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UAE's Iranian expats vote for new president

Nation+ Page 6

Dubai real estate to see steady growth as more serious buyers invest in local markets



Realty Check Page 12

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TOWER IN SHARJAH CATCHES FIRE



A fire broke out in a residential tower in Sharjah on Sunday afternoon. The entire building was safely evacuated as several civil defence, ambulance, and police teams quickly arrived to control the fire. [See Page 4](#)

Hundreds held in cybercrime raids

Mazhar Farooqui
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Major cybercrime syndicates have been dismantled in an all-night operation across the UAE, resulting in the arrest of hundreds of cybercriminals and the rescue of numerous individuals.

The operation follows an investigation by *Khaleej Times*, uncovering the racket.

One of the largest operations took place in Ajman on Wednesday, where special forces raided the city's Grand Mall and several residential towers used for cybercrimes. The all-night operation resulted in the arrest of hundreds of suspects. Investigations into their roles are ongoing, and those involved will be referred to the public prosecutor.

A similar crackdown was conducted across locations in Dubai recently, with the largest raid at Rahaba Residences in DubaiLand.

The cyber syndicates entrapped thousands of individuals, including many South Asians and Africans.

The *Khaleej Times* investigation revealed a strict hierarchy within the scam centres, with telesales agents at the bottom and "killers" — expert hackers — at the top.

A telesales agent said they were referred to by their handlers as "opening batsmen". "We would make the first call, initiate conversation, and assign people simple tasks like posting Google reviews and liking YouTube videos," she explained.



Scammers now take aim at your UAE Pass

Ajanta Paul
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They say they're from the police, the Ministry of Interior, or your bank. Regardless, their modus operandi is the same: To trick residents into revealing sensitive and personal information by asking them to authorise UAE Pass requests.

The vishing (voice phishing) scam is the latest in a series of sophisticated fraudulent attempts faced by UAE residents, amid warnings by authorities to be vigilant against unscrupulous parties. In a WhatsApp poll conducted by *Khaleej Times* last week, more than 8,300 people said they had received phone calls or emails from scammers impersonating UAE authorities. Unfortunately, those who

do fall for the scammers' tactics end up in personal and financial loss.

Dubai resident Bresh Rajan is still baffled after a vishing attack during which a woman had all his official information. Speaking to *Khaleej Times*, the Indian expat said: "I had submitted my Emirates ID (EID) for renewal, and on May 13, I received a call from a lady who claimed to be from the UAE ICP. She said they were in the final stages of the renewal process."

"She had all my details, including the ID number and the expiry date. She said they were updating the system to protect residents from scammers and, therefore, needed the data."

[Turn To Page 6](#)

"Our handlers monitored our calls to ensure we followed the script that appeared on our computer screen."

As trust was gained and the involvement of people deepened, they were ushered into a larger Telegram group with hundreds of participants. "We collectively defrauded hundreds of people daily, and when our illicit gains surpassed

Dh100,000, pre-recorded applause and cheers echoed through the room," one handler said.

The syndicates recruited individuals from Asia and Africa under false pretences. The operation marks a significant step in combating cybercrime in the region and rescuing those trapped in inhumane conditions.

Finest to apply as ministry starts Emiratisation checks

[See Page 4](#)

Travel plans in limbo as Japan halts e-visas

Kirstin Bernabe
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Some UAE residents who are hoping to finally turn their Japan holiday dreams into reality are facing a challenge: It is a struggle to get a visa.

Japan recently suspended its e-visa system — a facility launched in 2023 to make the application process easier for UAE residents. While Emiratis can visit the country visa-free, many expats have to secure the permit prior to their trips.

Now, those applying for a visa to the popular East Asian destination have to e-mail its Dubai consulate for an appointment. However, travellers and agencies that

Khaleej Times spoke to said it was "almost impossible" to get a slot and several requests were being "rejected".

Rafeez Ahmed, a Dubai-based travel vlogger, is planning to explore Japan for two weeks in September — but instead of counting down to the big day, on Wednesday, he was anxiously compiling his documents for visa application. This would be his second attempt.

"I was working with an agency to get an appointment but they had been trying to get one for the past two weeks. They sent four letters to the consulate and all four were rejected or denied," Rafeez told *Khaleej Times*.

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Social media in awe as mum dries clothes on 5-star hotel railing

Nasreen Abdulla
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When Indian tourist Pallavi Venkatesh saw her mother drying swimming clothes on a hotel balcony in Dubai, she thought it was "hilarious" and decided to post a video of it on Instagram.

She was not counting on her mother becoming a global symbol for mum duties. "I posted it because it was relatable to so many people," she told *Khaleej Times*. "I didn't expect it to blow up the way it did."

The orthodontist was on a vacation in Dubai with her mother, parents-in-law and two children. Staying at Atlantis the Palm, the family decided to spend the last day of their holiday at the water park in the hotel. "We returned to the room only at 11am," said Pallavi.



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YOUR UAE GUIDE

LIFE AND LIVING IN THE EMIRATES, EXPLAINED



Now, a simple way to calculate gratuity for domestic workers

Mohre has created an online calculator that instantly tells a user how much the end-of-service benefits should be depending on circumstances

Kirstin Bernabe
kirstin@khaleejtimes.com

Employees in the UAE are entitled to end-of-service benefits — and this applies to domestic workers, too.

Unlike in companies where an HR department takes charge of gratuity disbursements based on federal laws, families have to do the calculations on their own for their house maids and nannies.

The process becomes complicated when certain factors are thrown in: What if the nanny resigns for no reason? Or the domestic worker was unfairly dismissed? If the contract was breached, is he/she still entitled to gratuity?

In the same way, does the employer have the right to demand a sum of money if a housemaid quits before the contract ends?

Simplifying the process of determining end-of-service benefits, the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (Mohre) has created an online calculator that instantly tells a user how much the gratuity should be depending on circumstances.

Here's how to use the calculator:

» **Step 1: Keep the job contract ready**

You will need to know details about the domestic worker's employment, so it's best to keep the contract handy.

» **Step 2: Go to Mohre's official website**

Log into <https://www.mohre.gov.ae/> and, on the home page, click on the 'Services'

tab. On the drop-down list, you'll see the 'Domestic Workers Calculator'.

» **Step 3: Fill out the basic details**

Upon clicking on the calculator option, you will be directed to a simple form.

The basic information you have to enter include the contract's start and end date and the salary of the worker.

You'll also need to specify the reason why the worker is leaving. There are four options:

- 1 Contract ended
- 2 Worker resigned for no reason
- 3 Worker resigned because the employer breached the contract
- 4 Worker dismissed for no reason
- 5 Worker dismissed for breaching the contract

Take note that the 'total allowances' amount at the bottom changes depending on the selection. If you click on 'worker resigned for no reason', you will find a negative amount, which means this is how much the housemaid or nanny needs to pay for breaching the contract.

For example, if it displays -1800, it means the amount that employer should get is Dh1,800.

» **Step 4: Enter unpaid allowances**

Domestic workers are entitled to other benefits like annual leave salary, and if he/she suffers injuries while on job, compensation must be paid by the employer, too.

There are four boxes at the bottom of the calculator. Here's what they mean:

1 Specific period salary: Enter any unpaid salary for a certain period



2 Annual leave salary: Specify the duration of unclaimed leave or leaves that the employer failed to pay

3 Weekend allowance: Specify weekends when the employee was asked to work

4 Work injury: If a worker suffers an injury while on duty, the employer will need to provide compensation depending on the severity of the condition. The 'disability percentage' has

to be specified to determine the amount (Medical reports and official records would usually identify this percentage).

» **Step 5: See the amount**

The amount displayed in the 'total allowances' box is what the employer has to pay as end-of-service benefit. If it's negative, it means the domestic worker will have to pay the employer.

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Add four minutes for Abu Dhabi / Deduct four minutes for Ras Al Khaimah and six minutes for Fujairah.



Check on the go

Log on to khaleejtimes.com to know the latest prayer timings from around the world. bit.ly/UAEPrayerTime

Fines to apply as ministry starts Emiratisation checks from today

Sahim Salim and Angel Tesorero newsroom@khaleejtimes.com

Starting July 1, authorities in the UAE will begin assessing whether private sector companies have achieved their Emiratisation targets for the first half of 2024. Firms with 50 employees or more that haven't added one per cent more Emiratis to their payroll over the last six months will be fined.

This came as the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MoHRE) confirmed June 30 as the final deadline for meeting targets for the first half.

This year, the fine is Dh8,000 per month for each Emirati not hired. It was Dh7,000 per month last year,

and Dh6,000 monthly in 2022. The fines will increase by Dh1,000 annually until 2026.

Private companies in the country are required to increase the number of their Emirati employees by two per cent every year. By the end of last year, companies were required to have four per cent Emiratis as employees. By the end of this month (June), this should be upped to five per cent. Before 2024 ends, a firm's workforce must have six per cent UAE nationals.

A federal law aims to raise Emiratisation target by two per cent annually to reach 10 per cent of a company's work force by the end of 2026. The annual target is split in two - one per cent in the first six

months, and the other one per cent in the second half of the year.

Early this year, Mohre has also started implementing the UAE Cabinet decision to expand the scope of Emiratisation to include firms with 20 to 49 employees. More than 12,000 companies with 20-49 employees, operating across 14 specific economic sectors, are now required to hire at least one Emirati in 2024 and another one in 2025

Mohre urged companies that have yet to meet their Emiratisation targets to take advantage of the Nafis Programme's digital platform, "which allows them access to a wide pool of qualified Emirati job seekers across various specialisations".

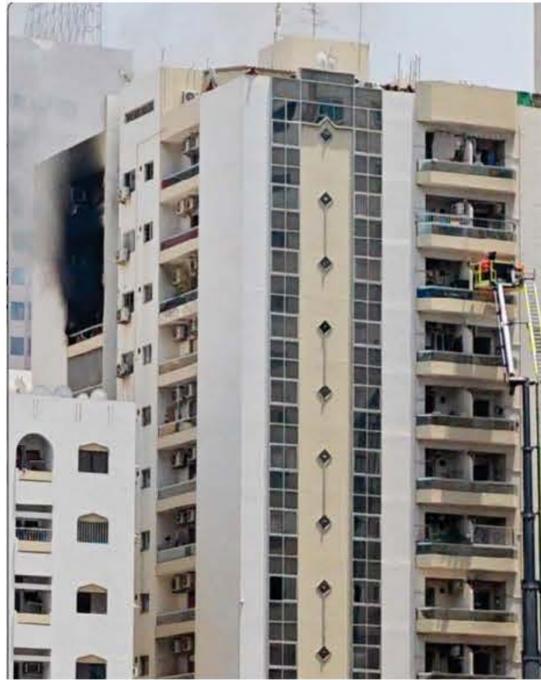
Back in May this year, Mohre announced there are now more than 97,000 Emiratis working in about 20,000 private companies in the country.

"(This) underlines the effectiveness of the government's Emiratisation decisions, policies, and initiatives, most notably the Nafis programme," noted Mohre Minister Dr. Abdulrahman Al Awar.

He added the total number of Emirati employees in the private sector has grown at a rate of approximately 170 per cent since September 2021, when the government launched the Nafis programme, a federal initiative aimed at increasing the employability of Emiratis in the country's private sector.



Private companies in the country are required to increase the number of their Emirati employees by two per cent every year. — FILE PHOTO



The residential tower on Jamal Abdul Nasir Street in Sharjah where fire broke out on Sunday afternoon. — SUPPLIED PHOTO

Residents evacuated after fire breaks out in residential tower

Waheed Abbas waheedabbas@khaleejtimes.com

A fire broke out in a residential tower on Jamal Abdul Nasir Street in Sharjah on Sunday afternoon. The entire building was quickly evacuated as several civil defence, ambulance, and police teams arrived to control the fire.

The evacuated residents anxiously waited and watched from the safety of nearby buildings as authorities fought to control the blaze, which started at 1pm local time.

According to residents, the fire began on the 11th floor of the 13-storey building.

"When alarm bells started ringing, there was quite a lot of noise in the building. Someone banged

on our apartment door. When I came out, a woman shouted, asking us to 'run'. Only then did we realise that a fire broke out in our building," said AN, a resident of the building (who did not wish to disclose his identity).

AN continued: "Smoke was rapidly spreading and engulfing the apartments, so people panicked. Some residents who were taking showers came out running in towels. I could only grab my mobile phone and came out running. We could see everybody running out and leaving their doors open". Another resident, MZ, said: "I was at work when my family informed me about the fire. I came running, and thank God, they were out of the building and safely evacuated".

Can a buyer sue seller of used car for not revealing accident?



LEGAL VIEW

Ashish Mehta

Question: I bought a second-hand vehicle directly from the owner after seeing his ad on a classifieds website. I found out recently that the vehicle was involved in a major accident but the owner did not disclose this to me. Since I was not made aware of the accident, I paid the owner the current market value of the vehicle. In this situation, do I have a legal case against him? Is there anything I can do? Do warranty rules or consumer protection laws apply in this situation?

Answer: In UAE, it is an obligation of the supplier/seller to provide the full correct details of the product he/she intends to sell. This is in accordance with Article 6 (1) (e) of Cabinet Decision No. 66 of 2023 Concerning the Executive Regulation of the Federal Law No. 15 of 2020 Concerning the Consumer Protection which provides for the Obligation of the Suppliers upon contracting. The said Article reads as:

"1. The supplier shall provide the consumer with an invoice that proves the dealing or contracting with the supplier regarding the commodity or the service, without incurring any further burdens by the consumer. The invoice shall contain the following particulars:

- a. Name, address and contact information of the supplier.
- b. Date of invoice.
- c. Description of commodity or service.
- d. Unit of sale, quantity of commodity or number of sold units.
- e. Condition of the commodity, if it is used.
- f. Price of commodity or service, in the local currency.
- g. Warranty period.
- h. Date of delivery of commodity or provision of service.
- i. Serial number of commodities and the contained parts, as per the nature of each commodity.
- j. Commercial registration number.
- k. Tax number (if any)."

Furthermore, Article 8 of Cabinet Resolution No. 66 of 2023 states that advertisements or offers of goods or services are considered deceptive if they contain misleading claims that could create a false impression for consumers.

"Article 8 - Misleading Advertisement of Commodity or Service
A description, advertisement or offering of a commodity or a service shall be deemed deceptive, if the same contains a misleading claim whenever it may directly or indirectly create a false or misleading impression to the consumer, in particular if the claim includes one or more of the following elements:
» Nature, composition, substantial descriptions, constituent ele-

ments, quantity, shape or appearance of commodity.

- » Source, individuality, authenticity, way of manufacture, production date, expiry date, terms of use, warnings of use, weight, size, number, quantity, measurement, calibration, capacity, benchmark or any other standards.
- » Country of origin, country of export or the commodity producer.
- » Terms and procedures of contracting including after-sale service, warranty, and price and way of payment.
- » Awards, certifications or quality marks.
- » Trademarks, statements or logos.
- » Characters of commodity or service and the expected results of their use."

In accordance with Addendum 2 of the Cabinet Resolution No. 66 of 2023, if an individual is guilty of providing misleading advertisement of prices of the provided commodities and services provided under Article 8 of the Cabinet Resolution No. 66 of 2023, he may be fined up to Dh100,000.

Article 12 of the Federal Law No. 15 of 2020 Concerning the Consumer Protection, states: "In the event that a malfunction is found in the product or service, the supplier shall repair or replace the same, return the product and refund its price, or re-perform the service without charge, in accordance with what is specified by the implementing regulation of this law".

In view of the provisions above, it is an obligation of the seller to provide you with the correct information at the time of selling the vehicle.

You may claim compensation for the same under the relevant provisions of the Consumer Protection Law. If you experience any issues with the vehicle, you may request the owner/seller to bear the cost of repairs of the said vehicle. If the seller disagrees, you may initially file a complaint with the Consumer Protection Department at the Department of Economic Development in the emirate where you reside, or where you had completed the purchase of said vehicle. If there is no amicable settlement, you may file a case against the seller in the court which has jurisdiction in the UAE, claiming relevant monetary compensation.

If the vehicle is under manufacturer warranty at the time of the accident, you may be able to get any malfunction fixed subject to the provisions of the warranty.

Ashish Mehta is the founder and Managing Partner of Ashish Mehta & Associates. He is qualified to practise law in Dubai, the United Kingdom and India. Full details of his firm on: www.amalawyers.com. Readers may e-mail their questions to: news@khaleejtimes.com or send them to Legal View, Khaleej Times, PO Box 11243, Dubai.

United Arab Emirates "English Announcement" **UAEU** جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة United Arab Emirates University

Invitation to participate in project Pre-Qualification program

The United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) invites companies specialized in providing Health Insurance Services For UAEU employees & their families to participate in the Pre-Qualification for the upcoming tender, participants should adhere to the following dates:

Project Name	Receiving Documents starts at	Last Date of Submitting the offers
Providing Health Insurance Services For UAE University Employees & Their Families	1 July 2024	12 July 2024

- Terms and Conditions:**
- The purpose of the Pre-Qualification Request is to evaluate suppliers eligibility and compatibility with the project scope, the financial and the technical ability to execute the project.
 - Qualification documents can be obtained through email from the Tender & Procurement Department representative mentioned below.
 - All requested documents are mandatory, uncomplete requests will be disregarded.
 - Qualified companies only have the right to apply for the project when tendered.
 - Company Trade License specialization and activity includes Health Insurance.
 - This announcement is considered as an integral part of the terms and conditions of the tender documents.

For further information: Please call 03-713 5962 or through email: fg.alshamisi@uae.ac.ae

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Bank of Baroda, United Arab Emirates (UAE) Operations invites Request for Proposal (RFP) for Engagement of Concurrent Audit firm to carry out Concurrent Audit of Abu Dhabi Branch & Sharjah Branch for -12- months from 01-09-2024 to 31-08-2025.

Details of RFP and Terms of Reference are available under the tab "Tenders" on Bank's website: <https://www.bankofbarodauae.ae/tenders>

Any amendment/modification/change in the RFP shall be notified on the Bank's website only. Interested bidders should refer to the same before final submission of the proposal.

Last Date for Submission of RFP is 22nd July, 2024 up to 6:00 p.m.

Place : Dubai Date: 01.07.2024 Dy, Chief Executive (GCC Operations)

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بنك بارودا Bank of Baroda India's International Bank

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Bank of Baroda, United Arab Emirates (UAE) Operations invites Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Consultant for Conducting "Independent audit of stress test-2024 submission, including data quality assurance as per CBUAE guidelines".

Details of RFP and Terms of Reference are available under Tenders section on Bank's website: <https://www.bankofbarodauae.ae/tenders>

Any amendments / modifications / changes including any Addendum in the RFP shall be notified on the Bank's website only. Interested bidders should refer the same before final submission of the proposal.

Last Date for Submission of RFP is 22nd July, 2024 up to 6:00 p.m.

Place : Dubai Date: 01.07.2024 Dy, Chief Executive (GCC Operations)

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Development of Digital Silk Road picks up speed

Importers now don't have to wait for their bills of entry to be stamped today

Wang Hanchao and Pang Geping

As the peak season of durian sales approaches, durians freshly harvested in the morning in Vietnam and Thailand are swiftly making their way to store shelves in major Chinese cities within just three to five days.

How are they reaching China so fast? The answer could be found at the Youyi Port in Pingxiang, south China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, where trucks fully loaded with imported fruits are always seen lining up for customs clearance.

"The hotter it gets, the less time the fruits can wait," said Cai Zhenyu, general manager of an international logistics based in Guangxi, who has been engaged in the food import business for over 10 years. "A delay means a drop in fruits' price, and if the delay is too long, the entire truckload becomes worthless," Cai explained.

According to him, the import process involved inspections, customs declarations, weighing, and vehicle transfers, which took five to six hours at best, or even two to three days sometimes, leaving the cargo owners anxious.

Thanks to the development of the Digital Silk Road and the continuously optimised intelligent customs clearance system, importers don't have to wait for their bills of entry to be stamped today, as truck drivers can pass through checkpoints with just a face scan or fingerprint verification.

"In cases where no inspection is required, it takes only about 10 minutes for truck drivers to leave the customs supervision area from entry," Cai noted, adding that each step of the customs clearance process can be shown in real time on a mobile application.

Building the China-Asean Information Harbor is an important measure to promote Belt and Road cooperation



Employees of China-Asean Information Harbor Company Ltd check data. — Photo by Chen Qiyuan



Trucks go through customs clearance at the Youyi Port in Pingxiang, south China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. — Photo by Liu Yixin

and to strengthen connectivity between China and Asean countries. It aims to create an international communication passageway, a hub for big data resource application and services, a demonstration area for the application of new-generation information technology, a cluster for open cooperation in digital economy, and a center for cultural and people-to-people exchanges catered to Asean countries.

"We are striving to play a pivotal role in enhancing the development and application of information technologies and building the Digital Silk Road," said Wang Yongchao, head of the Commission for Industry and Information Technology of Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

Currently, China and Vietnam are collaborating on the expansion of the Youyi Port, with plans to introduce autonomous driving in the Chinese section of the cargo passage by the end of this year, thus providing contactless, unattended, and intelligent customs clearance services 24/7.

On the big screens in the exhibition hall on the first floor of the office building of China-Asean Information Harbor Company Ltd in Nanning, capital of Guangxi, there are various data and charts showcasing the achievements of information connectivity.

According to an executive of the company, in recent years, the company has built multiple digital platforms

and even replicated China's successful shared electric bike business in overseas trials.

The China-Asean Information Harbor has set up a multi-path system centered around Nanning, while Guangxi is accelerating the construction of an administration of international communication accesses. Over the past five years, Guangxi's total foreign trade with Asean has grown at an average annual rate of 10.5 per cent. In the first quarter of this year, the autonomous region's imports and exports with Asean hit 90.12 billion yuan (\$12.68 billion), an increase of 33.3 per cent year-on-year.

"China and Asean have been each other's largest trading partners for four consecutive years. Digital connectivity not only facilitates trade but also further enhances mutual understanding between peoples," said an official with the Big Data Development Bureau of Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.



A researcher shakes hands with a humanoid robot in a laboratory of the Huzhou Institute of Zhejiang University. — Photo by Huang Yangqiang/People's Daily Online

AI industry sees prosperous future in China

China has made significant strides in AI development, marked by steady growth in industrial scale

Wang Yunshan

The application of rubber seal strips onto a car roof was accompanied by a captivating display of a huge robotic arm picking it up and rotating it mid-air. This interesting scene was unfolded at a 5G-Advanced (5G-A) flexible production line in a factory of China's carmaker Great Wall Motors (GWM) in Baoding, north China's Hebei province.

Thanks to the integration of 5G-A and artificial intelligence (AI), this efficient production line has slashed 60 hours of downtime per year, thus avoiding potential losses of over 800 million yuan (\$110.36 million) that could have been incurred by delayed deliveries. In recent years, China has made significant strides in AI development, marked by steady growth in industrial scale, robust infrastructure, and a rapid increase of innovative products.

"The vast application scenarios, huge market, and massive talent pool have laid a solid foundation for the vigorous development of China's AI industry," said Yu Youcheng, deputy secretary-general of the Chinese Association for Artificial Intelligence (CAAI). According to Yu, a large number of new breakthroughs, technologies and applications are rapidly emerging across different application scenarios in China.

Gradual improvement in infrastructure: In 2023, the total size of China's data center racks reached 8.1 million and the scale of computing power reached 230 EFLOPS. In particular, the scale of intelligent computing power has reached 70 EFLOPS, an increase of over 70 percent.

Steady growth in industrial scale: The total scale of China's core AI industry has reached 500 billion yuan, and the number of related enterprises has exceeded 4,400. According to a report released by CCID Consulting, a market research firm affiliated with China Center for Information Industry Development (CCID), the market scale of China's AI industry will reach 1.73 trillion yuan by 2035, accounting for 30.6 percent of the world's total.

Continuous expansion of integrated applications: So far, large-scale AI models developed by China have shown tremendous potential in areas such as smart mining, drug research and development, meteorology, government services, finance, intelligent manufacturing, and railway management. The integrated application of the industrial internet in China has expanded to 49 major categories of the national economy, and generative AI has been widely applied in chatting robots, intelligent search, and text generation.

At the general cargo terminal of Rizhao Port in east China's Shandong province, a diverse array of general cargo items came together before making their way to different parts of the world, including steel plates made in Handan, north China's Hebei province, excavators from Zhuzhou, central China's Hunan province, and drainage pipes from Zhengzhou, the capital city of central China's Henan province.

In the past, the complex loading and unloading procedures for these items, which varied greatly in shape and size, resulted in low operational efficiency. Now, with an AI-enabled planning system, the port has boosted its overall operational efficiency by 10 per cent and yard throughput by 20 per cent.

Apart from assisting intelligent manufacturing, AI technology can also make typhoon forecasts, develop new drugs, identify faults, and formulate production plans. These remarkable breakthroughs are paving the way for an era of intelligence.

The application of AI technology in the transportation sector has enhanced operational efficiency and raised safety levels. In the face of the booming development of the AI industry, many experts and business leaders have highlighted the importance of accelerating AI-related sci-tech innovation and promoting high-quality development and high-level application of AI in order to foster new growth drivers.

Moving forward, China will continue to enhance AI infrastructure, expand AI applications, and advance key and core AI technologies to bring its AI industry onto a higher level.

China provides fresh opportunities for world with new development

China undoubtedly plays an indispensable role in global industrial and supply chains

Luo Shanshan

At GE Healthcare's Beijing Imaging Equipment Manufacturing Base in Beijing Economic-Technological Development Area, five batches of raw materials for producing a new type of diagnostic equipment have just arrived and been put into use.

"These raw materials are essential components for our new equipment," said an employee from Beijing GE Hualun Medical Equipment Company Ltd, a subsidiary of General Electric Company (GE). "They hit the production line immediately after being cleared from customs, which increased the efficiency of our supply chain," the employee added.

According to him, the company has been able to implement its global strategy at a faster pace thanks to the increasingly favourable business environment in China.

He noted that over the past six years, the company has outperformed its total production from the last 20 years, with two-thirds of the CT scanners sold globally coming from the company's Beijing facility. In Suzhou New District,

east China's Jiangsu province, a new factory of Suzhou Hybiome Biomedical Engineering Company Ltd (Hybiome), invested and controlled by French multinational vitro diagnostic company bioMérieux, has just been completed.

To build Hybiome into a prominent player in vitro diagnostics, the factory is planned to produce 1,000 fully automated chemiluminescence immunoassay systems per year, with an annual output value of one billion yuan (\$137.86 million).

Over the past more than 40 years of reform and opening up, China has emerged as the world's second-largest economy, remained the world's top manufacturing hub for 14 consecutive years and the top trading nation for seven straight years. The country undoubtedly plays an indispensable role in global industrial and supply chains.

This year, foreign companies continue to enjoy broader prospects in China. According to China's Ministry of Commerce, the number of newly established foreign-invested firms in China hit 12,000 in the first quarter (Q1) of 2024, up 20.7 per cent year on year. In the same period, the actual foreign direct investment (FDI) in China stood at 301.67 billion yuan. In terms of the structure of FDI, the country's high-tech manufacturing sector attracted 12.5 per cent of the FDI inflow in the first quarter, up 2.2 percentage points compared to



A workshop of the BMW production base in Shenyang, capital of northeast China's Liaoning province. — Photo from the WeChat public account of the publicity department of Shenyang

that in the same period last year.

Behind the decisions of multinationals to intensify their presence in China is their confidence in the country's ability to sustain sound economic growth. For instance, Standard Chartered Securities (China) Limited, a wholly foreign-owned securities company affiliated with Standard Chartered, has commenced securities business in Beijing. The largest Apple store in Asia has officially opened in Shanghai. The China-Saudi Arabia ethylene project has entered the construction stage in Zhangzhou, east China's Fujian province, with a total investment of 44.8 billion yuan.

China boasts a complete industrial system, a super-large market, and a stable social environment. The Chinese economy has strong resilience, tremendous potential and great vitality, and the fundamentals sustaining its long-term growth remain unchanged. It has become the favoured investment destination for many foreign businesses.

The 2024 Kearney Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Confidence Index report released in April by Kearney, a global

management consulting firm, upgraded China's ranking from seventh to third.

Besides, for the second time in the 26-year history of the FDI Confidence Index, Kearney includes an exclusive emerging market ranking to give business leaders insights into which emerging markets are most appealing to investors now and over the next three years. China ranks first on the 25-market list.

As China advances a broader agenda of opening up across more areas and in greater depth, and works to expand institutional opening up with regard to market access and the service sector, a more transparent and predictable business environment is being created for foreign companies to develop in the country.

According to a survey of more than 600 foreign-funded companies conducted by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade in the first quarter this year, over 70 per cent of them are optimistic about the development prospects of the Chinese market over the next five years, and more than 50 per cent believe the Chinese market has become more attractive.

SCO strengthening youth development for better future

New platforms set to deepen understanding among the younger generation

Zhang Bolan

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) carries forward the spirit of good-neighborliness, and advances equality, mutual learning, dialogue and inclusiveness between civilisations. It calls for peaceful coexistence and harmonious development of different civilisations, and expands people-to-people and cultural cooperation. It has enhanced the popular support for state-to-state relations.

In recent years, the SCO has built sound platforms for youth exchanges to deepen mutual understanding among the younger generation and bring them closer together. The development of the SCO is highlighted by the constantly strengthened friendly exchanges among the youth of SCO member states.

Ilya Kryzhevich, a journalist with Belarus Today, has been reporting on the Chi-

nese economy for nine years. He told *People's Daily* that he goes to the Great Stone China-Belarus Industrial Park, a landmark Belt and Road cooperation project, for interviews almost every month.

"Drastic changes are taking place there. We sometimes joke that you'll never enter the same China-Belarus Industrial Park twice," Ilya Kryzhevich said.

He noted that young people in Belarus have benefited very much from the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). "Many innovative enterprises in the medical industry from China have entered the Belarusian market, providing immense job opportunities for young Belarusians. Besides, many young people in Belarus have established innovative sci-tech firms in the industrial park," he added.

Connectivity is key to Belt and Road cooperation. Islom Okhunov, head of the Division for the Development of International Cooperation and Ratings of the Ministry of Youth Policy and Sports of Uzbekistan, said that the construction of the highway network among Central Asian countries has made constant



Youth representatives from Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states attend a youth forum during the sixth Silk Road (Dunhuang) International Cultural Expo, September 6, 2023. — Photo provided by the All-China Youth Federation

progress thanks to the development of the Silk Road Economic Belt, turning Uzbekistan from a landlocked country to a land-linked one. "This has connected my hometown to the sea and ports. I'm looking forward to the early operation of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway," he told *People's Daily*.

From the release of the Declaration of

the SCO Youth Council to the establishment of an SCO exchange base for young entrepreneurs, and from hosting the SCO Youth Campus to the solid progress made by the China-Russia Youth Entrepreneurship Incubator, the SCO is advancing youth development in an orderly manner.

Last year, an SCO forum on youth development was hosted at the Qingdao SCO-DA Pearl International Expo Centre in the China-SCO Local Economic and Trade Cooperation Demonstration Area (SCO-DA), east China's Shandong province, where youth representatives from SCO member states shared the experience and cases of youth development in their respective countries, renewing friendship and seeking for a better future through a collision of ideas.

Nikolai Zhdanov, a youth representative from Russia, has been involved in the youth work of the SCO since 2020. He believes that youth development has become an increasingly important topic for SCO member states.

"Youth exchanges are vital for maintaining good-neighborliness and friendly

cooperation among SCO member states. During this event, I had the opportunity to communicate with young people from countries such as Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, and we agreed to launch many bilateral and multilateral youth exchange programs," Zhdanov said.

"This is Geely, and that is BYD." On a street in Qingdao, Taalaybek Dayirbekov, chairman of the Youth Public Council of Kyrgyzstan, effortlessly named the Chinese car brands as new energy vehicles (NEVs) passed by.

"In Bishkek, an increasing number of Chinese NEVs are running on the streets, which help alleviate air pollution and improve the urban environment. The BRI not only brings economic benefits but also improves the life quality for the people in partner countries," Dayirbekov noted.

Iranian expats vote from Dubai, Abu Dhabi centres

Ashwani Kumar and Waad Barakat
newsroom@khaaleejtimes.com

Iranian expats in the UAE cast their ballots in a crucial election to choose the successor to former President Ebrahim Raisi who died in a helicopter crash in May.

According to the Iranian missions, there was a "good turnout" of expats on Friday to exercise their rights and shape the future of their country.

"Voting is important. This election is happening at a crucial time. We hope for stability and progress," said an expat, who gave his name as Saleh.

Iranian expats aged 18 and above were eligible to vote at the Iranian Embassy in Abu Dhabi and the Consulate General in Dubai, provided they brought their national identity card or passport. Special desks and counters were set up to facilitate a seamless voting process. Iranian residents deposited their ballots in a sealed box.

Iranian Ambassador Reza Ameri noted that the early presidential elections were held in about 95 other countries, including the UAE, where Iranian nationals were residing.

"In the UAE, there are about half a million Iranians, most of

them of course in Dubai," Ameri said. While there were two centres in the UAE, about 60,000 polling centres were set up outside Iran.

The ambassador explained that while voting is primarily conducted via paper ballots outside Iran, some areas have implemented electronic voting procedures. "To this moment and this hour, participation and turnout in the elections has been good, and there are many Iranian residents who attended the polling stations and cast their votes in the ballot box," Ameri noted.

The ambassador emphasised that the embassies and consulates abroad will not directly announce

the final election results. "We report the results to the election centre in Iran and after they have received all the results from all countries, the government will officially announce the results of the elections."

Ameri stated that the polls opened at 8 am local time in Dubai and Abu Dhabi and closed at 6 pm.

While there was a decent turnout at the missions, there were expats who didn't go out to vote. "I couldn't go. I was at work. We have issues like lack of jobs, price rise, and political instability. We need good leaders. We hope things will change," said an expat, who gave his name as Reza.



An Iranian voter participates in presidential polls at the Iranian consulate in Dubai on Friday. — REUTERS

Social media in awe as woman dries clothes on hotel railing

From page 1

"We had to check out by 12pm. So my quick-thinking mother decided to spread the clothes on the railing so that it would be at least semi-dry by the time we had to leave."

Watching her mother, Shobha Rani, carefully spread the clothes on the railing, she decided to post a funny video of it. "Moms just momming at Palm Atlantis," she wrote on her reel with a smiling emoji. The video then zooms into another balcony where clothes had been similarly left for drying.

"I did warn her that the local laws might prohibit it but she wanted to leave it out for at least 10 to 20 minutes so that we didn't have to carry really wet clothes in our luggage," Pallavi said.

Like with a lot of things on social media, Pallavi's relatable post blew up. As of Saturday afternoon, the reel had been viewed over 1.1 million times and had more than 1,000 comments. "You can take mum out of India but to take India out of mum is just impossible," wrote one commentator. "She is mum, she can do anything," wrote another one.

Chiming in with the comments was the hotel Atlantis The Palm itself. "Mum duties (clapping hands emoji). We hope you enjoyed your stay! (We include a retractable drying cord in every bathroom so that you can dry your clothes over the bath)," it wrote.

However, the innocent post also drew a lot of criticism. "This is bad manners," wrote one, while another pointed out that hanging clothes in the balcony was illegal in Dubai. A third called it the "toxicity" of "desi parents" and said it was embarrassing.

Pallavi said her mother was surprised by the way the Internet was divided over something she grew up doing. "She laughed at all the attention she received," she said.

"However, she was also shocked to know that something that was common practice in India is no longer common and considered bad manners." She said she took the backlash she received with a pinch of salt. "No matter what you do, social media will find good or bad out of it," she said. "Sometimes, people fail to see the fun and lighthearted humour. However, when the reel went viral, I also got a lot of supportive comments from people all over the world. I am happy that Atlantis the Palm saw the funny side of it."

Pallavi said the Dubai weather meant she did not have to lug any wet clothes back to India. "Our clothes were dry within 10 minutes of being put out in the balcony," she chuckled.

Watch out! Scamsters now take aim at your UAE Pass

From page 1

How was I supposed to doubt her?" Rajan then received codes from his UAE Pass app (even though he had not initiated them) and was asked to click on one of the two that flashed on his screen. He followed the instructions, and "they got access to my app, which opened up for me as well," he said.

The fraudsters then deployed sophisticated tactics to trick Rajan. He was sent three emails from the ICP's gov.ae domain. The expat, who moved to the UAE three years ago, was further convinced this is the usual procedure for renewing his Emirates ID.

"Our conversation continued for more than 15 minutes, as she talked me through the 'process'. The emails asked me to complete legal services, provide all financial verification, and authorise the card with the officer on call.

"As soon as I provided my bank details and card number, I received a debit request from ICP for Dh1 with an OTP (one-time password). Then, she asked for my CVV number and the OTP I received. That was the first time I was alarmed."

When the Indian expat refused to comply, the caller became aggressive and threatened consequences. Rajan did not budge. The agitated caller disconnected the call, and Rajan's UAE Pass was blocked. He later reinstalled the app and regained access using his biometrics.

High-pressure tactics

Scammers using this particular tactic even target residents who have yet to install the UAE Pass app. Narrating what happened to her, Dubai resident Ann Mel said: "I was running late and rushing to an appointment when I got a call from an unknown mobile number. The person on the other end was brusque and said something about the UAE Pass. I was barely registering what was being said while navigating my route. The lady then said she needed to verify my Emirates ID, but when I asked her why, she started to yell."

The media industry executive realised it was a scammer. "I told her 'I don't have the time for this'. Her response was the best. She shouted back, 'You think I have the time? I'm working too!' I cut the call, and she didn't bother calling me back—but, ma'am? You're a scammer. What do you mean you're working too?"

The expat highlighted the aggressive pressure tactics used by the scammers. "These tactics force people to make decisions quickly. They scare people into compliance



and prevent them from immediately registering those minor but important details — like how Emirates ID authorities would never call from a mobile number, to begin with."

Another resident, Muhammed (who did not wish to disclose his full name), 39, found himself in a similar position when he was asked to confirm an OTP on the app. "I did not because I found it strange, as I did not initiate anything to generate a code. Although the man said he was from the Ministry of Interior, I just hung up." His doubts were confirmed when he saw similar posts online.

Several residents are sharing their experiences on social media forums — along with scammers' mobile numbers — in a bid to help fellow users be more aware. Re-counting his own episode, Rajan said: "I should have known when I received the call from a mobile number. I was initially convinced when she had all my EID details; how was that possible?"

UAE Pass 'secure'

Khaaleej Times reached out to the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) for comment; at the time of publication, a response was still awaited.

In response to social media chatter about scam attempts involving UAE Pass, the TDRA recently assured the public of the platform's high-security standards, calling it a secure digital identity solution for residents and citizens.

The authority stressed the importance of exercising caution when receiving OTP, notifications or login requests linked to UAE Pass. Users are urged not to share the details and meticulously verify any requests to avoid potential fraud attempts by individuals seeking un-

authorised access to accounts. On Friday, the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization also put out an advisory warning customers against scammers impersonating authorities. "You may receive text messages claiming to be from official authorities, requesting data updates or one-time password. Official authorities will never send such requests through text messages or calls. Be cautious," it said.

Rayad Kamal Ayub
Managing director at Rayad Group

compile unique usernames and passwords based on commonly used combinations."

In cases like Rajan's, where hackers are seemingly able to trigger UAE Pass requests, he says they are likely using pirated software that can track portals visited by victims and steal credentials such as usernames and passwords. "With this, they are able to log in and send notifications to the UAE Pass app."

Khalifa bin Huwaidan Al Ketbi, Chairman of CAWCAB LLC, a UAE-based cyber security and technology enterprise, confirmed: "Fraudsters easily access data collected by credential stealers, a type of malware often embedded as a backdoor in widely used apps distributed through Play Stores."

Another method is for scammers to enter your mobile number into any UAE Pass-linked app. This would enable them to trigger an OTP request. If unknowing victims share this code, it would grant them login access. As for how Rajan received an email similar to a government domain, Kamal Ayub explained: "Hackers constantly create seemingly similar domains that closely resemble legitimate ones. It is also relatively easy for hackers to clone a name in their server and send text messages that may seem genuine to the receiver. Since they already have all our information, they can also easily trigger a response from the website and send an email. These can be proactively tracked and removed by the government or organisations before they are used for cyber fraud."

Ayub said some fraudsters have even weaponised SEO and mobile ads to deceive innocent victims. "For instance, searching for the words 'refund for failed transac-

tion' may display a scammer's website and contact details, which unsuspecting users click on and end up losing money. Governments should collaborate with digital advertising companies to enforce verification against financial fraudsters placing ads," he said.

Meanwhile, Al Ketbi highlighted the growing threat of identity cloning and 'digital arrest' scams these days. "With personal data gathered through various sources (as mentioned above), identity cloning has become much easier."

"There's also a new, dangerous trend where fraudsters use VOIP calls to threaten individuals with allegations of sexual harassment or illegal drug use and imminent arrest by law enforcement. The fear of arrest puts victims under stress, leading them to install more malicious software. This, in turn, gives hackers further access to personal information, which is then used to manipulate victims even more."

How to stay safe

Scammers are constantly changing their approach and employing dubious tactics to deceive victims. According to Ayub, it's important to remember a few basic tenets of cyber security:

1. Avoid installing common software from unknown sources and remove the software or app when there is no requirement. This will reduce the attack surface of the user.

2. Telltale signs are receiving calls from unknown numbers and unknown phishing emails constantly that some data has been leaked about you. Refusing to engage with unknown numbers and emails is very effective.

3. If scammers have access to your email and phone (through malicious mobile apps) and are able to retrieve the access codes, they can reset the account to threaten you. Follow digital security practices, including updating passwords regularly, enabling two-factor authentication, not sharing sensitive information (like banking details or OTPs), and being cautious of suspicious messages or links.

4. Once you share OTP, a transaction will be complete, but you can quickly contact the service provider to secure your account. Police can also help by creating a dedicated system for tackling identity theft cases with large service providers like Google, Meta, Microsoft and Amazon.

5. Stay up to date with advisories from the government, which is constantly tracking and monitoring cyberspace to alert users of malicious apps and to plug data leaks.

Japan halts e-visas, travel plans in limbo

From page 1

"Now, I spoke to another agency who said they could give me an appointment for July 1," said the Indian expat.

With the e-visa, applicants just had to log into a website, submit the requirements and pay the fees (Dh80 for most nationalities and Dh20 for Indians). This online visa system, however, has been suspended in Dubai since April 27, according to a call centre executive for the Japanese Consulate-General in the emirate.

To secure an appointment, applicants now have to send an e-mail to the consulate between 8am and 10am on weekdays. The mission published a guide on its website (www.dubai.uae.emb-japan.go.jp/), specifying the details that must be included in the e-mail.

If an appointment is confirmed, the consulate will reply by 4pm with an appointment for the next day. If an applicant doesn't get a response, it means the request "was not successful" — and he/she will have to

send another e-mail request the next day.

In its guide, the consulate said that an application will not be accepted if the travel date is "more than 3 months or less than 2 weeks at the time of application"

Malou Prado, CEO of MPQ Travel and Tourism, said sending these e-mails did not work at all. "At first, we just kept sending these appointment requests to the consulate but we didn't get any response. We just got tired of trying."

A customer service representative of another agency, Akbar Travels UAE, said they used to help residents apply for Japan visas. "But after the e-visa suspension and because of multiple rejections, we just stopped offering the service."

Even travel platform Musafir.com encountered the same challenges, according to Rashida Zahid, vice-president for the agency's operations. Two days ago, however, they were able to get visas processed, Zahid said. It is touch and go — some are granted a slot, others are not as lucky.

These visa challenges come at a time when concerns of "overtourism" have emerged in Japan. The destination has seen more than three million visitors for a third straight month in May, according to official data. With a weak yen, travellers from different parts of the world are able to enjoy a bargain.

Amid visa woes, some agencies, like MPQ Travel and Tourism, managed to find a solution for its clientele. "For our Filipino clients, we now suggest that they apply back home, since we also have an office in Manila," Prado said.

"Those who go on one-month annual leave would spend some time in Manila first so they would be able to apply for the visa in person. Within seven to 10 working days, they can get their visa for Japan," she explained.

Prado also encourages her customers to apply for multiple-entry visas. "We have noticed that after a traveller is able to go to Japan with a single-entry visa, it is much easier to get a five-year multi-entry one upon coming back," she said.

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In addition to Online Submission of price in DEWA system and online submission of Tender Bond to ENBD Bank, scanned copy of the Tender Bond Swift Message duly signed and stamped by the issuing Bank and that of the completed tender document with signed and stamped Form of Tender along with other relevant documents have to be uploaded in the Vendors' code earmarked private Folder in DEWA SRM system.

The closing date for receipt of completed Tender online is 11.00 Hrs of Thursday, 15th August, 2024.

For any further queries, the office of the Vice President - Contracts may be contacted.

Participants in the Tender should submit the names of their Local Partners/Sponsors, having a valid Dubai Trade License along with a photocopy of their current license.

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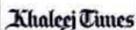
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A Palestinian woman carries salvaged items following an Israeli raid in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, on Saturday on a road damaged by Israeli bulldozers. — AFP

Israeli tanks advance into areas in north and south Gaza as fighting rages

Israeli forces advanced further on Sunday into the Shejaia neighbourhood of northern Gaza and also pushed deeper into western and central Rafah in the south, killing at least six Palestinians and destroying several homes, residents said.

Israeli tanks, which moved back into Shejaia four days ago, fired shells towards several houses, leaving families trapped inside and unable to leave, the residents said.

The Israeli military said forces operating in Shejaia had over the past day killed several Palestinian gunmen, located weapons, and struck military infrastructure. On Saturday it announced the death of two Israeli soldiers in northern Gaza.

The armed wing of Hamas and the allied Islamic Jihad reported fierce fighting in both Shejaia and Rafah, saying their fighters had fired anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs against Israeli forces operating there.

More than eight months into Israel's air and ground war in Gaza, militants continue to stage attacks on Israeli forces, operating in areas that the Israeli army said it had gained control over months ago.

Arab mediators' efforts, backed by the United States, have so far failed to secure a ceasefire. Hamas says any deal must end the war and bring a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. Israel says it will accept only temporary pauses in the fighting until Hamas, which has governed Gaza since 2007, is eradicated.

In Rafah, near the border with Egypt, Israeli tanks pushed deeper into several districts in the east, west and centre of the city, and

medics said six people had been killed in an Israeli strike on a house in Shaboura, in the heart of the city.

The six bodies from the Zurub family were transferred to Nasser Hospital in the nearby city of Khan Younis. On Sunday, dozens of relatives paid their respects before the bodies, which were wrapped in white shrouds, and then carried them in their arms to prepared graves.

Residents said the Israeli army had torched the Al Awda mosque in the centre of Rafah, one of the city's best-known.

Israel has said its military operations in Rafah are aimed at eradicating the last armed battalions of Hamas.

The Israeli military said on Sunday its forces continued "targeted, intelligence-based" operations in Rafah, killing several gunmen in different encounters and dismantling tunnels.

The latest Gaza war erupted when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing around 1,200 people and seizing more than 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has so far killed nearly 38,000 people, according to the Gaza health ministry, and has left the heavily built-up coastal enclave in ruins.

The Gaza health ministry does not distinguish between combatants and non-combatants but officials say most of the dead are civilians. More than 300 Israeli soldiers have been killed in Gaza and Israel says at least a third of the Palestinian dead are fighters. — REUTERS



Displaced Palestinians evacuate the Mawassi area on the outskirts of southwestern Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip. — AFP

Gazans living in unbearable conditions, says UNRWA

Gazans are forced to live in bombed-out buildings or camp next to giant piles of trash, a United Nations spokeswoman said, denouncing the 'unbearable' conditions in the besieged territory.

Louise Wateridge from UNRWA, the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees, described the "extremely dire" living conditions in the Gaza Strip.

"It's really unbearable," she told reporters in Geneva, via video-link from central Gaza. Wateridge, who returned Wednesday after four weeks outside the territory, said that even in that time the situation had "significantly deteriorated". "Today, it has to be the worst it's ever been. I don't doubt that tomorrow again will be the worst it's ever been," she said. Nearly nine months into the war between Israel and Hamas, Wateridge said the Gaza Strip had been "destroyed".

She said she had been "shocked" on returning to Khan Younis in central Gaza. "The buildings are skeletons, if at all. Everything is rubble," she said. "And yet people are living there again. There's no water there, there's no sanitation, there's no food. And now, people are living back in these buildings that are empty shells, with sheets covering the gaps left by blown-out walls.

With no bathrooms, "people are relieving themselves anywhere they can". Wateridge said the struggle to bring fuel into Gaza and distribute it safely was having a knock-on impact on the ability to deliver aid. "Without the fuel, the humanitarian response really grinds to a halt," she said. Wateridge was speaking from a guesthouse as there was no fuel to go out and undertake missions. About 150 metres away, she said, a pile of around 100,000 tonnes of waste was building up, with makeshift tents pitched around it. "The population is living among it," she said. "With the temperatures rising, it's really adding misery to the living conditions."

Wateridge said that before the war, sanitation units would clear all the trash from refugee camps to landfill sites. Now, appeals to the Israeli authorities for access to the landfill sites were frequently denied, she said. And lacking fuel meant even when access was granted, trucks could not go in to clear out the mess.

Wateridge said food insecurity in the territory was having a visible effect on the population. "When I see my colleagues, my friends here, they're visibly unrecognisable because having such unsustainable access to food for so long, you start to age, you look unhealthy, your skin changes colour," she said. — AFP

Reformist to face ultraconservative in Iran presidency runoff on July 5

The sole reformist in Iran's presidential election, Masoud Pezeshkian, will face the ultraconservative Saeed Jalili in a runoff, authorities said on Saturday, following a vote marred by historically low turnout.

Pezeshkian secured 42.4 per cent of the vote, while Jalili, a former nuclear negotiator, came second with 38.6 per cent, according to figures from Iran's elections authority.

Conservative parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf was next with 13.8 per cent, while the only other candidate, conservative cleric Mostafa Pourmohammadi, got less than one per cent.

"None of the candidates could garner the absolute majority of the votes," electoral authority spokesman Mohsen Eslami said.

In his first post-election remarks, Pezeshkian thanked his supporters and urged them to vote again next Friday "to save the country from poverty, lies, discrimination and injustice".

"I hope your presence will be the basis of a new voice for change in attitude, behaviour, conversation and in the distribution and allocation of resources," he added in a video published on the website of the reformist newspaper Etemad. Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah

Ali Khamenei had called for a high turnout ahead of Friday's vote.

Only slightly more than 40 per cent of the 61 million electorate took part — a record low turnout for the Islamic republic — and more than one million ballots were spoiled.

The poll had been scheduled to take place in 2025 but was brought forward by the death of ultraconservative president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash last month.

The Guardian Council, which vets candidates, had originally approved six contenders.

But a day ahead of the election, two of them — the ultraconser-

vative mayor of Tehran Alireza Zakani and Raisi's vice president Amir-Hossein Ghazizadeh-Hashemi — dropped out.

After the final results were released, they both asked their supporters to vote for Jalili in the July 5 runoff.

Ghalibaf followed suit, asking "all revolutionary forces and supporters" to get behind Jalili's bid for the presidency.

In the 2021 election that brought Raisi to power, the Guardian Council disqualified many reformists and moderates, prompting many voters to shun the election. — AFP



Presidential candidate and ultraconservative former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili (L) and Masoud Pezeshkian, reformist candidate in the Iranian election. — AFP FILE

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Egyptians open makeshift study halls as outage hits students

In Egypt, where a shortage of natural gas has caused rolling blackouts during a heatwave, churches, cafes and libraries have stepped up to help students study for their crucial high-school exams.

The venues that have their own power generators, which also include sports centres and wedding halls, have opened to students struggling at home with power cuts that were officially extended this week to three hours daily. Egypt generates most of its electricity from burning natural gas.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly said Egypt would need to import \$1.18 billion of mazut fuel oil and natural gas to end power cuts exacerbated by heatwaves that have driven up electricity consumption. Declining domestic gas production and fluctuations in imports have also contributed to power cuts.

The government aims to stop cutting power for the rest of the summer from around the third week of July, he said. More than 745,000 students are slated to take the exams this academic year, according to the education ministry. The results help determine which students are accepted to public universities.

Hundreds of students, eager to escape the heat, lined up on Tuesday outside the air-conditioned Bibliotheca Alexandrina on the Mediterranean coast. The library had announced that students could use its 2,000-seat reading hall free of charge outside its regular hours.

"I came here because there are many services available, it's a nice vibe, there's internet and the atmosphere is calm, which encourages us to study," said high school student Hassan Yazid.

Khaled Saeed, the library's head of security, said staff were surprised by the large number of students who turned out. — REUTERS

Sunday Times backs opposition Labour Party in UK election

Britain's *Sunday Times* newspaper endorsed the main opposition Labour Party for the July 4 parliamentary election, saying in an editorial that the country needs a "radical reset" after 14 years of Conservative rule.

The newspaper, owned by Rupert Murdoch's News UK, has backed the Conservatives at every election since 2005 but said on Sunday that the country could not carry on with what it said was now an "exhausted" party.

"We believe it is now the right time for Labour to be entrusted with restoring competence to government," the editorial said.

"There comes a time when change is the only option."

Keir Starmer's Labour Party is far ahead of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservatives in the opinion polls.

The *Sunday Times* said the period since 2016 — the year of the Brexit referendum — had been defined by political chaos which had distracted Conservative leaders from the issues which matter most to voters — healthcare, schools and the economy.

"The Conservatives have in effect forfeited the right to govern. In opposition they must regroup, rejuvenate, reject internecine

fighting and stop blaming everyone else for their woes," the newspaper said.

The Sun, one of Britain's best selling newspapers which is also owned by Murdoch, has not yet said which party it is endorsing in the election. It has a strong track record of picking election winners.

Among other newspapers, the *Daily Mirror* and the *Guardian* have also endorsed Labour, while the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Telegraph* have backed the Conservatives. *The Economist*, a business weekly magazine, has thrown its weight behind Labour. — REUTERS



British opposition Labour Party leader Keir Starmer and Victoria Starmer pose with an attendee during a general election campaign event at The Royal Horticultural Halls in London, Britain, on Sunday. — REUTERS



Democrat candidate, US President Joe Biden, and Republican candidate, former US president Donald Trump, take part in a US presidential election debate in Atlanta on Thursday. — REUTERS

Death toll from heavy rain in Delhi rises to 11

The death toll from this week's sudden heavy rain has climbed to 11 in New Delhi, including four citizens who drowned in submerged underpasses, the *Times of India* reported, while flight operations stuttered in the Indian capital.

New Delhi, which endured one of its worst heatwaves in history earlier this month, faced the biggest downpour in decades on June 28, with rainfall in a single day surpassing the city's average for the entire month.

The torrential rain caused a fatal roof collapse at one of the three terminals of Delhi's main airport, disrupted flights, flooded underpasses, and led to massive traffic jams, power and water outages in parts of the city.

Nearly 60 flights were cancelled from New Delhi's main airport in the last 24 hours, according to data from flight tracking platform Flightaware.

Operations were largely normal on Sunday, with most flights from the affected terminal diverted to the other two, an airport official said but did not rule out possible flight cancellations in the course of the day.

The Delhi airport is one of the country's biggest and busiest.

Terminal 1, the now-closed terminal, is mostly used by low-cost carriers IndiGo, operated by Interglobe Aviation, and SpiceJet, and currently has a capacity to handle 40 million passengers annually.

An IndiGo spokesperson did not comment on the flight cancellations and a SpiceJet spokesperson did not immediately respond to a phone call. — REUTERS

Explainer: How Democrats could still replace Biden

After President Joe Biden's shaky performance at the debate with former president Donald Trump on Thursday night, some Democrats openly questioned whether he should be replaced as their candidate for the 2024 election.

There is a process for doing so, but it would be messy.

For answers on how that would work, Reuters spoke to Elaine Kamarck, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution think tank, a Democratic National Committee (DNC) member, and author of the book *Primary Politics* about the presidential nominating process.

This explainer is based largely on interviews with her.

Q: What options do Democrats have?

A: The Democratic Party has had no real Plan B for Biden as its presidential candidate. He ran virtually unopposed for the party's presidential nomination this year.

He will not be nominated officially until later this summer, so there is still time to make a change and a handful of scenarios to enact one: Biden could decide himself to step aside before he is nominated; he could be challenged by others who try to win over the delegates he has accrued; or he could withdraw after the Democratic convention in Chicago in August, leaving the Democratic National Committee to elect someone to run against Trump in his place.

Q: So what happens next?

A: Right now, the process largely depends on Biden. He would have to agree to step down or face a challenger this late in the process who would try to force him to do so. So far Biden has shown no indications of wanting to step aside and no opponents have challenged him directly.

In fact some of his top potential replacements — Vice President Kamala Harris

Biden acknowledges age, bad debate performance

US President Joe Biden said he intended to defeat Republican rival Donald Trump in the November presidential election, giving no sign he would consider dropping out of the race after a feeble debate performance that dismayed his fellow Democrats.

"I know I'm not a young man, to state the obvious," an ebullient Biden said at a rally one day after the head-to-head showdown with his Republican rival, which was widely viewed as a defeat for the 81-year-old president.

"I don't walk as easy as I used to, I don't speak as smoothly as I used to, I don't de-

bate as well as I used to," he said, as the crowd chanted "four more years."

"I would not be running again if I didn't believe with all my heart and soul that I could do this job. The stakes are too high," Biden said.

Biden's verbal stumbles and occasionally meandering responses in the debate heightened voter concerns that he might not be fit to serve another four-year term and prompted some of his fellow Democrats to wonder whether they could replace him as their candidate for the November 5 US election. — REUTERS

and California Governor Gavin Newsom — spoke passionately in his defense after the debate, serving in a surrogate role that showcased their support but also contrasted their smooth delivery with his faltering one on the Atlanta debate stage.

Q: What happens if Biden steps down?

A: Biden has spent the last several months accruing nearly 4,000 Democratic delegates by winning primary elections in US states and territories. Those delegates would normally vote for him, but the rules do not bind or force them to do so; delegates can vote with their conscience, which means they could throw their vote to someone else.

If Biden "releases" his delegates by stepping aside, there could be a competition among other Democratic candidates to become the nominee.

Q: Who would replace Biden?

A: Several candidates could step into the fray, but there is no obvious number one.

Vice-President Harris would almost certainly be at the top of the list, but she has had her own problems after a rocky start in the job

and poor polling numbers. The US Constitution dictates that the vice-president becomes president if the president dies or becomes incapacitated, but it does not weigh in on an inter-party process for choosing a nominee.

California Governor Newsom, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear and Illinois Governor JB Pritzker have all been floated as possible replacements, but they are Biden supporters and campaign surrogates who are working to help get him elected now.

Q: How would a nominee be chosen?

A: There would likely be a free-for-all of sorts between the Democratic heavyweights vying for the job.

Candidates would have to get signatures from 600 convention delegates to be nominated. There are expected to be some 4,672 delegates in 2024, including 3,933 pledged delegates and 739 automatic or superdelegates, according to Ballotpedia.

If no one gets a majority of the delegates, then there would be a "brokered convention" in which the delegates act as free agents and

negotiate with the party leadership to come up with a nominee. Rules would be established and there would be roll call votes for the names placed into nomination.

It could take several rounds of voting for someone to get a majority and become the nominee. The last brokered convention when Democrats failed to nominate a candidate on the first ballot was in 1952.

Q: What happens if Biden steps down after the convention?

A: If Biden steps down after the August convention, the 435 members of the Democratic National Committee would choose a new candidate. The members would meet in a special session to select a nominee.

Q: Who are these 435 DNC members?

A: They are divided equally between men and women as well as various constituency groups including labour leaders and racial minorities. Of the total, 75 are appointed at-large by the chair, while the rest are elected in their respective states.

Q: Who could nominate an alternative in that case?

A: To nominate a candidate to replace Biden on the ballot, that person would have to have the support of a minimum number of DNC members — perhaps around 60, though the exact number would be determined by the DNC's rules committee, which would lay out the rules for the proceedings before they started. There would likely be nominating speeches and seconding speeches. Multiple candidates could be nominated before the list is whittled down.

Q: How would those votes be counted?

A: The DNC would likely hold its meeting in Washington and the votes would be counted there. Ballots would be coded, signed and collected by hand. If a vote were to happen very close to Election Day on November 5, when it was not possible to meet in person, then it would likely be virtual. — REUTERS

France votes in pivotal snap polls as far right eyes power

French people voted on Sunday in the first round of high-stakes snap parliamentary elections which could see the far-right party of Marine Le Pen take power in a historic first.

With Russia's war against Ukraine in its third year and energy and food prices much higher, support for the anti-immigration and eurosceptic National Rally (RN) party has surged despite President Emmanuel Macron's pledges to prevent its ascent. The vote could put the far-right in power in France for the first time since the Nazi occupation in World War II.

Polling stations opened across mainland France at 8am and will close 12 hours later, immediately

followed by projections that usually predict the result with a degree of accuracy. Voters in France's overseas territories that span the globe cast ballots earlier in the weekend. Some 49 million people are eligible to vote.

"These are not easy elections, the results are very uncertain, and the repercussions could be serious for society", said Julien Martin, a 38-year-old architect in the southwestern city of Bordeaux.

Voters lined up to cast their ballots in France's Pacific territory of New Caledonia, where tensions remain high following last month's deadly riots. The vote is "decisive", said Cassandre Cazaux, a nurse.

"It should be well attended, but I

don't know if everyone will play along and come out to vote," Cazaux added.

By midday local time, turnout in the archipelago, which is located between Australia and Fiji, stood at 32.4 per cent, compared to 13.06 per cent recorded during the 2022 legislative polls.

Former president Nicolas Sarkozy, Greens party leader Marine Tondelier and former prime minister and Macron ally Edouard Philippe were among the first high-profile politicians to vote.

Philippe, the mayor of Le Havre in northern France who has made little effort to hide his ambitions for the presidency, was seen smiling

and chatting to locals on Sunday morning.

Elections for the 577 seats in the National Assembly are a two-round process. The shape of the new parliament will become clear after the second round on July 7.

Most polls show the RN on course to win the largest number of seats in the National Assembly, parliament's lower house, although it remains unclear if the party will secure an outright majority.

Final opinion polls have given the RN between 35 per cent and 37 per cent of the vote, against 27.5-29 per cent for the left-wing New Popular Front alliance and 20-21 per cent for Macron's centrist camp. — AFP



Francois Hollande, former French president and candidate for the left-wing Nouveau Front Populaire, casts his ballot in the first round of the early French parliamentary elections in Tulle, France, on Sunday. — REUTERS

Dubai mortgages hit highest in 14 months as demand soars



A view of Sheikh Zayed Road. Dubai's mortgage transaction volumes rose 57.9 per cent in May with a total of 3,359 loans recorded – the second highest level trailing only March 2023. — FILE PHOTO

Waheed Abbas
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Mortgage transaction volumes saw a massive increase in Dubai — reaching nearly 14-month high — despite relatively high interest rates in the UAE even as demand for local property stayed strong.

According to Property Monitor, mortgage transaction volumes increased by 57.9 per cent in May with a total of 3,359 loans recorded — the second highest level trailing only March 2023 as the emirate's red-hot property continues to grow at a steady pace.

Quoting official data from the Dubai Land Department, Allsopp & Allsopp said Dubai's mortgage sector has been on the rise, with

May recording a 14-month high in activity, marking the second-highest month in terms of mortgages on record.

"It's a great time for buyers to take advantage of the low rates. Even if some banks adjust their rates slightly, others will likely lower theirs, which means these favourable conditions should stick around for a while. We expect mortgage activity to keep growing in the coming months," said Connor Humble, mortgage Services manager at Allsopp and Allsopp.

"We're seeing a shift in the market towards better mortgage education, which is driving higher activity. More people are approaching independent mortgage advisors before going to their banks to understand their options fully," said Lewis Allsopp, chair-

man of Allsopp and Allsopp.

"In the last couple of years, buyers have been more cautious of fluctuating interest rates. If buyers only speak to one bank, they are unlikely to get the best terms. This is where mortgage advisors come in — they go to all the banks and negotiate the best terms, from free valuations to better interest rates. We have seen first-hand how massively beneficial this is for buyers," said Allsopp.

Rates impact

Interest rates have been peaking in the UAE, but they are expected to go down later this year when the US Federal Reserve will start reducing rates. Since the UAE follows the Fed, rates in the country will also decline.

Allsopp & Allsopp said it record-

ed a similar heightened demand reaching a significant 3-year high in mortgage activity as finance buyers outpaced cash buyers by 55.8 per cent in May, doubling figures from April.

Allsopp & Allsopp's May report revealed that mortgage buyers were typically younger individuals who preferred being around popular lifestyles and social hotspots such as Downtown Dubai, Jumeirah Village Circle (JVC), Dubai Marina, Jumeirah Lake Towers (JLT), and Jumeirah Beach Residence (JBR).

For villas, the top areas were The Springs, Arabian Ranches, Town Square, Al Furjan, and Reem.

"We are observing a notable trend of more buyers deciding to move into suburban areas that might not have been on top of their

list a few years ago. These areas can be more affordable compared to properties in the city centre with a similar size," it said.

Property Monitor said loans taken for new purchase money mortgages accounted for 53 per cent of borrowing activity, with the average amount borrowed being Dh1.85 million at a loan-to-value ratio of 76.6 per cent.

Meanwhile, loans for refinancing and equity release saw their market share decrease by 9.5 per cent to 29 per cent. The remaining 18 per cent was due to bulk mortgages — those taken by developers and larger investors with multiple units. The 605 bulk loans issued for the month were spread across several projects, most notably in Jumeirah Village Circle and MBR City.

Dubai targets FDI worth Dh650B by 2033

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Dubai's Executive Council on Sunday approved the Foreign Direct Investment Development Programme, which aims to attract Dh650 billion of investments to Dubai by 2033.

The initiative will be carried out by designating Dh25 billion over 10 years in direct support of the emirate's ambitions to emerge among the world's top three economic cities by 2033.

This comes under the vision of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum.

Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, First Deputy Ruler of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of the UAE, and Deputy Chairman of The Executive Council of Dubai, said: "Dubai has built an integrated, unique, and inspiring economic model, featuring advanced enablers and tools to enhance decision-making, create a broad array of promising opportunities, and attract top talents and global investment."

In addition to the foreign direct investment plan, the council also approved the Dubai Economic Model to measure Dubai's development against its economic targets through an economic database that includes more than 3,000 indicators to enhance consumer and investor confidence.

Promoting sustainability

A framework plan for the areas surrounding Metro stations to promote sustainability and quality of life in Dubai was also approved. This will provide incentives for developers, offer services that will support the '20-minute city' concept and increase the number of commuters.

For UAE nationals, the council approved the 'Manbar' programme, which aims at doubling the number of Emiratis working in mosques and equipping them with the necessary skills and qualifications. These will include delivering prayers, call to prayer and performing the Friday prayer.

Furthermore, the 'Ghras Al Khair' programme was launched to empower Emirati content creators and promote values of tolerance and national identity. Schools and universities will offer programmes and awareness campaigns for the same.

How Emirates strips down A380s in world's largest retrofit project

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With its bare black interior and pipes running through its sides, the Emirates A380 looked nothing like the luxurious aircraft the world knows.

But this is where the magic happens. The entire aircraft is cleaned, fixed and then fitted with a modern-looking interior.

It was in 2022 that Emirates began to refurbish its planes in what was dubbed the largest retrofit project in the world. This multibillion-dollar project sees the airline's engineering staff complete a thorough rework of the plane to make it more suited to modern standards.

With Boeing further delaying the delivery of planes to Emirates, the airline expanded its retrofit project earlier this year to include an additional 43 A380s and 28 B777s aircraft.

"The entire operation takes place here at our 500,000sqm facility," said John Walker, VP for base maintenance at EK Engineering. "We have completed about 30 aircraft now. The retrofit of the Boeing 777 will begin on Monday."

At the retrofit programme, every element inside the plane is stripped down to its bare black interiors. During this time, every inch of the interior and exterior is checked diligently. The entire process of retrofitting an A380 takes approximately 21 days.

The engineers take apart each



The entire aircraft is cleaned, fixed and then fitted with a modern-looking interior during the retrofit programme. — SUPPLIED PHOTO

cabin piece by piece and put them back together "like a giant puzzle," according to Walker.

Once the work inside the plane is completed, the Business and Economy Class seats are repainted, re-trimmed and re-upholstered with new covers and cushioning. In the First Class suites, the leather, arm rests and other materials are replaced as well.

The seat covers, made from 95 per cent wool and 5 per cent nylon, are taken apart by a team of talented tailors and carefully woven into various types of bags.

These are then distributed among charitable entities, schools, orphanages, and foundations across Africa and Asia.

Emirates believes in recycling and reusing everything. The airline has begun repurposing more than 50,000kg of materials to

produce thousands of handmade children's backpacks and school bags.

Once all the upgrades are finished, these seats and new fittings are reinstalled into the plane. Emirates is moving towards a

contemporary look with a lighter colour scheme for the seats. The trademark cherrywood is also replaced with a lighter wood.

Apart from the retrofit, Emirates also regularly services its planes and ensures that stringent safety checks are conducted. The pilot seats are checked and cushioned to make it as comfortable and safe as possible.

The emergency slides — which are designed to allow passengers to slide to safety in case of an emergency — are also regularly tested. According to safety standards, they must inflate within six seconds of being activated and these are tested within the Emirates engineering facility.

Every plane is equipped with emergency supply packs that have a survival kit. Some of the items inside are: A high-protein bar, a flare to attract attention if stranded, a survival manual, and a manual hand pump.

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Salary: AED 20-30K (all incl.) + Benefits.

2. SITE AGENT – SERVICES
Minimum 12-15 years' relevant GCC experience in construction of utilities such as potable water, irrigation, sewerage, drainage and shallow services (electrical & telecommunication network). Must be well versed with NOC procedures and requirements of various authorities.
Salary: AED 20-30K (all incl.) + Benefits.

3. SENIOR PROJECT ENGINEER / PROJECT ENGINEER (STRUCTURES)
Minimum 5-10 years' relevant GCC experience with expertise as detailed one (1) above.
Salary: AED 12-20K (all incl.) + Benefits.

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Salary: AED 12-20K (all incl.) + Benefits.

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Positions 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 should have the following qualifications / expertise: - Degree or Diploma in Civil Engineering with expertise in the construction of Bridges, Tunnels, Underpasses / Roads & Highways and associated civil works preferably in UAE or other GCC countries. Should be well versed with NOC procedures and requirements of various authorities. Must have good man management skills and understanding of quality and cost control and HSE requirements. Responsible for overall management of resources, achieve progress targets, project cost and financial control, monitoring daily progress, project schedule and financial reporting etc.

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Minimum four (4) years experience as CAD Operator preparing Multi-Discipline CAD Drawings in AutoCAD Software. Ability to prepare drawings in Microstation will attract higher remuneration.
Salary: Dhs. 6,000-12,000/month (all incl.) + Benefits.

C) FOREMAN (STRUCTURES & UTILITIES)
Candidate must have minimum 5-10 years relevant experience especially in construction of Bridges & Underpasses / Roads & Highways and associated civil works.
Salary: Dhs. 4,000-10,000/month (all incl.) + Benefits.

D) SURVEYORS (Roads & Bridges)
Candidate must have minimum 5-10 years relevant experience especially in construction of Bridges & Underpasses / Roads & Highways and associated civil works.
Salary: AED 4,000-10,000 /month (all incl.) + Benefits.

E) ASSISTANT SURVEYORS
Candidate should have minimum 2-3 years relevant experience in infrastructure works.
Salary: AED 2,500-5,000 (all incl.) + Benefits.

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Dubai real estate to see steady growth as more serious buyers invest in local markets

High-net-worth individuals are drawn to the city's world-class infrastructure, strategic geographic location, and innovative developments

Waheed Abbas
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Dubai's real estate market has seen three cycles of growth so far. But it saw two boom-bust cycles – first during the 2008 global financial crisis when the market crashed for the first time and again during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Following the three-and-a-half-year rally, industry players are confident that the market will not bust but see a slower and steady growth. This is because the industry now has more end-users and serious investors who are investing in the local market.

As the third growth cycle comes to an end, experts are confident that there will be no boom-bust again – thanks to key initiatives such as Escrow account, inflow of millionaires and end-users that have played a key role in bringing stability in the market.

Experts in the industry say that property market has moved beyond the boom-bust cycles as it has now become a more mature and regulated sector.

"Dubai's real estate market has significantly evolved over the years, transitioning from the boom-bust cycles of the past to a more stabilised and sustainable growth trajectory. This maturity is driven by several factors, including implementation of stringent regulatory frameworks, enhanced transparency, and a strategic focus on long-term economic diversification," said Hassan Hijazi, group CFO of Amwaj Development.

He also added that Dubai's appeal to a diverse range of investors has broadened. According to him, high-net-worth individuals, institutional investors, and expats alike are drawn to the city's world-class infrastructure, strategic geographic location, and innovative developments.

"The Expo 2020 legacy and various government initiatives, such as the Golden Visa programme, have also played a vital role in attracting and retaining investors, reinforcing Dubai's position as a global investment hub," noted Hijazi.

Imran Farooq, CEO of Samana Developers, said over the last five decades, Dubai has built its economic infrastructure and multi-national society so strong that it would be inaccurate to say that the city's rise is "artificial or a balloon".

"The city stands strong and tall on its foundations. Dubai has shown it to the world by successfully organising global events such as Dubai Expo 2020, UAE COP28, and its exemplary handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. It only makes sense that Dubai's real estate sector has matured enough and moved beyond the boom-and-bust cycle," said Farooq.

Yogesh Bulchandani, founder and CEO of Sunrise Capital, said it's clear to anyone who has seen the ups and downs of



Dubai's real estate market has significantly evolved over the years, transitioning from the boom-bust cycles of the past to a more stabilised and sustainable growth trajectory."

Hassan Hijazi
Group CFO of Amwaj Development

the sector that Dubai's real estate market has shown exceptional resilience, defying predictions of a slowdown.

"While global property markets stutter, prices in Dubai are continuing to rise, signalling a break from the boom-and-bust cycles. The market's strength is bolstered by buyers purchasing for occupancy, indicating the previously transient nature of Dubai is fading. Demand remains strong from Europe (and the UK), India, and South Asia, with an influx of wealthy investors and foreign buyers, leading to a more stable and mature real estate landscape in Dubai," he underlined.

Samana Developers' CEO said he doesn't see Dubai property prices dropping over the next five years because the returns it gives to investors are very attractive.

"We have seen a rise in the number of investors from Europe, CIS, and China. We see all of the market segments are in high demand. Higher prices mean the market is attractive for foreign institutional investors. It helps Dubai further strengthen its real estate sector and facilitate all stakeholders," he added.

Dubai's relatively lower property prices compared to cities like Hong Kong, Singapore, and New York attract investors but don't guarantee immunity from fluctuations, according to Bulchandani.

"The current trend of sustained price increases might suggest maturity, but global economic intercon-

nections and investor behaviour still pose risks of cyclical trends," he stressed.

Meanwhile, Hassan Hijazi noted that the relatively lower property prices in Dubai compared to cities like Hong Kong, Singapore, and New York indeed provide a cushion against significant market corrections.

"This affordability, coupled with the city's continuous development, safety, quality of life and the government's proactive measures, makes the Dubai property market attractive to a wide range of investors and residents.

"Additionally, the proactive measures taken by the government to regulate supply and demand dynamics ensure market stability. While some price adjustments are natural in any real estate cycle, the inherent value proposition of Dubai's property market positions it well to avoid major corrections, ensuring sustained investor confidence and market resilience," said Hijazi.



Higher prices mean the market is attractive for foreign institutional investors. It helps Dubai further strengthen its real estate sector and facilitate all stakeholders."

Imran Farooq
CEO of Samana Developers





Indian players celebrate after receiving the T20 World Cup trophy. — AFP

World Cup triumph may be the start of India's dominance

The era of India's dominance in cricket may have kicked in with their spectacular triumph in the T20 World Cup on Saturday, according to several former players. India prevailed in an edge-of-the-seat thriller against South Africa in Bridgetown to claim their second 20-overs global trophy 17 years after winning the inaugural edition.

It was India's first global title since winning the 2013 Champions Trophy, but their consistency in recent years was never in doubt. India lost back-to-back finals of the World Test Championships in 2021 and 2023, while their only defeat in the 50-overs home World Cup last year came in the summit clash against Australia.

They ended that barren streak in International Cricket Council (ICC) events on Saturday when India became the first team to win the T20 World Cup going unbeaten in the tournament.

"I have a feeling that this is a breakout win for us," former India opener Virender Sehwag wrote on X.

"For years, we have played well,

been consistent in a range, consolidated but not able to get past the finish line," he wrote. "With this win, I think we would be winning many ICC trophies consistently in the years to come."

India's resurgence follows the demise of England's white-ball dominance as the Jos Buttler-led side have now failed to defend two World Cup titles in eight months.

India appear to have inherited that mantle, believes former England fast bowler Steven Finn.

"India are formidable - they have got all bases covered in all conditions," Finn told the BBC. "This experience could see them go on to dominate now. It is an experience that will serve them very well."

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly predicted "they will win many more" after the success in the Caribbean.

Batting great Sachin Tendulkar said India's overall fourth World Cup title in limited-overs cricket would be a major motivation for young talents in the country.

"Every star added to the Team India jersey inspires our nation's

starry-eyed children to move one step closer to their dreams. India gets the 4th star, our second in @T20WorldCup," Tendulkar wrote on X.

India's domination in the 20-overs format will have to be under a new leadership, though.

Captain Rohit Sharma and stalwart Virat Kohli bowed out of T20 Internationals after winning the World Cup, while it was also head coach Rahul Dravid's last match in charge of the squad.

India last won a World Cup in 2011 at home under MS Dhoni, who earlier led the team to a T20 World Cup trophy in the inaugural edition in 2007.

Star batsman Virat Kohli played a knock for the ages in his 59-ball 76 to guide India to 176-7, a total their bowlers defended brilliantly as they restricted their opponents to 169-8 despite South Africa needing just 26 runs off 24 balls with six wickets in hand.

The clash between the tournament's two unbeaten sides lived up to expectations and provided intense drama that culminated with India claiming their second

T20 World Cup 17 years after their first.

It was a fitting finale to the biggest T20 World Cup featuring a record 20 teams, which created quite a buzz in United States, the joint tournament hosts with West Indies.

The US impressed on the field too, stunning former champions Pakistan and making the Super Eight stage ahead of Test playing nations such as New Zealand and Sri Lanka.

Afghanistan also gave a good account of themselves until South Africa hammered them in the semifinals.

It was the first time South Africa made the final of a World Cup in any format, but Aiden Markram's side fell agonisingly short of the title.

No batter scored a century in the bowler-dominated tournament, which, for many, was a welcome break from the usual relentless slog of the format encourages.

India's Jasprit Bumrah, adjudged player of the tournament, particularly stood out and proved again why he is the best all-format bowler in the world. — REUTERS



All-rounder Jadeja announces retirement from T20 internationals

India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja on Sunday announced his retirement from T20 internationals, a day after he lifted the World Cup in Barbados.

The left-handed Jadeja follows skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli in quitting the shortest format soon after the seven-run win over South Africa in a thrilling final on Saturday.

"With a heart full of gratitude, I bid farewell to T20 internationals," Jadeja wrote in a social media post. "Like a steadfast horse galloping with pride, I've always given my best for my country and will continue to do so in other formats."

He added, "Winning the T20 World Cup was a dream come true, a pinnacle of my T20 international career. Thank you for the memories, the cheers, and the unwavering support."



Jadeja, 35, played 74 T20 matches for India. He took 54 wickets with his left-arm spin and scored 515 runs as a lower middle-order batsman since his debut in 2009.

Jadeja featured in all the matches for unbeaten India in the ninth edition of the T20 World Cup. — AFP

'We will always remember their contributions': Olympic hero Neeraj on Rohit, Kohli and Dravid

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As India were locked in a seesaw battle with South Africa in the final overs of the T20 World Cup in Barbados, thousands of miles away in Germany, one man was following every moment of the gripping encounter.

His name: Neeraj Chopra, the ace javelin thrower and the only Indian track and field athlete to have won Olympic and World Championships gold medals.

Neeraj is now in Germany preparing for next month's Paris Games where he hopes to become only the fourth man in history to defend the Olympic javelin gold.

But Neeraj was glued to his television screen in Germany, rooting for India which held their nerve in the final four overs to quell the South African threat and win the nail-biting battle by seven runs.

Neeraj now hopes that the Indian cricket team's World Cup win will fuel his dream of making more Olympic history in Paris.

"There is always an amazing feeling, a great positive vibe when India win something big in sports, whether it's cricket, athletics, badminton or wrestling," Neeraj told



India's Neeraj Chopra with the world championships gold medal. — AFP

the Khaleej Times from Germany during an exclusive interview.

"I was very happy yesterday, I was watching the whole match here in Germany. It gave me a great positive feeling just before the start of the Olympics. I hope it (the Olympics) goes very well and I am working very hard for it here in Germany."

The 26-year-old also doffed his hat to Rohit Sharma's team for handling the pressure when South Africa, chasing 177, needed only 26 runs off 24 balls with six wickets in hand.

"There were lots of twists and turns in the match, at one stage it felt like India would not win," he said.

"But they handled the pressure so well in that crunch moment, I think that made the difference.

This is what separates good athletes from great athletes and good teams from great teams. It's all about handling the pressure and the Indian team really did that very well yesterday (Saturday)."

Neeraj also thanked Rohit, and Virat Kohli, the two Indian icons who announced their T20I retirements after Saturday's final, and Rahul Dravid who ended his stint as India team head coach with a World Cup win.

"Both of them (Rohit and Kohli), what they have done for cricket, what they have done for the country, is really amazing. They are on a different level," he said.

"But it's the reality in every athlete's life, you have to retire one day. What is important for us is to remember what they have achieved in their careers and their contributions. They have inspired a lot of young kids in India. I think their achievements and the hard work will continue to inspire the future generations.

"And Mr Dravid has always been a great role model in India. As a player, he had done so well for India. Now it's great to see him win the World Cup as a coach. As Indians, we can't thank all three of them enough for their contributions."



Virat Kohli, Rahul Dravid and Rohit Sharma after the final. — X

'It felt like India, not Dubai': Fans in UAE celebrate India's triumph

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India's nail-biting win over South Africa in the T20 World Cup final sparked wild celebrations in Dubai on Saturday night as jubilant fans hit the streets, beat drums and sang until midnight.

Rohit Sharma's Indian team ended years of heartbreak in ICC events by winning their second T20 World Cup title with a seven-run win in a last-over thriller against South Africa in Barbados.

As Hardik Pandya defended 16 runs in the final over of the gripping contest, Bur Dubai streets were swarming with people in blue jerseys celebrating one of India's greatest wins on the global stage.

"It was amazing to see so many people celebrating in the streets, Meena Bazar was buzzing after the final ball was bowled," Dubai resident Bhavesh D. Kikla told the Khaleej Times.

"People were singing and dancing on the streets. It felt like we were in India, not Dubai. The atmosphere was electrifying."

Kikla, who watched the match in a club with a group of nine people, felt like leaving early when South African batsmen threatened to break Indian hearts.

"There were lots of twists and turns. We felt down and out when they needed only 30 off 30, we felt like leaving the club. The mood was down," he admitted.

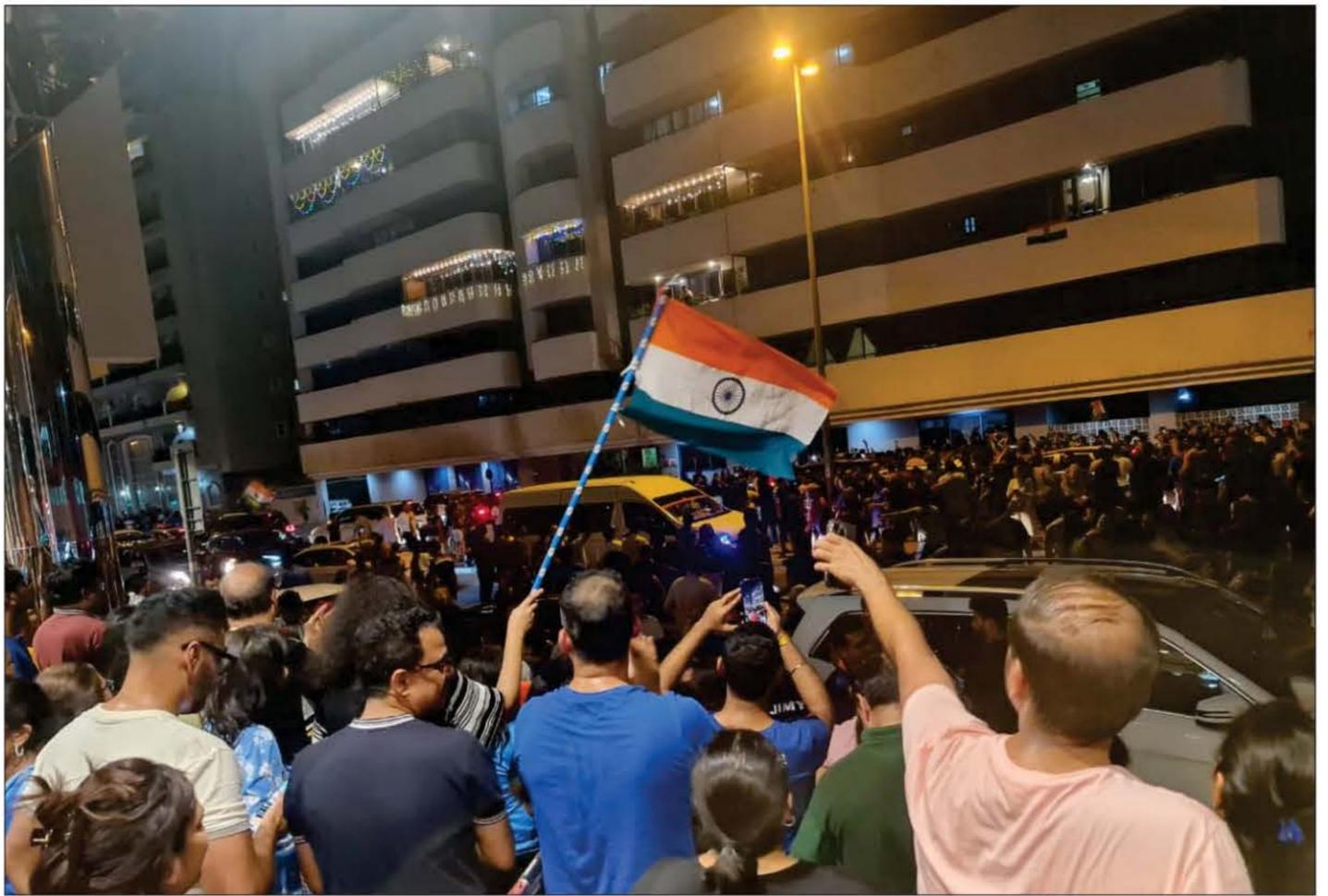
"But then our bowlers turned the match completely in our favour. I think it added lot of spice to the match. Now we are feeling amazing, but if it was a straight-forward win, it probably would not have felt so good."

Kikla, an avid cricket fan, was lost for words when asked about Suryakumar Yadav's stunning catch in the long off boundary to dismiss David Miller, South Africa's last hope, in the final over.

"That was unbelievable, I don't really have words to express it," he said. "That catch was the moment when India won the game. It was an out of the world effort from Surya."

Vikas Chandra, another Dubai resident, watched the game with a group of 10 friends at his residence.

"The day we beat Pakistan, we knew would be in the final. So we had been planning to watch the final at our home since that day," he said. "We expected Australia to play India in the final. But South Africa fought hard and it was an



Dubai residents celebrating India's World Cup win on Saturday night. — PICTURE COURTESY GHULAM MUSTAFA

amazing game last night," added Chandra before paying tribute to Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja who announced their T20I retirement after the final.

"One era has ended here and a new group of players will emerge now. These senior players, Kohli, Rohit, and Jadeja deserved to go out on a high. The planning was very good and they were very well supported by (coach Rahul) Dravid," he said.

Chandra then revealed why he still remains a big fan of MS Dhoni, under who India won the 2007 T20 World Cup and the 2011 ODI World Cup.

"I come from Bihar, so my great cricket memories are the World

Cup wins under his captaincy," he said.

"I also used to live in the same colony as Dhoni's family in Ranchi. His house was just a stone's throw away. So I have always been a Dhoni fan."

Gopal Jasapara, a veteran Dubai-based cricket coach, doffed his hat to another Indian icon, Jasprit Bumrah, who played a big role again in the final.

It was Bumrah's unplayable spell (4-0-18-2) which inspired the likes of Arshdeep Singh (4-0-20-2) and Hardik Pandya (3-0-20-3) to help India snatch a victory from the jaws of defeat in the death overs.

"Bumrah bowled amazingly well in the whole tournament.

Whenever the team needed wickets or they needed to put pressure on the opposition, Rohit gave him the ball and he always delivered," Jasapara said.

"He is without doubt the best fast bowler in the world and one of the greatest bowlers I have ever seen in my life. Most of his wickets are clean bowled, he hits the stumps regularly. That shows he is unplayable."

Jasapara also heaped praise on Pandya for his strong comeback after a poor IPL season when he was mercilessly trolled on social media and booed by fans at stadiums for replacing Rohit as Mumbai Indians captain.

"Hardik never uttered a single word during the whole IPL saga.

He never reacted during that tough time, he never responded to any negative comments that people were making," Jasapara said.

In the make-or-break final over on Saturday, Pandya held his nerve, dismissing Miller and Kagiso Rabada to drag India over the line.

"He had a poor IPL, but he came back strong in the World Cup. He is such an integral part of this Indian team. I think after the match when Rohit hugged him and kissed him, it summed up everything, that cricket is bigger than any individual," he said.

"And Rohit proved that he is one of the greatest leaders India have produced. There were so many stories about their relation-

ship (during the IPL). And now look how well they performed together for India. It's all about the team.

"As for Hardik, I am so happy for him, so many fans hated him in the IPL, and now he is a hero for the whole country. That's the beauty of cricket."

Dishang Mehta, another Dubai resident, felt Saturday's victory was also a fitting farewell to Kohli who produced a superbly paced 76 to help India set a competitive total.

"I think they (the Indian cricket board) should retire the number 18 jersey (Kohli's jersey number) as a mark of respect to the legend," he said. "He's the best player ever for me."



Germany's Jamal Musiala celebrates after scoring his team's second goal. — AFP

Germany embracing fans' expectations, says Nagelsmann

Germany's first knockout victory at a major tournament in eight years will raise fans' expectations that a former powerhouse of the sport are returning to their best at Euro 2024, but the players will not feel pressure, coach Julian Nagelsmann said.

Kai Havertz and Jamal Musiala's second-half goals sent Germany into the quarterfinals. The game was suspended for 20 minutes in the first half due to the weather before Danish defender Joachim Andersen went from hero to zero when his close-range finish was disallowed for offside and he conceded a penalty converted by Havertz in the 53rd minute.

The hosts were scintillating at the start of their 2-0 win over Denmark on Saturday, with Nagelsmann describing their first

20 minutes as "the best of the whole tournament", before the elements and the Danes dragged Germany into a tricky contest.

"I think we have no more pressure than usual," Nagelsmann told reporters. "I think the fans and also the expectation of our fans is a big push for us."

"We can deal with the pressure. For me, it's still a privilege and we also tell the players it's a privilege to play soccer games under pressure. All the players are used to dealing with it, so it's no problem."

Germany's victory was ultimately a comfortable one and they could have won by more than two goals but for good saves by Kasper Schmeichel and wastefulness in front of goal. — REUTERS

UAE Team Emirates' Pogacar claims Tour de France lead

Tadej Pogacar claimed the Tour de France overall lead with a late attack in Sunday's second stage, though the Slovenian may have been surprised by how easily defending champion Jonas Vingegaard followed him despite his recent lack of racing.

While the 2020 and 2021 Tour winner's lightning attack on the ascent of San Luca left fellow favourites Primož Roglič and Remco Evenepoel seemingly glued to the road, Vingegaard had no trouble keeping up despite entering the race having not competed since he sustained a collapsed lung in a crash almost three months ago.

"Jonas was on my wheel, we can see he's already in great shape. It's going to be very interesting," said Pogacar, who is looking to be-

come the first rider to win the Giro d'Italia and the Tour de France in the same year since the late Marco Pantani in 1998.

While Pogacar will be hoping not to fade over the three weeks of the race after riding the Giro in May, Vingegaard is looking to improve and keep some freshness for the final week. Tour debutant Kevin Vauquelin was the second French winner in the first two days after being the best of the break-away in the ascent to San Luca (1.9km at 10.6%) as he gave his Arkea-B&B Hotels team their first win in the race.

Romain Bardet, who started the day in the leader's yellow jersey, finished 21 seconds behind Pogacar to lose the overall lead by six seconds while Evenepoel eventu-

ally managed to bridge the gap with Vingegaard and his rival.

"There was a little gap in the middle of the climb and I was not well positioned, my bad," said Evenepoel, who had Ecuador's Richard Carapaz in his slipstream as he battled back to avoid any losses.

Overall, Pogacar leads Belgian Evenepoel and Vingegaard of Denmark, who are second and third, respectively, on added places with no time difference. Roglič is now 21 seconds down on Pogacar.

Eleven riders broke away early but none of them posed a threat to Bardet's yellow jersey.

They opened a 10-minute gap and it became quickly obvious that they would battle it out for the stage win despite a late acceleration from the peloton.

In the leading group, Frenchmen Jordan Jegat and Axel Laurance attacked on the San Luca climb in a stadium-like, deafening atmosphere. It was the first of two ascents to San Luca up alongside the Portico which features 666 arches.

Vauquelin, Norwegian Jonas Abrahamsen and Nelson Oliveira of Portugal broke free in the flat part leading to the bottom of San Luca. The Frenchman then upped the pace right away and did not look back. Abrahamsen took second place with another Frenchman, Quentin Pacher, finishing third.

"I've had so many tough times, in training, at the Tour de Suisse, at the French championships, and yesterday I got dropped, I was a bit at the end of my tether," Vauquelin said. — REUTERS



UAE Team Emirates' Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar during the second stage of the Tour de France. — AFP

Novak inspires Osaka at Wimbledon

Naomi Osaka said on Sunday she hopes to mark her daughter's first birthday by making a winning return to Wimbledon thanks to a helping hand from Novak Djokovic.

The Japanese superstar, a four-time Grand Slam champion and a former world number one, hasn't played at the All England Club since 2019. Osaka takes on Diane Parry of France in her opener on Monday, the day before she celebrates daughter Shai's first birthday.

"She's one on Tuesday so it will be very exciting day," said the 26-year-old.

"It's been a great journey and I'm lucky and blessed to have happy girl with lots of energy. It's a dream to be here with her now." Osaka's four majors came on the hard courts of the US Open and Australian Open.

She made the third round at Wimbledon in 2017 and 2018, losing to former champions Venus Williams and Angelique Kerber respectively.

Her most recent appearance in 2019 was brief with a first round loss to Yulia Putintseva.

In order to improve her chances at this year's tournament, Osaka has sounded out seven-time Wimbledon champion Djokovic. "I tried to slide on grass. I asked Novak how he did it. I have tried a few times but it has been scary. I think I may have to wait for the grass to get brown a little," she said.

"But he told me no matter if he falls he keeps getting up and doing it." — AFP

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