rise, shrug off Nvidia share drop

PARIS: US and European stock markets advanced on Thursday, with Frankfurt hitting a new record, as investors shrugged off a drop in shares of chip giant Nvidia and turned their attention back to interest rates. The main US stock indexes opened higher even as Nvidia fell after the tech titan reported earnings that did not meet everyone's sky-high expectations.

After US markets closed on Wednesday, Nvidia said its sales more than doubled to \$30 billion in the second quarter, but at a slower pace than in previous quarters, and that profits also doubled, to \$16.5 billion. Nvidia has become a bellwether for the tech sector owing to its huge role in the development of AI chips and its shares have risen more than 150 percent since the start of the year, accounting for a third of the broad-based S&P 500 index's gains.

Despite the impressive earnings, Nvidia's shares initially fell by as much as eight percent in after-hours trading Wednesday as traders had hoped for even better results from one of the world's most valuable companies. Nvidia shares were down almost around two percent on Thursday after the markets opened. "Investors have become spoiled, expecting Nvidia

not just to meet but obliterate expectations," said independent analyst Stephen Innes.

Traders are now focused on a raft of economic indicators that could shed light on the possible size of expected rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank next month. US Federal Reserve chief Jerome Powell gave markets a boost last week when he declared that the central bank was ready to finally cut borrowing costs, which sit at a 23-year high.

Government figures showed Thursday that the US economy expanded more than initially thought in the second quarter, growing at an annual rate of 3.0 percent, up from 2.8 percent in an earlier estimate. The GDP report helped to "reassure investors that the economy is not teetering on an economic cliff," said

eToro US investment analyst Bret Kenwell. Despite the revision, "the Fed is unlikely to alter its plans to cut rates at next month's meeting after Chair Powell made it clear that it's time to shift policy toward lower rates," he said. Other figures Thursday showed US jobless claims fell slightly last week. Investors will next look at the Fed's favored gauge of inflation on Friday and key jobs data next week.

In Europe, Germany reported the country's inflation rate slowed to 1.9 percent in August, the lowest in more than three years and within the ECB's two-percent target. With Spain also reporting slower inflation and other eurozone countries expected to do the same, "that paves the way for a September rate cut," said Franziska Palmes, senior Europe economist at Capital Economics. — AFP

Business

Gulf Bank announces 20 winners of first draw in summer campaign

Prizes range from KD 500 to KD 1,000 each

KUWAIT: As part of its continuous efforts to reward its customers, Gulf Bank has announced the winners of the first draw in its summer campaign for credit and prepaid cardholders. Out of the 20 winners, ten received prizes of KD 1,000 each, and another ten won KD 500 each, based on transactions made between July 14 and Aug 15, 2024.

Gulf Bank will announce 30 new winners on Oct 2, 2024, in the second draw of its summer campaign for all credit and prepaid cardholders. This draw will be based on transactions made between August 16 and September 19, 2024. The grand prize is KD 20,000, with 15 winners receiving KD 1,000 each and another 14 winners getting KD 500 each.

On this occasion, Mohammed Taqi, Assistant General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, stated: "Alongside our continuous commitment to providing the best services and products, we aim to reward our customers with outstanding offers and prizes throughout the year. This is why we run our summer campaign annually, so Gulf Bank customers



Mohammed Taqi

We run our summer campaign every year as part of our dedication to rewarding our customers

can benefit from it both within Kuwait and abroad." He added, "Gulf Bank customers receive one entry into the draw for every KD 10 spent within Kuwait using their credit or prepaid cards. Spending outside Kuwait increases their entries to three. Additionally, customers double their chances of winning when us-

ing digital wallets such as Apple Pay, Samsung Pay and Google Pay."

Taqi emphasized that Gulf Bank credit cards provide numerous travel-related benefits for customers to enjoy during the summer season. These include travel insurance, discounts on hotel bookings, flights, and

car rentals. Moreover, Gulf Bank credit cardholders benefit from complimentary access to over 1,000 airport lounges worldwide. Customers can also earn Gulf Points on all their expenses during the summer campaign, which can be redeemed for free flights, hotel bookings, or travel packages.

Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait's leading bank, fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace to deliver exceptional customer service while contributing sustainably to the community. Through its extensive branch network and innovative digital services, the bank empowers customers to conduct banking transactions conveniently and efficiently, ensuring a seamless experience.

In alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, "New Kuwait," and its commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships, Gulf Bank is dedicated to driving robust sustainability initiatives across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions. The bank is committed to implementing strategically selected and diverse sustainability programs both internally and externally.

Google opening office in Vietnam, plans AI training, funding

HANOI: Alphabet's Google is considering building a large data centre in Vietnam, a person briefed on the plans said, in what would be the first such investment by a big US technology company in the Southeast Asian nation. Google is weighing setting up a "hyperscale" data centre close to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's southern economic hub, the source said, declining to be named because the information was not public.

The investment, the size of which the source did not specify, would be a shot in the arm for Vietnam, which has so far failed to attract major overseas capital in data centers due to its patchy infrastructure, with large tech companies preferring to house their centers in rival nations in the region.

It was not clear how quickly Google would reach a decision on an investment, but the source said internal talks were taking place and the data centre could be ready in 2027. A spokesperson for

Google declined to comment about the data centre plan. Hyperscale centers are the largest in the industry, with power consumption usually similar to that of a big city.

A hyperscale data centre with power consumption capacity of 50 megawatts (MW) could cost between \$300 million and \$650 million, according to estimates based on data published by real estate consultant Jones Lang LaSalle in a report this year on data centers in Vietnam. Google's move was motivated by the large number of its domestic and foreign cloud services clients in Vietnam and the country's expanding digital economy, the source said, noting the Southeast Asian nation was one of the fastest-growing markets for YouTube, Google's popular online video sharing platform.

Currently the top data centre operators in Vietnam, based on computing space, are industrial investment firm IDC Becamex and telecommunications company VNPT, both Vietnamese state-owned enterprises, according to an internal market report by an industrial park in Vietnam seen by Reuters. The Nikkei reported in May that Chinese e-commerce company Alibaba was considering building a data centre in Vietnam. Alibaba declined to comment on the matter on Thursday when contacted by Reuters.



Growth strategy

Despite growing demand for digital services from Vietnam's 100 million population, foreign investors in the sector have largely shunned the country because of occasional power shortages, less attractive investment incentives and weak internet infrastructure which relies on a handful of ageing subsea cables, according to industry experts. In Southeast Asia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand are well ahead in the

industry, and have attracted far bigger investments from global tech giants.

Google said in May it would invest \$2 billion in Malaysia to develop its first data centre and Google Cloud region in the country. Unattractive regulations on foreign ownership and data localization have also long been a hurdle, but in a reform approved in November Vietnamese legislators decided to allow overseas data centre operators to retain full ownership.

Vietnam has strict cybersecurity rules and has long clashed with foreign tech companies about storing data in the country - a requirement that it has, however, not regularly enforced. Undeterred, Google is opening a representative office in Vietnam, and is already hiring dozens of engineers, marketing experts and other professionals, according to ads on LinkedIn. "We now have a team on the ground to better serve our Vietnam-based advertising customers and support the country's digital transformation," a spokesperson for Google told Reuters.

Google is also offering 40,000 scholarships in Vietnam for basic AI courses and \$350,000 each for 20 selected AI start-ups, Google Vietnam Managing Director Marc Woo said on LinkedIn last month. The company already has a large network of suppliers in Vietnam that assemble its products, including Pixel smartphones. - Reuters

No.	Ticker	Sector	Price Movement & Performance										Valuation Multiples *				
			Open Price	Close Price	Week High	Week Low	Range	Volume	WTD Change	WTD %	YTD %	Support Level	Resistance Level	P/E	P/B	Yield	Beta
101	National Bank of Kuwait	Banking	882	878	886	872	14	28,367,167	-4	-0.45%	3.12%	870	879	13.1	1.67	3.9%	1.05
102	Gulf Bank	Banking	318	317	321	313	8	35,350,558	-1	-0.31%	18.45%	316	321	19.1	1.50	3.6%	1.29
104	Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait	Banking	292	286	293	286	7	12,492,982	-5	-1.72%	28.88%	279	292	14.9	1.17	3.0%	0.96
106	Kuwait International Bank	Banking	186	185	188	184	4	23,090,875	-1	-0.54%	27.03%	180	186	14.9	0.69	2.6%	1.06
107	Burgan Bank	Banking	187	193	194	187	7	14,672,846	7	3.76%	17.82%	191	197	17.9	0.69	3.0%	1.33
108	Kuwait Finance House	Banking	720	727	731	717	14	73,977,171	8	1.11%	9.15%	725	734	20.2	2.09	2.6%	1.13
109	Boubyan Bank	Banking	592	588	593	588	5	9,655,104	-2	-0.34%	3.88%	585	593	30.0	2.43	1.3%	1.14
201	Kuwait Investment	Financial Services	170	166	170	165	5	1,988,519	-4	-2.35%	30.71%	160	168	10.4	0.77	6.0%	1.98
204	National Investments	Financial Services	257	236	257	235	22	16,414,172	-17	-6.72%	-1.26%	232	237	33.5	1.04	6.3%	2.02
205	Kuwait Projects	Financial Services	102	103	104	101	3	46,551,873	2	1.98%	-1.90%	103	107	NM	0.58	0.0%	0.93
212	Arzan Financial Group	Financial Services	168	180	182	166	16	50,829,782	12	7.14%	-10.86%	179	186	20.4	0.98	1.1%	1.23
222	Aayan Leasing and Investment	Financial Services	159	158	163	157	6	13,519,049	-1	-0.63%	-9.20%	158	163	8.8	1.07	4.7%	1.61
252	Al Imtiaz Investment	Financial Services	46.1	46.3	46.9	45.6	1.3	5,567,988	0.4	0.87%	-18.05%	46	47	NM	0.33	0.0%	1.33
401	Kuwait Real Estate	Real Estate	236	236	237	232	5	34,538,679	1	0.43%	22.03%	229	237	17.2	1.54	1.6%	1.16
404	Salhia Real Estate	Real Estate	437	433	449	432	17	4,385,647	-1	-0.23%	5.98%	424	434	18.2	1.43	3.2%	0.57
413	Mabaneer	Real Estate	868	858	868	849	19	3,669,440	-5	-0.58%	7.89%	856	869	18.0	1.87	1.6%	0.93
418	The Commercial Real Estate	Real Estate	154	153	158	153	5	20,253,651	-1	-0.65%	53.00%	150	156	15.5	0.94	2.5%	0.68
501	National Industries	Financial Services	225	223	227	222	5	20,908,952	-1	-0.45%	14.78%	217	226	12.8	1.02	2.1%	1.59
505	Gulf Cable	Industrials	1,722	1,604	1,780	1,507	273	7,282,396	-201	-11.14%	22.44%	1,600	1,661	17.3	1.32	4.1%	1.07
506	HEISCO	Industrials	914	868	915	852	63	1,887,619	-44	-4.82%	5.85%	858	870	19.7	2.23	3.4%	0.90
514	Boubyan Petrochemical	Basic Materials	638	655	680	629	51	13,262,310	27	4.30%	11.97%	655	677	19.9	1.34	9.1%	0.90
603	Agility	Industrials	257	256	258	250	8	26,256,521	-5	-1.92%	-49.71%	253	260	8.2	0.74	7.8%	1.57
605	Zain	Telecommunications	458	467	475	455	20	25,993,404	9	1.97%	-7.89%	463	468	11.0	1.77	7.5%	0.55
623	Human Soft Holding	Industrials	2,630	2,665	2,680	2,621	59	439,994	39	1.49%	-17.67%	2,628	2,675	8.5	3.48	12.6%	0.61
642	ALAFCO	Industrials	233	233	235	227	8	514,373	0	0.00%	29.44%	227	236	14.1	0.93	0.0%	1.16
654	JAZEERA	Consumer Discretionary	889	970	1,040	879	161	7,722,965	85	9.60%	-30.17%	949	990	84.5	7.85	2.8%	1.33
813	GFH Financial Group	Financial Services	103	103	106	100.9	5.1	80,994,555	1	0.98%	34.99%	102	104	10.8	1.26	4.9%	1.32
821	Warba Bank	Banking	195	197	201	195	6	61,557,296	2	1.03%	12.27%	196	200	27.8	1.10	1.4%	1.06
822	Kuwait Telecommunications	Telecommunications	523	539	543	521	22	4,166,780	15	2.86%	-4.26%	530	548	16.0	2.38	6.5%	0.73
823	Mezzan Holding	Consumer Staples	932	892	932	892	40	1,620,679	-38	-4.09%	55.13%	879	949	20.2	2.50	2.2%	0.45
824	Integrated Holding	Industrials	554	555	591	541	50	2,558,055	3	0.54%	8.82%	555	567	28.3	2.33	3.6%	0.74
827	Boursa Kuwait	Financial Services	2,022	2,050	2,095	2,001	94	733,163	30	1.49%	18.91%	2,035	2,070	25.0	7.14	3.5%	1.34
830	AL GHANIM	Consumer Discretionary	1,176	1,131	1,210	1,130	80	8,591,949	-68	-5.67%	7.10%	1,123	1,140	11.0	3.85	5.9%	0.84
831	Beyout Investment	Financial Services	491	450	491	440	51	4,644,162	-40	-8.16%	#VALUE!	440	455	17.7	2.63	0.0%	NULL

* As of end of week closing

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Business

As searing summers ravage crops, Japan bets on heat-resistant rice

High temperatures and dry conditions lead to lowest rice yields in 25 years

KUMAGAYA, Japan: Grappling with a rice shortage after extreme weather ravaged last year's crop, Japan is hoping new heat-resistant varieties of its staple food can help stave off future supply shocks.

Last summer's high temperatures and dry conditions led to lower rice yields in key growing regions and damaged the quality of grains, contributing to the lowest inventories seen in 25 years, according to official data. Along with higher demand - partly attributed to record inbound tourism this year - supermarkets across the country have struggled to keep rice shelves stocked in recent months and some have imposed quotas on how much customers can buy.

The local government in Saitama, a prefecture north of Tokyo that is one of the hottest regions in the country, hopes science can avert future shortages and is pushing ahead with one of several nationwide projects to develop more resilient rice. "It's going to keep getting hotter, which makes me feel that without varieties that resist high temperatures, this is going to become a very tough job," said Yoshitaka Funakawa, a 73-year-old farmer who is participating in the trial run for Saitama's heat-resistant rice called emihokoro or 'beaming smile'. Japan sweltered in its warmest July on record in 2024. High heat disrupts the accumulation of starch inside rice grains, causing them to appear more opaque, mottled with white flecks and less desirable for human consumption, impacting the crop's market value.

"The more this cloudy, white phenomenon there is on rice, the grade of rice decreases, which leads to declines in farmers' income," said Naoto Ooka, who oversees rice breeding at Saitama's Agricul-

tural Technology Research Centre. At the centre, researchers take seeds from across Japan, cultivate and cross-pollinate them in a drive to create more resistant varieties like emihokoro, which has been planted in 31 fields as a trial this year.

Rice is a source of pride for Japan renowned for premium grains that are the base for signature dishes like sushi, but it is also a widely consumed food. Rice is also one of the few staples the nation has historically been able to be self-sustainable in producing. The world's fourth-largest economy imports more than 60 percent of its food resources. Last year's poor yields are among the factors that have driven up prices sharply.

Private rice inventories in Japan amounted to 1.56 million tons in June 2024, the lowest end-of-season volume since 1999 when comparable data was first collected, according to the agriculture ministry.

Inflation data for July released last week showed rice, excluding the famous 'koshihikari' premium brand, saw the highest rate of price increase in over 20 years. At a branch of the Akidai supermarket chain in western Tokyo, shelves normally stocked with bags of rice were largely empty.

The supermarket chain's president Hiromichi Akiba said wholesalers have been unable to fulfil its orders, and sometimes they cannot deliver any rice. While the current shortage may be relieved when a new crop becomes available as early as September, light supply is expected to remain through next year with hot weather posing risks for upcoming harvests, research firm BMI said in a report this month. Meanwhile, the government is increasingly concerned that



TOKYO: This photo taken on July 25, 2024 shows a supermarket worker putting up a sign informing customers purchasing rice to buy only one bag per person. — AFP

climate change will threaten its most important crop longer term unless action is taken.

An agriculture ministry report released in July showed paddy rice yields in Japan are projected to decline about 20 percent by 2100 compared to

the previous century. The ministry said shifting to high temperature-tolerant varieties was the most important measure to address the impact of climate change on rice crops and possible future shortages. — Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mexico GDP to shrink to 1.5%: CB

MEXICO CITY: The Bank of Mexico cut its forecast for economic growth this year and next, according to the central bank's quarterly report on Wednesday, citing weaker foreign manufacturing demand while inflation remains stubborn. The central bank for Latin America's No 2 economy now expects 2024 gross domestic product growth of 1.5 percent, down from a previous forecast of 2.4 percent, and 1.2 percent growth next year from a prior forecast of 1.5 percent. Banxico, as the central bank is known, said it had reduced this forecast due to weaker-than-expected second-quarter growth, noting external demand should remain soft due to expected weakness in US manufacturing as well as fewer public infrastructure projects boosting domestic construction. — Reuters

Poland's 2025 budget deficit to rise

WARSAW: Poland's government sees its general deficit rising to 5.5 percent of GDP in 2025, Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on Wednesday, as Warsaw ramps up defense spending and drops some practices of the former administration that critics said kept costs off the books. The government's draft budget for next year also envisages the economy growing by 3.9 percent, higher than the 3.7 percent forecast in budget assumptions published in June, with public sector debt at 59.8 percent, close to the constitutional limit of 60 percent. — Reuters

Swedish economy shrinks in Q2

STOCKHOLM: The Swedish economy shrank in the second quarter as household spending and investment fell, official data showed Thursday. The country's gross domestic product contracted by 0.3 percent compared to the first quarter, when it grew 0.7 percent, according to Statistics Sweden. "GDP decreased slightly in the second quarter. The downturn in the economy was wide but offset by the foreign trade in goods, where exports increased and imports decreased," said Jessica Engdahl, head of national accounts at Statistics Sweden. — AFP

Huawei posts 34.3% rise in HI sales

BEIJING: Chinese tech giant Huawei said Thursday that sales surged in the first half of the year, even as it struggles under the weight of sanctions that have deprived it of technology from the United States. The Shenzhen-based company has for several years been at the centre of an intense technological rivalry between Beijing and Washington, with US officials warning its equipment could be used to spy on behalf of Chinese authorities — allegations it denies. Since 2019, the sanctions have cut Huawei off from global supply chains for technology and US-made components, hammering its production of smartphones at the time. — AFP

CPTPP effective by Dec 15: Britain

LONDON: The British government said on Thursday its agreement to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) would enter into force by Dec 15 this year after it received the final ratification required. CPTPP is a free trade agreement sealed in 2018 between 11 countries - Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. Britain is the only European member of CPTPP and the first new country to join since its inception. — Reuters

Profits decline as Qantas looks to win back angry customers

SYDNEY: Australian airline Qantas reported on Thursday a slide in net profit as post-COVID fares dropped, and said it was working to rebuild its reputation after a string of public scandals. Net profit fell 28 percent to Aus\$1.25 billion (US\$849 million) for the financial year that ended June 30, the airline said.

It blamed lower fares as market capacity expanded after the pandemic, along with the cost of customer-friendly initiatives and a reduction in freight revenue.

Revenue climbed 10.7 percent to Aus\$21.9 billion, however. The carrier predicted stable bookings and travel demand in the months ahead, tipping a "positive revenue momentum". Australians were making travel a spending priority, and their intention to travel over the next 12 months remained "high", it said. "Our focus this year has been getting the balance right in delivering for customers, employees and shareholders while building a better, stronger Qantas Group," said chief executive Vanessa Hudson.

"Restoring trust and pride in Qantas as the na-

Toxic, deadly, cheap: Life for women gold miners in Philippines

SAGADA/PARACALE, Philippines: It's a man's world mining gold in the Philippines - but it's the women who come off worst. Be it cooking toxic pans of mercury, scouring mud pools for cheap slivers of hope or sluicing the boggy soil - women do the hardest jobs and get paid the least.

One in three of the illegal mining workforce is female - and women are 90 times more at risk of dying on the job than men. "There are a lot of women in the mines, but they are invisible," Meggy Katigbak, an expert on small-scale gold mining, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. The work is illegal, makeshift - and doesn't even pay well.

But they've been mining this way for centuries in Paracale, a colonial, coastal city whose name means 'canal digger' after gold-hungry colonial powers swooped in to make their fortunes.

They are still scouring - and dreaming big - today. "Life here is hard, but my children give me strength to do this. They're my life," Christy Ortiz told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Like any other day, 44-year-old Ortiz rose at dawn, waking first to cook for her seven children, before setting out to hunt for gold in a homemade mine she had dug from rice paddies and filled with muddy water. Ortiz and her husband practice compressor mining - the world's most dangerous gold extraction method and one that is only found in her little corner of the Philippines.

Manila banned it in 2012 for its grave safety risks and health hazards - a matter of no care to the Ortiz family. As Ortiz looked on, her husband dove 10 feet (3 m) under, breathing through a tube he had connected to a compressor, which pipes air underwater and is her family's prized possession. Ortiz paid 29,000 pesos (\$515.92) for the machine, using money she had amassed through years of scrimping, carefully saving her state welfare grants: money only given to the country's poorest.

While her husband waded underground for hours, filling buckets with dense soil, Ortiz performed all the above-ground rituals to extract whatever slivers of gold she could find. With no protective equipment, she worked in the same white shirt and skirt that she wore at home.

There is little separating her work from home life. "Sometimes I forget to eat breakfast, because I need to go straight to the mine after sending my kids to school," said Ortiz. Her feet soaked in muddy water, she mashed the soil and ran gloop

through a sluice box made of wood and banana leaves, hoping the water might tease out even a sliver of gold. Next Ortiz extracted the nuggets from a clag of soil and stones, using a traditional wooden tool, then cooked up the gold with mercury, a toxic metal used to separate gold from ore.

Her takings - one tiny piece of amber metal worth less than 200 pesos (\$3.56) enough to get them through that day. Luckier than yesterday, she said, when no gold came.

Ortiz said earnings ranged from zero to 1,000 pesos a day, so on lean days, Ortiz said she had to pull a double shift and go selling charcoal to the neighbors to feed her big family. "I didn't want to do this forever - I wanted to go back to my hometown," said Ortiz, who lives more than 1,000 km from her birthplace. "But I didn't want the people there to know that I've been struggling since I came here."

Some 15 million women work in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector globally, and an estimated 18,000 to 20,000 Filipino women and children take part in ASGM-related work. Figures may be far higher in the absence of any official count, industry experts say, but all agree the work affects women's health and earnings disproportionately. Gender discrimination and disregard for health, safety and social protection limit the rights and economic opportunities of women miners, according to a 2023 report by the World Bank.

Women are often barred from the top jobs and do not get paid as much as men for the same work, according to the Bank, which analyzed mining laws in 21 countries. Deep-seated cultural bias can also get in the way of wider sectoral reform. Filipino women struggle to access capital, even as their exposure to hazards has increased, the report said.

In Paracale, many families mix backyard digging with domestic life, forcing women to balance household chores and caring duties with risky gold panning and mercury mixing. A field survey by the International Labour Organization (ILO) revealed that almost 73 percent of female Philippine respondents had handled mercury, often linked with pregnancy risks and birth abnormalities, such as cerebral palsy. Janice Galero, who used to sluice, pan, and cook gold in Paracale, said high levels of mercury were still found in her blood seven years after she stopped mining. Official tests carried out in 2022 to gauge the risks of mining showed mercury in a high number of women's blood.

But a representative from planetGOLD, a United Nations-affiliated program working to eliminate mercury from the supply chain in gold, said both the national Department of Health and the local government of Paracale had "agreed not to make the results public to avoid panic in the community". — Reuters



SYDNEY: This picture taken on Aug 28, 2024 shows a Qantas plane taking off from Sydney International airport. — AFP

liability and customer initiatives delivered a positive improvement in on-time performance and customer satisfaction" she said. Looking forward, Hudson said she was "really optimistic" about being able to drive earnings growth and lift margins.

She assured shareholders this would not be done by increasing the cost of airfares, but rather through investment in the company's fleet. The carrier has long been seen as the "spirit of Australia" — the nation's link to the rest of the world. Although not state-run, Qantas is seen as an integral part of the economy and vital to cohesion in a country where major cities are hundreds of kilometers apart. — AFP

Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway hits \$1tn market value

OMAHA: Berkshire Hathaway's market value closed above \$1 trillion for the first time on Wednesday, reflecting investor confidence in the conglomerate that Warren Buffett built over nearly six decades into what many consider a proxy for the American economy.

Buffett's company joined six other US companies, all in or tied to the technology sector, valued at more than \$1 trillion: Apple, Nvidia, Microsoft, Google parent Alphabet, Amazon.com and Facebook parent Meta Platforms. Berkshire's Class A shares closed up 0.7 percent at \$696,502.02. The more widely held Class B shares rose 0.9 percent to \$464.59. Buffett, who turns 94 on Friday, has run Omaha, Nebraska-based Berkshire since 1965.

He transformed it from a failing textile company into a colossus with dozens of old-economy businesses such as Geico car insurance, the BNSF railroad, Berkshire Hathaway Energy, Brooks running shoes, Dairy Queen ice cream, Ginsu knives and the World Book encyclopedia.

The operating businesses generated \$22.8 billion of profit in the year's first half, up 26 percent from 2023. Berkshire also has a huge stock portfolio even after selling tens of billions of dollars of Apple and Bank of America, its largest and until recently its second-largest stock holdings, in 2024.

The sales are a major reason Berkshire's cash hoard, mainly in US Treasury bills, soared to \$276.9 billion as of June 30. Berkshire has also slowed repurchases of its own stock. "Buffett built Berkshire in a systematic, relatively low risk manner," said Steve Check, president of Check Capital Management in Costa Mesa, California, which invests one-third of its \$2 billion of assets in Berkshire stock and options. "As a huge conglomerate it will always have parts doing well."

The \$1 trillion valuation is based on Berkshire's 553,234 Class A and 1,325,192,508 Class B shares outstanding as of July 23. Since the year Buffett took charge, Berkshire shares have gained more than 5,600,000 percent. That's about 20 percent annually, nearly double the annualized gain in the Standard & Poor's 500 including dividends. No single catalyst appeared to fuel Wednesday's gain. Berkshire's Class A shares are up 28 percent this year, while the S&P 500 excluding dividends is up 17 percent. — Reuters

Weekender

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 2024

Kuwaiti mythical creatures that can still cast a spell

Watercolor painting depicting Edaida.

Edaida

Appearing in the form of fire or glowing embers that move away when approached, this imaginary character was used to scare children and keep them from going out at night. It's also known as "Daw Edaida" in the Kuwaiti dialect or "Edaida Fire".

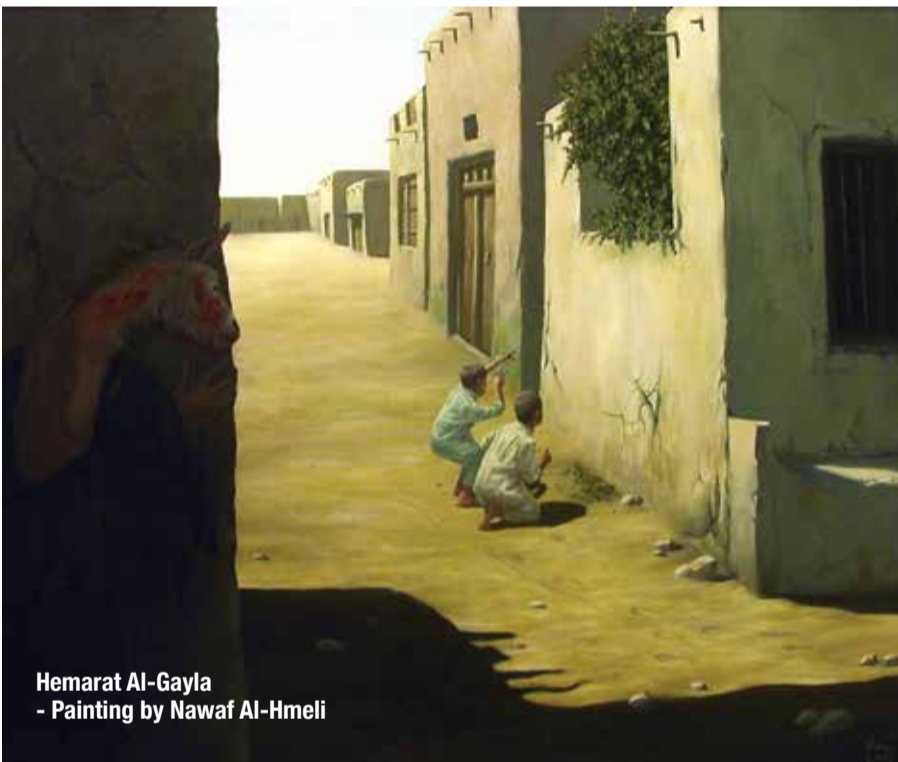


By Passant Hisham

Long ago, the quiet nights of Kuwait, spent between the sea and desert, inspired its people to weave tales that evoked fear, excitement and anticipation, reflecting the lifestyle of that time. Though these stories are now recounted as mythical folktales, they have been passed down through generations, becoming an integral part of Kuwait's heritage. Heritage researcher Salem Abdullatif Al-Misbah shared with Kuwait Times some of the most popular mythical characters that shaped these narratives:



Salem Al-Misbah



Hemarat Al-Gayla - Painting by Nawaf Al-Hmeli

Hemarat Al-Gayla

"Hemarat" means a female donkey, and "al-gayla" refers to noon in classical Arabic, said Misbah. In the past, people believed in a creature that looked like a donkey and would harm anyone who crossed its path on the road

at noon. Children were warned about it to keep them from going out during that time. Misbah added that some also called it "Umm Hemaar" and described it as a woman with a donkey's leg, though it is likely a different character.



Tantal - Painting by Nawaf Al-Hmeli

Tantal

Depicted as a very tall and strange figure with long arms, a big head and intimidating eyes, Tantal was said to appear on roads at night. People believed they could use a long needle to threaten it and make it run away.



Nawaf Al-Hmeli



Drawing of Tantal from the book 'The Concise Kuwaiti Encyclopedia' by Hamad Al-Saeedan



Umm al-Sa'af and al-Leef - Photo from a Qatari comics blog

Umm al-Sa'af and al-Leef

This scary old woman with messy hair and wings was believed to fly around, threatening children to sleep at night. According to Misbah, the character was inspired by a type of palm tree known as "Umm

al-Sa'af and al-Leef", which makes noise during dark, windy nights, causing children to mistake it for a frightening creature. Some say it was used to scare misbehaving children who disobeyed their parents.

Bu Darya

This water demon is said to resemble a human. It was believed to climb aboard ships, capture sailors and drag them underwater to attack them. Sailors would scream and shout if it appeared on their ship

and wave knives at it, making it flee back into the sea. Misbah mentioned that a similar creature, called "Al-Atoom", is described in Arabic literature as a sea creature with fish-like tails and arms but no legs.



Watercolor painting of the sea where Bu Darya used to appear.

Even though these tales have nearly disappeared, they remain vivid in the memories of many. They continue to inspire movies, plays, books and even paintings, encouraging artists to express their imagination in creative ways. "I have always been fascinated by Kuwaiti mythology. These horror tales are crafted to give you chills, yet they do so in a unique and intriguing manner, tailored to keep children from wandering around," said Nawaf Al-Hmeli, a Kuwaiti fine artist who painted two mythical Kuwaiti creatures from his imagination: Tantal and Hemarat Al-Gayla.



Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC)



Kuwait Towers



KUWAIT'S ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPIECES



By Ghadeer Ghloom

In the realm of architectural marvels, certain buildings stand out not only for their aesthetic appeal but also for their unique design and significance. Kuwait Times embarked on an exploration to showcase some of these remarkable structures, focusing on those that are distinguished by their exceptional architectural style.

These iconic structures are part of Kuwait's burgeoning architectural landscape, contributing to the country's identity on the global stage and enhancing its reputation as a hub of architectural brilliance. Each building tells a story of artistic vision and engineering prowess, offering both inspiration and pride to the people of Kuwait and capturing the attention of the international community.

Kuwait Towers

Kuwait Towers comprise of three towers; each offers different services. The main tower is the tallest and most exciting. It has two globes, with the one at the top containing a restaurant. The globe is designed to slowly rotate for the visitors of the restaurant to enjoy a full bird's eye view of Kuwait City. The second tallest tower has a single globe and is used for water storage, and the third, known as the service tower, has no globes and is used for water distribution and technical services. Kuwait Towers were built in 1979, and features a traditional Islamic theme with a modern touch, representing Kuwait's heritage, and is considered a landmark of Kuwait.

Liberation Tower

The Liberation Tower was built after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait to commemorate Kuwait's liberation. The tower has a sleek and elegant vertical silhouette that commands attention in Kuwait's skyline. Its design is highlighted with a distinctive, circular midsection. This round, globe-like structure not only adds visual interest but also sets the tower apart as a unique architectural landmark. It has an observation deck that allows viewers to view Kuwait City and the Gulf. The tower mainly includes office spaces for various governmental and private organizations. These offices contribute to the tower's functionality as a center for administrative and business activities.

Al Hamra Tower

Al Hamra Tower is the tallest building in Kuwait at nearly 414 meters tall. Not only is it unique for its height, but also for its artistic twisting design that



— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

gives it an outstanding appearance. Construction of the tower was completed in 2011. It includes 80 floors above ground, and offers different facilities such as business offices, conference and wedding halls, dining spaces, shops, cinema and other entertainment options.

Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC)

JACC has an aesthetic exterior covered with an eye-catching material, as the reflective glass panels are designed to interact with natural light, creating a shimmering effect that changes throughout the day. JACC opened in 2016 as a cultural and entertainment hub on a massive scale, hosting theatrical performances, operas, concerts, exhibitions, conferences and many other events. JACC is also surrounded by an open outdoor space with restaurants, cafes and a park that provides a green space for visitors to enjoy and relax.

The Avenues mall

The most famous and favorite destination for many residents of Kuwait, The Avenues mall is a premier shopping and entertainment destination that was completed in phases, starting from 2007. It is an extensive and expansive mall, making it one of the largest shopping and entertainment destinations in the Middle East, as it spans over 1.3 million square meters. The Avenues has four major phases, each contributing to its reputation as a central hub for retail and leisure. Beyond shopping and dining, The Avenues functions like a small town of its own, offering additional amenities such as hotels, gyms and spas, thereby providing a comprehensive lifestyle experience.



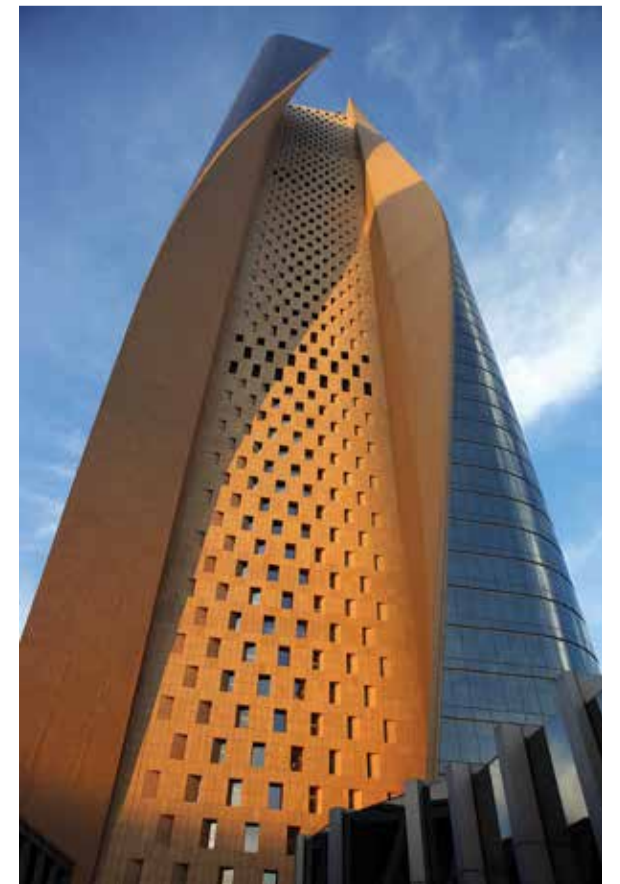
The Avenues mall



Liberation Tower



Al Hamra Tower





Dalal AlKhulaifi prepares a fresh cup of coffee. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Brewing passion

How Dalal AlKhulaifi percolated from coffee skeptic to SCA-certified specialist



By Faten Omar

Dalal AlKhulaifi, a certified trainer from the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) and barista, turned from a coffee hater to a coffee specialist. Over time, AlKhulaifi not only grew to appreciate the complexities and nuances of coffee, but also mastered the art of making it. Her transformation from a skeptic to a specialist made her follow her passion — Kuwait Times spoke with AlKhulaifi to learn more.

Kuwait Times: What inspired your love for coffee and when did it start?

AlKhulaifi: My passion was sparked when I visited a small, classic café in Italy that served espresso and hot croissants. The scene captivated me, but I still didn't enjoy the taste of coffee back then, even though I felt delighted watching my father savor it.

I started drinking coffee during university, opting for sweeter drinks like lattes and cappuccinos, as I couldn't yet handle the bitterness. After graduation, I began searching for my passion. The COVID-19 pandemic played a key role in helping me find it, as I spent time watching coffee art videos on social media and found joy in them.

When the pandemic ended and life returned to normal, I returned to work but



Dalal AlKhulaifi

certified course through the coffee organization. The trainer noticed my curiosity and passion, so he invited me to join him and develop my skills to become a trainer myself, and I accepted.

Each country has its unique coffee culture, and I want to explore this diversity. Italy is exciting to me, as I visited it when I was younger. But I didn't have the awareness I have now to dive into their coffee culture.

al course in Kuwait. After completing the necessary levels, I enrolled in a three-week certified trainer preparation course with SCA. I submitted my project, graduated and earned my official training license. I then trained at the academy for a year until I was ready to work independently and start my own business. Now, I provide professional workshops.

KT: What is your favorite coffee and why?

AlKhulaifi: One of my favorite drinks now is espresso, along with Americano, a cold brew using a Chemex. My taste has evolved. Coffee becomes truly enjoyable when you learn to prepare it from scratch. I'm working on launching a new Kuwaiti winter drink and designing my menu.

Espresso is one of the best types of coffee from which you can derive a variety of blends and flavors. From a single shot, you can make numerous drinks, such as latte, cappuccino, Cortado, Americano, mocha, Caffe macchiato and more.

KT: What's the most challenging aspect of being a barista in Kuwait?

AlKhulaifi: My family and friends were supportive and encouraging. However, when I attended catering events, some clients would cancel their orders upon learning that the barista was Kuwaiti. Unfortunately, some people still believe that foreign baristas are more skilled than their Kuwaiti counterparts.

KT: How do you source your coffee beans, and what qualities do you look for in them?

AlKhulaifi: When choosing a coffee bean, I believe there is no right or wrong way; the best choice depends on your personal preferences. Coffee has its characteristics and traits, and each country has its way of growing, processing and roasting it. You need to experiment to discover which coffee personality suits you. There are two main coffee species: Arabica and Robusta.



Arabica accounts for 75 percent of global production, and here in the Middle East, we favor Arabica, while Europeans tend to prefer Robusta. Step one, I choose Arabica. Step two; I select the roast level I prefer, such as light, medium or dark. Personally, I favor medium roasts for their balanced flavor. Step three, I choose the taste. I prefer a nutty flavor, which is typical of Brazilian coffee, while others might



prefer a floral taste, often found in Ethiopian coffee. These flavors aren't added; they come naturally from the soil and climate where the coffee is grown.

still felt unfulfilled. I prayed for guidance, and by chance, I came across an Instagram ad for a coffee training academy in Kuwait. I signed up for a specialized,

KT: How did you learn about coffee? Which courses did you take?

AlKhulaifi: To become a trainer, I needed to complete the foundation profession-



WHAT'S ON IN KUWAIT

Event: Make your own frame workshop
Location: AlTijaria Tower
Date: August 30- 31, 2024

Event: Alj Sister musical show
Location: Salmiya Theater
Date: August 30- 31, 2024

Event: Bakarah Expo
Location: Kuwait International Fairground - Hall 4A
Date: August 30- 31, 2024

Event: Workshop on the Philosophies of Expansion to Space
Location: Advance Space Civilization Initiative
Date: August 31, 2024

Event: Artspace studio popup walk-ins
Location: Artspace, The Scientific Center
Date: August 30- 31, 2024

Event: Pottery workshop
Location: Burj Shaikha - Qibla
Date: August 30, 2024

Sports

Pope out cheaply again as Sri Lanka rattle England at Lord's

Sri Lanka captain De Silva eyes Test Championship points against England

LONDON: Stand-in captain Ollie Pope once more fell in single figures as England were reduced to 97-3 by Sri Lanka at lunch on Thursday's first day of the second Test at Lord's. No 3 batsman Pope, twice out for six in England's five-wicket win during the first Test at Old Trafford last week, in his debut as skipper in place of the injured Ben Stokes, was out for just one.

And shortly before lunch, England lost the well-set Ben Duckett for 40 to an over-ambitious reverse sweep, with Sri Lanka looking to level this three-match series at 1-1. But star batsman Joe Root, fresh from his match-winning unbeaten 62 in Manchester, was still there on 29 not out.

Despite the sunny overhead conditions, Sri Lanka captain Dhananjaya de Silva decided to bat first after winning the toss at Lord's. It looked a questionable decision when left-hander Duckett scored three fours in an over off Asitha Fernando.

But Sri Lanka struck twice in quick succession to leave England 42-2. Makeshift opener Dan Lawrence, again in for the injured Zak Crawley, fell for nine when caught behind pushing away from his body off Lahiru Kumara, recalled in place of Vishwa Fernando.

De Silva said at the toss the prospect of swing had encouraged him to field first, but it had little to do with Sri Lanka transforming England's 39-1 into 42-2. Pope had made just one when he top-edged a pull off paceman Fernando and De Silva, running back from square leg, held a well-judged catch.

Not for the first time in his long England career, former captain Root came in with the innings faltering. He was on 11 when rapped on the pad by a full-length Kumara delivery to spark a raucous lbw appeal. Paul Reiffel ruled not out, with Sri Lanka's review seeing the decision upheld on umpire's call.

But no technology was required when left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya struck with just his fourth ball, Duckett top-edging an extravagant reverse-sweep to Kumara on the point boundary

to finish a 47-ball innings featuring four fours. Sri Lanka hope to end a run of six straight Test defeats by England with what would be their maiden win in nine Tests at Lord's.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka captain Dhananjaya de Silva hopes his side can climb up the World Test Championship (WTC) table as they go in search of a maiden win in the five-day format at Lord's this week. The tourists pushed England hard before losing last week's first Test at Old Trafford by five wickets. That defeat has left them needing to win at Lord's, where they have drawn six and lost two of their previous eight Tests, if they are to level this three-match series at 1-1 and turn next month's finale across London at the Oval into a decider.

De Silva is also conscious of Sri Lanka's position in the WTC table, where his side are currently fifth — one place below England. "It is all about getting a Test win," he told a pre-match press conference at Lord's on Wednesday. "It will mean a lot for the country. But more importantly we need to get points in the World Test Championship."

"We are more confident heading into this game. We were confident at Old Trafford as well but we failed to deliver. We have to be clear with our plans and execute them well."

Nissanka, Kumara recalled

Sri Lanka have made two changes to their side. Pathum Nissanka, who has enjoyed one-day international success this year but last played a Test match in 2022, replaces Kusal Mendis in the top order and paceman Lahiru Kumara comes in for left-arm Vishwa Fernando.

"Overall, Pathum is the best batter in the country at the moment," said De Silva. "He has a good mindset and he has a good technique." Dinesh Chandimal, who made an impressive second-innings 79 at Old Trafford has been included despite suffering a painful blow to the thumb while batting against

express quick Mark Wood, but he may not keep



LONDON: Sri Lanka's Asitha Fernando celebrates after trapping England's Harry Brook LBW (leg before wicket) on the opening day of the second cricket test match between England and Sri Lanka at Lord's cricket ground in London on August 29, 2024. — AFP

wicket with Nishan Madushka on standby to take over behind the stumps.

England will be without the injured Wood at Lord's, but De Silva said new-ball spearhead Chris Woakes was proving tougher to face for Sri Lanka's batsmen. "I am not concerned about the speed," the 32-year-old middle-order batsman explained. "Speed is not troubling us. It is the line and length that's troubling us. Chris Woakes is able to bowl 20 to 30 balls at one area and that's what is troubling us."

But one Sri Lanka batsman who arrives at Lord's very much in form is Kamindu Mendis. The left-

hander scored his third hundred in just four Tests with an excellent 113 at Old Trafford to leave him with a supremely high average of 92.16 ahead of fulfilling a childhood ambition by playing at Lord's.

"It was a dream to play at Lord's when I was a boy," said the 25-year-old Mendis. "I'm excited to play here." Sri Lanka team for second Test: Dimuth Karunaratne, Nishan Madushka (wkt), Pathum Nissanka, Angelo Mathews, Dinesh Chandimal, Dhananjaya De Silva (capt), Kamindu Mendis, Prabath Jayasuriya, Asitha Fernando, Lahiru Kumara, Milan Rathnayake. — AFP



RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's captain Shan Masood (C) attends a training session at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi. — AFP

Bangladesh eye series win against Afridi-less Pakistan

RAWALPINDI: Bangladesh are hoping to secure a first Test-series victory over Pakistan, who have left out star pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi for the second match starting in Rawalpindi on Friday. The visitors upset a normally formidable home team with a clinical ten-wicket display in the first Test — Bangladesh's first win in over 14 encounters against Pakistan.

But the hosts have been struggling through a lean spell of late, bowling out early in this year's T20 World Cup. Their last Test series was a whitewash in a three-match tour to Australia. Star pacer Afridi struggled to find his rhythm through much of the innings, with Pakistan's head coach Jason Gillespie saying he will be rested to allow him to spend time with his new-born son and family.

"Obviously Shaheen will miss out on this game. We had a good conversation with him and he fully understands and appreciates the thinking behind it. We are just looking at what our best combination is for this game," Gillespie said.

The home team have recalled spinner Abrar Ahmed after going with an all-pace attack in the first Test. Former Australian pacer Gillespie admitted it will be a challenge to square the series. "We want to go out there and play positive," said Gillespie, who is in his first series with Pakistan. "It's about scoring

lots of singles and with our bowling we want to be ruthless and challenging the opposition batters."

But he backed under-pressure skipper Shan Masood who failed with the bat with six and 14 in the first match, and has lost all four of his Tests as captain. "Shan is a very positive captain," said Gillespie.

"He wants to play and win games we showed that with our intent in the first game but it didn't quite work out and that's credit to our opposition. That game is gone, but what we can do is focus on the game starting tomorrow."

'Morale very good'

Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusinghe was confident his side could recreate their heroics from the first Test. "The morale of the players is very, very good," said former Sri Lankan batsman Hathurusinghe. "Obviously beating Pakistan in Pakistan is not an easy task."

Pakistan were rattled by the Bangladesh response to their first-innings total of 448-6, crumbling for a paltry 146 in their second outing. A brilliant 191 by veteran batter Mushfiqur Rahim on a flat Rawalpindi pitch helped the visitors rack up their highest-ever total against Pakistan of 565 to take a crucial 117-run first-innings lead.

Spinners Mehidy Hasan Miraz (4-21) and Shakib Al Hasan (3-44) then rocked the hosts and made them rue not playing a frontline spinner. But Hathurusinghe said the second game would be a big challenge. "They are a very strong team and we expect a very good fight in the second Test as well but we will not be different from the first game and know our strength as well as that of Pakistan's." — AFP

It's an opportunity for him to be that Test veteran we need with that experience and calmness," All Blacks head coach Scott Robertson told reporters.

The 32-year-old Cane replaces Dalton Papali'i, who is sidelined by a thumb injury. Barrett will captain the All Blacks having missed the two recent home Tests against Argentina with a finger injury. New Zealand won on their last visit to Ellis Park when fly-half Richie Mo'unga kicked 15 points to seal a 35-23 win in 2022.

"Ellis Park is an iconic ground, with the whole experience you want as many players as you can who have experienced it before," Robertson said. "There will be some tough moments out there. They know what it takes."

South Africa and New Zealand will meet again in Cape Town on September 7. South Africa lead the

Shakib Al Hasan: Bangladesh cricket's under-fire champion

DHAKA: Bangladesh cricketer Shakib Al Hasan is the leading all-rounder of his era, whose laundry list of achievements is rivalled only by his disciplinary infractions and his brief political career under his country's loathed ex-leader.

Shakib has been the driving force of his team's rise to become serious international contenders, enthralled fans through both star turns and scandals. He remains the only player to have topped the International Cricket Council all-rounder rankings in all three formats simultaneously.

Now 37, Shakib is still performing — he took three second-innings wickets as Bangladesh beat Pakistan for the first time in Tests on Sunday. Selectors have tolerated his transgressions and occasional defiance as the price of sporting glories that in 2022 saw him named his country's greatest athlete by eminent Bangladeshi sports journalists.

"Cricket in Bangladesh is divided into two eras: Before and after Shakib Al Hasan," veteran sports reporter Montu Kayser told AFP last year.

Of the many controversies in Shakib's career, none have dogged him like his decision to contest sham elections in January under autocratic ex-premier Sheikh Hasina. A student-led uprising ousted



Shakib Al Hasan

Hasina this month, with the leader fleeing the country for neighboring India.

The cricketer was in Canada playing in a T20 league as he lost his lawmaker job during the revolution. He has not returned home since. Along with dozens more members of Hasina's Awami League, a murder case has been filed against Shakib that accuses him of culpability in the police killing of protesters. Shakib has not spoken publicly about the case, but his teammates have rallied around him. "As a teammate and a brother, I will be there during his tough times," veteran batsman Mushfiqur Rahim said on Facebook this week. "I do not support the false allegations made against him." — AFP

No end in sight to Saudi talks: PGA's Monahan

MIAMI: After over 14 months of talks, PGA Tour commissioner Jay Monahan said on Wednesday that there is no deadline to complete a merger with the Saudi Arabian Public Investment Fund (PIF), owners of the breakaway LIV Golf league.

Speaking on Wednesday, ahead of this week's Tour Championship, the final event of the FedEx Cup playoff series, Monahan said the talks would take yet more time. In June, 2023, the PGA Tour and PIF governor Yasir Al-Rumayyan announced a plan to unify the PGA and LIV, restoring a single tour for golf's best talent.

But judging from Monahan's comments, such a deal remains far on the horizon. "We have the right people at the table with the right mindset," Monahan said. "I see that in all of these conversations, and that's both sides. That creates optimism about the future and our ability to come together."

"But at the same time, these conversations are

championship table after back-to-back wins over the Wallabies in Australia. New Zealand are second following a win and a defeat in their home Tests against Argentina.

South Africa have included fit-again Eben Etzebeth on the bench as a late call-up. The veteran lock had initially been left out of the matchday squad with a minor back injury. Springboks coach Rassie Erasmus says double World Cup winner Etzebeth has recovered fully and will provide cover off the bench at lock. Flanker Pieter-Steph du Toit will start in the second row for South Africa due to an injury crisis in that position.

New Zealand team (15-1)

Beauden Barrett, Will Jordan, Rieko Ioane, Jordie Barrett, Caleb Clarke, Damian McKenzie, TJ Pere-

complex. They're going to take time. They have taken time, and they will continue to take time," he added. Asked whether there was a deadline on the talks, he said: "We have not agreed to a deadline. I don't think we want to restrict ourselves in that way. We want to achieve the best and right outcome at the right time."

A number of big-name players have jumped from the PGA Tour to LIV over the past two years for huge financial guarantees with Spanish star Jon Rahm making the move last December. The two tours will continue as separate entities into the 2025 season with a number of issues that have divided the sport remaining unresolved.

LIV players do not receive points towards the Official World Golf Rankings from their 54-hole tournaments, severely reducing their chances of qualifying for major tournaments and the Ryder Cup. But the announcement of a 'framework agreement' between the two tours did at least put an end to the court cases and legal wrangles between the parties.

Monahan said he felt that the talks had created a constructive atmosphere and better relationship between the two organizations. "It's been enhanced. It's stronger. That's a direct result of dialogue and conversation and really starting to talk about the future, future product vision and where we can take our sport," he said. — AFP

nara, Ardie Savea, Sam Cane, Ethan Blackadder, Tupou Vaa'i, Scott Barrett (capt), Tyrel Lomax, Codie Taylor, Tamaiti Williams.

Replacements: Asafo Aumua, Ofa Tu'ungafasi, Fletcher Newell, Sam Darry, Samipeni Finau, Cortez Ratima, Anton Lienert-Brown, Mark Tele'a.

South Africa team (15-1)

Aphelele Fassi, Cheslin Kolbe, Jesse Kriel, Damian de Allende, Kurt-Lee Arendse, Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu, Cobus Reinach, Jasper Wiese, Ben-Jason Dixon, Siya Kolisi (capt), Ruan Nortje, Pieter-Steph du Toit, Frans Malherbe, Bongani Mbonambi, Ox Nche.

Replacements: Malcolm Marx, Gerhard Steenkamp, Vincent Koch, Eben Etzebeth, Elrigh Louw, Kwagga Smith, Grant Williams, Handre Pollard. — AFP

Sam Cane returns for All Blacks to face Springboks

JOHANNESBURG: Former captain Sam Cane was named Thursday in the All Blacks team to face South Africa in a crunch Rugby Championship match while Scott Barrett returns from injury to skipper the visitors. Cane was named at open-side flank for the Test at Johannesburg's Ellis Park on Saturday, his first start for New Zealand since he was shown a red card in the World Cup final defeat to the Springboks last October. "Sam has been incredible off the field for us.

Sports

Germany coach Nagelsmann calls up Stiller for Nations League

Stegen expected to be first-choice goalkeeper in place of Neuer

BERLIN: Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann included uncapped midfielder Angelo Stiller in his squad for the September Nations League fixtures, their first matches since a Euro 2024 quarter-final exit and several retirements.

The squad is the first named after a generational change brought on by the international retirements of veterans and 2014 World Cup winners Manuel Neuer, Toni Kroos and Thomas Mueller. Captain at Euro 2024, Ilkay Gundogan — who missed Germany's 2014 World Cup triumph through injury — has also announced he will no longer play for his country.

Nagelsmann did not indicate who would take over from Gundogan as skipper, although German media reported Bayern Munich midfielder Joshua Kimmich is the frontrunner. Stuttgart's Stiller is the only uncapped player to be called up, with Nagelsmann praising his "good performances" with last season's surprise Bundesliga runners-up.

The coach said he wanted to stick with the majority of the squad who impressed at Euro 2024 on home soil. "For the moment, these changes are enough for the national team," Nagelsmann said. "We want to give the Euros squad the chance to present themselves again in the first games after the tournament."

Long-time understudy Marc-Andre ter Stegen is expected to be first-choice goalkeeper in place of Neuer. Alexander Nuebel, who is on loan at Stuttgart from Bayern and is viewed as the long-term successor to Neuer at club level, has been included in the

squad, having been cut just before Euro 2024.

Real Madrid centre-back Antonio Ruediger has been rested after a long summer including winning the Champions League final at Wembley in June. Bayern forward Serge Gnabry, who missed Euro 2024 with a muscle injury, has also been left out of the squad despite a return to fitness.

Fellow Bayern winger Leroy Sane misses out as he continues his return from an operation on a leg injury. After almost a decade of underperforming at major tournaments, including two group-stage World Cup exits in Russia and Qatar, Germany impressed at the Euros.

The hosts were eliminated with a 2-1 extra-time loss to Spain in Stuttgart, the only team not to lose to the eventual champions inside 90 minutes. Germany host Hungary on September 7 in Duesseldorf, followed by a trip to Amsterdam to take on the Netherlands on September 10.

Squad

Goalkeepers: Oliver Baumann (Hoffenheim), Alexander Nuebel (Stuttgart), Marc-Andre ter Stegen (Barcelona/ESP).

Defenders: Waldemar Anton (Borussia Dortmund), Benjamin Henrichs (RB Leipzig), Joshua Kimmich (Bayern Munich), Robin Koch (Eintracht Frankfurt), Maximilian Mittelstaedt (Stuttgart), David Raum (RB Leipzig), Nico Schlotterbeck (Borussia Dortmund), Jonathan Tah (Bayer Leverkusen).

Midfielders: Robert Andrich (Bayer Leverkusen), Emre Can (Borussia Dortmund), Chris Fueh-



HERZOGENAURACH: (FILES) Germany's head coach Julian Nagelsmann arrives for a press conference. — AFP

rich (Stuttgart), Pascal Gross (Borussia Dortmund), Jamal Musiala (Bayern Munich), Aleksandar Pavlovic (Bayern Munich), Angelo Stiller (Stuttgart), Florian Wirtz (Bayer Leverkusen).

Forwards: Maximilian Beier (Borussia Dortmund), Niclas Füllkrug (West Ham/ENG), Kai Havertz (Arsenal/ENG), Deniz Undav (Stuttgart). — AFP

Smith - from shunning homework to boccia Paralympic gold

PARIS: David Smith only took up boccia because it got him out of doing homework, he told AFP as the Paralympic sports programme began on Thursday, but along the way he absorbed the lessons of defeats to come into the competition in Paris as the two-time defending champion.

The chirpy 35-year-old Briton — sporting dyed red and blue hair — was speaking after he had won his opening pool match on Thursday, beating the semi-finalist from the Tokyo Paralympics, Jose Oliveira of Brazil, 5-2.

Boccia is one of two non-Olympic sports in the Paralympics — the other is goalball — and despite its Italian name it originated in Egypt around 5200BC. French audiences would relate to it as it resembles the game of petanque and more globally, bowls.

Smith, who was diagnosed with cerebral palsy aged one, admitted boccia was a way out for him when he was a six-year-old schoolboy. "It wasn't love at first sight, for sure," he said. "I started playing boccia when I was at school, and basically it was an excuse to get me out of doing homework."

"And then I went to tournaments, and the school I went to was very keen on winning. "If you didn't pick up a medal in something, you kind of felt a bit left out. "Then I started winning in boccia. I became British champion at the age of 14. (I am) still the youngest ever British champion."

However, his aversion to homework dissipated when he started competing abroad and he found that unlike in Britain there were players capable of beating him. "I started getting beaten, which was good for me," he said.

"From that sprang the challenge of trying to improve myself, because I knew I had the talent, but needed a bit of hard work to get to the level I am now. "Players have inspired me along the way from other countries like Thailand, Brazil.

"All the players over the past, even Oliveira there, he's beaten me before. "When he beats me, it's a great lesson for me to know, OK, how did he beat me? "So tactics, or me not hitting it enough, or not getting a bit too ambitious too early. So those sort of things make me a better player."

'Grandfather's footsteps'

Professionally Smith learned from his rivals but on an academic front he was inspired to take a degree in aerospace engineering due to his grandfather Charlie Smith, who died when he was 16. "He was a sheet metal worker for the RAF (Royal Air Force) during the Second World War," said Smith.

"He wasn't very good at taking orders from his superiors, but he was very good at maths. "So they kept him. And he got me into planes and stuff. "He was doing the dust filters on the Merlin engines (used in Spitfires among other planes) for the desert and stuff."

Smith, who aside from individual gold in Rio and Tokyo won the team title in Beijing in 2008, said although he was good at physics and maths at school he found aerospace engineering came as a "nice mix between the two." "It was going down my grandfather's footsteps a little bit," he said.

everything in these games." Japan have also been drawn with Australia, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia in a tough Group C. The top two teams qualify automatically for the finals, with the third and fourth-placed sides going into a further round of qualifying.

Mitoma is joined in the squad by three other Premier League players in Liverpool's Wataru Endo, Crystal Palace's Daichi Kamada and Southampton's Yuki Kariya. There was also a recall for Reims winger Junya Ito, who has not featured since he left the Asian Cup squad after a Japanese magazine published allegations that he sexually assaulted two women in a hotel in Osaka last year.

Japanese prosecutors dropped charges against the player earlier this month and he has denied any wrongdoing. Moriyasu had previously said he had not subsequently called up Ito to "protect" him.

The coach said the time was right to bring him back into the fold. "The player and the team have to be able to work in an environment where they can focus on their football, and up until now I doubted that would be the case," he said.

Former captain Makoto Hasebe was invited to join the squad as a coach for the games against China and Bahrain. Hasebe retired from playing aged 40 at the end of last season and is working as a coach with German side Eintracht Frankfurt's under-21 team. — AFP



TOKYO: (FILES) Britain's David Smith competes during the gold medal match for the boccia individual (BC1) competition at the Tokyo 2020. — AFP

"But like him, I don't like being told what to do. So once I realized that a career in aerospace probably wasn't looking likely, I kind of went down my own path, down the boccia route. "I became a full-time athlete."

Nevertheless Smith has not ditched his fascination with aeroplanes, World War II ones being his particular love. "I'm still an avid aircraft lover," he said. "Anything to do with the technical stuff. "YouTube channels are all on aircraft and stuff. I was watching a video about Swordfish this morning," he said, referring to the torpedo bomber that originated in the 1930s. "So yeah, it shows you how sad I am!" — AFP

Dunbar takes surprise stage win at Vuelta as Roglic claws at lead

MADRID: Irish rider Eddie Dunbar produced a sparkling finish to claim the 11th stage of the Vuelta a Espana on Wednesday while three-time winner Primo Roglic produced a late surge to chip away at Ben O'Connor's overall lead.

Team Jayco-AlUla's Dunbar spent much of the 166.5 kilometre route in a breakaway pack, suffering on the sharp hills with everyone else, only bursting clear 600 metres from the line in Padron. Known as a climber, it was a surprise move from the 27-year-old Corkman and his rivals failed to pick him up until it was too late, allowing him to take his first ever stage victory in a grand tour.

"It's been a while since I've been in a scenario like this, if I'm honest," Dunbar told Eurosport at the finish. "I just kind of used my experience. I was suffering a bit on that steep climb, then I realized everyone else was."

"I just played my cards. I said I'd gamble and back my finish. I know on a finish like this after a hard race I can sprint but I knew I had to go long. "Going from 600 to go was probably a bit long for a sprint but it was what I had to do to win. I can't believe it." — AFP

'Emotional' return to Paralympics for Britain captain Pratt

PARIS: Great Britain men's wheelchair basketball captain Philip Pratt said his return to Paralympic action was "very emotional" as he led his country to a convincing opening win in Paris, after missing the Tokyo Games for mental health reasons.

The 30-year-old Welshman won a bronze medal with Britain in the 2016 Paralympics in Rio, but chose to rule himself out of the 2020 Games in order to focus on his mental health and spend time with his dying grandfather.

"Yeah, it is very emotional, I don't think it really hit me until we came out of the tunnel today," said Pratt after Britain's 76-55 opening win against Germany. "Coming out (onto the court) as the last one, I thought it was unbelievable, I genuinely had a bit of goosebumps going on."

Pratt was candid when speaking of his decision not to play in Tokyo three years ago and was happy to discuss his mental health issues, which for years were a taboo subject in elite sport. "In Tokyo, I was in a bit of a dark place mentally," he said.

"I had a lot going on personally and my granddad was also dying at the time, so I made the decision to step back from basketball, step away from sport. "I thought it was only fair to my family and to my grandparents."

"Obviously it would have been unbelievable to be there with the boys and win a gold medal, but having the last days and moments with my grandad is something no gold medal will ever outshine." However, the Cardiff-born player said he was now in a "really good place", partly thanks to the British team's medical staff.

Pratt played in Britain's run to the World Championship silver medal last year and said it was only after the start of the tournament that he knew he had made the right choice to return. "I was still kind of in a weird place (before the World Championships).

"Then I think there's a photo of one of the first games, I'm like booming and flexing. "I showed it to him (the team psychiatrist), I was like, thank you, you got me back to that moment." A year on from that tournament, Pratt shared that he was ready to take Britain one step further as captain.

"Luckily these guys (his team-mates) believe in me to lead them and hopefully I can do enough to help us get there and fingers crossed when it comes to the medal games, we'll be ready," added Pratt. — AFP

Red-hot Mitoma returns for Japan in WCup qualifiers

TOKYO: Brighton's in-form Kaoru Mitoma returned to the Japan squad on Thursday as Hajime Moriyasu's side eye an eighth straight appearance at the World Cup. Japan face China at home on September 5 and Bahrain away five days later to start the decisive third round of Asian qualifying for the 2026 World Cup.

The 27-year-old winger Mitoma has not featured for Japan since the Asian Cup in Qatar in January, where injury restricted him to two substitute appearances. He was ruled out for the rest of last season after he returned to Brighton but he has started the new campaign in good form with one goal and one assist in his side's perfect start. Japan coach Moriyasu wants his team to make a fast start to the third qualifying round. "They will be tough games but we have to go into them with a winning mindset and prepare well for each one," he said.

"We want to maximize our potential and give

Classifieds

Clinics & Hospitals

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804

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

Hospitals

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

Change of Name

I, Mustafa, holder of Indian Passport No. T1941913, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that I have changed my name from Mustafa Ali Bohra (given name) and Bohra (surname) (**#6160 30/08/2024**)

I, Zahra D/o Nadeem Kaiser Abdullah Syed & Shaheen Nadeem, holder of Passport No. V7778233 do hereby change my name to Zahra (as given name) Nadeem Syed (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name Zahra Nadeem Syed and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (**#6159 29/08/2024**)



MONACO: Photo shows a screen displaying the fixtures of the group stage of 2024-2025 UEFA Champions League football tournament at the Grimaldi Forum in Monaco on August 29, 2024. — AFP

Holders Real Madrid face Dortmund and Liverpool in new-look Champions League

Each team to play eight games against eight different opponents

MONACO: Holders Real Madrid will face Liverpool away and host Borussia Dortmund in a repeat of last season's final in the league stage of the new-look Champions League, the draw for which took place on Thursday. Every team will play eight games against eight different opponents in the new format of Europe's elite club competition, with all 36 clubs now pooled together into one league rather than split into groups. Madrid, who have signed France superstar Kylian Mbappe since winning a record-extending 15th European Cup, will also notably play AC Milan at home and will go to Atalanta.

Real beat last season's Europa League winners Atalanta in the UEFA Super Cup in Warsaw earlier this month. Liverpool, who are back in the Champions League after a one-season absence, will also notably meet Milan and take on tournament debutants Girona. However, supporters of the Anfield club will perhaps be most excited about the prospect of hosting German champions Bayer Leverkusen, coached by former Liverpool midfielder Xabi Alonso.

Pep Guardiola's Manchester City, winners of the competition in 2023, will play at home to Italian champions Inter Milan and go to both Paris Saint-Germain and Juventus. However, they were

also handed more comfortable opponents including Club Brugge, Sparta Prague and Slovan Bratislava, who have never played in the modern Champions League proper. Other standout head-to-heads will include Bayern Munich against both PSG and Barcelona, and Arsenal against Inter and Paris.

The number of clubs in the Champions League has increased from 32 in the past, with the 36 participants split into four seeded pots of nine for the draw. Every team faces two teams from each of the four pots, one at home and one away. The first matches will be played on September 17, 18 and 19. The two extra matchdays in the new league phase will take

place in January, at the end of which the top eight clubs in the 36-team classification will advance directly to the last 16.

Those ranked between ninth and 24th place will go through to play a play-off round from which will emerge the remaining eight sides advancing to the last 16. The bottom 12 in the league phase will be eliminated altogether, with no clubs parachuting down into the Europa League as in the past. The Europa League and third-tier Conference League, the draws for which take place on Friday, will also now feature 36 clubs, although the latter competition will involve only six matchdays in the league phase. — AFP



KUWAIT: Young players being honoured during the closing ceremony.

CAN organizes Heido Sports Academy Championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: As part of the programs and sports activities carried out by Heido-CAN, a championship was organized under the title "CAN Academy Football Championship" for the second consecutive year, and for ages 4-15 years. Heido Sports Academy Director Abdullah Al-Saleh said the champi-

onship was of summer activities, in order to instill the rules of sport and its importance and practice it permanently for children. The closing ceremony was held earlier at Mishref Sports playground with the participation of 134 players, during which players and their guardians were honored due to their response to the invitation to participate.

This comes out of the CAN campaign belief that many parents encourage their children to practice sport, as it is an opportunity to develop the personality traits to be positive and beneficial for the society.

The results of the championship saw Al-Rifae team winning first place and Catalonia was second. Those activities are carried each month at the rate of (2) year long, with the hope of achieving CAN's awareness goals to raise the rate of health awareness among all society groups.

First medals up for grabs as action begins at Paris Paralympics

PARIS: Medals are up for grabs in track cycling, swimming, table tennis and taekwondo when the action begins on Thursday at the Paris Paralympics, which opened in a colourful and hope-filled ceremony ahead of 11 days of competition. The action also begins in sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, badminton, archery, goalball — a form of football for the visually impaired — and bocce, a version of bowls.

French President Emmanuel Macron declared the Games open on Wednesday during a ceremony in a balmy Place de la Concorde in central Paris — the first time a Paralympic opening ceremony has taken place away from the main stadium. The 4,400 competitors from 168 delegations paraded into the arena as the sun set with host nation France entering last to a standing ovation from 30,000 spectators.

The fine weather was in sharp contrast to the heavy rain which fell throughout the Olympics opening ceremony on July 26. International Paralympic Committee (IPC) president Andrew Parsons told the athletes and spectators he hoped for an "inclusion revolution", before Macron officially declared the Games open.

The Paralympic flag was carried into the square by John McFall, a British Paralympic sprinter who has been selected by the European Space Agency to be the first 'parastronaut'. French Olympian Florent Manaudou brought the flame into the arena to complete the four-day torch relay. Five French Paralympians, including 2020 gold medalists Alexis Hanquiquant and Nantenin Keita, lit the already-ignited cauldron in the Tuileries Gardens. Of the 35 Olympic venues, 18 will be used for the Paralympics includ-

ing the ornate Grand Palais and the Stade de France. Ticket sales had been sluggish for the Paralympics, which run until September 8, but they have accelerated since the Olympics and organisers say more than two million of the 2.5 million available have been sold, with several venues sold out.

Riding the wave of their Olympic team's success, host nation France are aiming for a substantial improvement on the 11 golds in 2021, which left them 14th in the medals table. Paralympic powerhouses China dominated the last Paralympics in



TOKYO: (FILES) USA's Matt Stutzman competes in the men's archery individual ranking round during the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games at the Yumenoshima Park archery field in Tokyo. — AFP

Tokyo with 96 golds and have again sent a strong delegation. Ukraine, traditionally one of the top medal-winning nations at the Paralympics, have sent 140 athletes to compete in 17 sports despite the challenges they face in preparing as the war against Russian forces rages at home.

A total of 96 athletes from Russia and Belarus will compete under a neutral banner but are banned from ceremonies because of the invasion of Ukraine. — AFP